

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AMENDMENT (TEMPORARY COVID-19 PROVISIONS) BILL 2022

545. Ms M.J. DAVIES to the Premier:

I refer to the Premier's intention to introduce the Emergency Management Amendment (Temporary COVID-19 Provisions) Bill 2022 as an urgent bill. Why has the Premier given the opposition just one day to consider this legislation?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

The opposition called for this. It requested it time and again. I can run through all the opposition's comments if it likes, but it called for this legislation time and again and said that it was urgent. Drafting this has not been easy. It was passed by cabinet yesterday, we have limited sitting weeks left and we want to get out of the state of emergency as soon as we can. In order to do that, we need to pass these laws through Parliament. One day the opposition demands it, and the next day it says it does not want it. The opposition will have the opportunity to be briefed in the same way the caucus is being briefed, and the opposition will have the opportunity to debate it in Parliament. We are trying to ensure that we have a step down in the measures available for us to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic. Obviously, it is a different circumstance now from what it was six or so months ago, or a year ago, in particular, or beyond. We are trying to put a new regime in place as other states have done.

The state of emergency that has been in place allows for a whole range of measures to be continued or reinstated, if you like. They are not necessary at this point in time. We are keen to remove ourselves from that, keen to remove the nomenclature, and keen to ensure that some of the measures available to us are not available under these new laws. It is a step down and a modest approach to this law.

It is not all about the opposition; it is about the people of Western Australia. They are the people we are trying to serve. I remind members opposite —

Several members interjected.

Mr M. McGOWAN: No matter what we do, they will criticise.

With the death of the Queen and other things, Parliament has only a certain number of weeks to debate the legislation. Let us imagine we delay it and we cannot bring it in for the next month or so. Members opposite will then say, "Why haven't you brought in the laws?" It does not matter what we do, they will criticise. I understand that that is the nature of politics. They are not particularly dexterous in their criticism, it would be fair to say, and the fact that they argue both sides of the same argument on consecutive days is obvious to everyone. Being in opposition does require a little bit of finesse—I have had some experience there—and dexterity, which members opposite lack. We want to move out of this regime. It is pretty obvious that this is a step down from the existing regime that is in place and the government intends to move in that direction.