

ALCOA — KWINANA REFINERY — CLOSURE

115. Dr D.J. HONEY to the Minister for State and Industry Development, Jobs and Trade:

My question is to the Premier as the Minister for State and Industry Development, Jobs and Trade. I refer the Premier to the announced closure of the Kwinana refinery.

- (1) Did the government meet with company and union representatives to develop options for keeping the refinery operating, as governments and unions did in Spain to protect the Alcoa refinery jobs there; and, if not, why not?
- (2) Can the Premier explain the contrast between the government's blasé attitude to the Alcoa Kwinana refinery closure compared with its meetings with industry and the commonwealth government over problems afflicting the nickel sector?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

- (1)–(2) I thank the member for the question. It is curious coming from him. As the member very, very well knows, it has some of the oldest and most outdated technology, and, from that point of view, is the least commercial of all the Alcoa refineries. Member, Alcoa has been signalling this to me as the member for Kwinana for many years. In fact, some years ago, I think, the head of Alcoa at the Kwinana refinery actually made that observation to me. So I am not quite sure why the member is asking this question. It is a little uncomfortable. Obviously, we talked to Alcoa extensively before it ultimately made the decision around the Alcoa refinery. As the vice-president of the Western Australian operation has said, both privately to me and publicly in the media, its decision around the closure of the Kwinana refinery had nothing to do with the inaction or because of the actions of the Western Australian government. It was simply part of making sure it had the most commercial operation in Western Australia. In particular, it wants to focus on the Pinjarra and Worsley plants because they utilise much more modern technology, which makes them much more commercial and profitable refineries. Obviously, it will continue to utilise the refinery in Alcoa Kwinana as a port landing or a port operation. We are all very sad for Alcoa to have made that decision, but we respect that decision. We worked with the company very carefully and over a period on that decision. Of course, we talked with the unions in that regard.

I have no idea what the member is referencing in relation to Spain. As I reflected earlier in my answer, the member knows very well the issues involved in that refinery.