

PUBLIC SECTOR — WAGES

528. Ms M.J. DAVIES to the Treasurer:

I refer to the rally of government frontline workers yesterday on the steps of Parliament House protesting the government's pay offer.

- (1) Will the government reconsider its pay offer, given the almost universal rejection of this offer?
- (2) Why did the Premier; Treasurer, who is responsible for setting the government's wages policy, not front the rally?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please!

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

- (1)–(2) I have a very capable Minister for Industrial Relations, who I thought did an outstanding job out there yesterday speaking to the assembled members of the public sector workforce. I saw him on the television. I probably would not wear the sunglasses next time!

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please, members! The joke is over, thank you.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Sorry, Madam Speaker. I thought he did an outstanding job in addressing the workforce and explaining the situation that we face.

The pay policy is a \$2 500 up-front payment for every public sector worker across the board, 150 000 or thereabouts. On top of that, there will be a three per cent per annum pay increase, and also on top of that the already legislated half a per cent superannuation guarantee for each of the two years. Also on top of that, we are not requiring any productivity offsets. For many members of the workforce, particularly the lower paid, it is a pay increase in the first year of around eight per cent. When we do a single payment that is the same for everyone, whether they are a specialist doctor or a school cleaner, for lower-paid workers it is a much higher percentage increase.

That is what we have offered. That is actually more generous than in New South Wales and Victoria. On top of that, as we saw recently in the Deloitte report, the cost of living in Western Australia compared with the other states is significantly lower, particularly for housing. This is a strong offer, and we would urge the workforce to take up the opportunity of this arrangement. Just so members know, when the Leader of the Opposition says it has met universal rejection, teachers have accepted it, as have doctors and elements of the transport workforce. Those three groups have already accepted it, which is many thousands of employees across the private sector workforce.

Dr A.D. Buti: You misled Parliament!

Mr M. McGOWAN: Yes, got it wrong!