

ROYALTIES FOR REGIONS — 2020–21 STATE BUDGET

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

I refer to the state budget papers and the section relating to royalties for regions.

- (1) Why has the Premier's government directed almost half the funding from the state's only regional development program to subsidise the Water Corporation, TAFE, the Department of Education and the Department of Transport to underwrite existing services that had previously been paid for from each portfolio's budget?
- (2) Have any of his regional members of Parliament raised concerns with him, as the Premier, about the misuse of royalties for regions under his leadership?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

- (1)–(2) Leader of the National Party, I have had a lot of positive feedback about the budget from members of the caucus. People are very excited about the fact that there will be 800 additional police officers shared all over Western Australia, metro and country. People are very excited that fees and charges are frozen for everyone across the regions and, indeed, every household will get a \$600 credit on its electricity bill. People are very excited that we were able to put \$200 million into backfilling remote Aboriginal communities and making sure that they are maintained and have proper buildings, because the Liberal Party pulled out support for remote Aboriginal communities. People are very excited about a massive increase in mental health spend across the state, including our support for suicide prevention, in particular, all over Western Australia, and people are very excited that we kept royalties for regions, as we said we would prior to the state election. Indeed, there are huge spends all over regional Western Australia, creating jobs and ensuring that we recover from COVID in each region of the state.

But I note that the Nationals WA members continue to whinge. I expect that they will produce a whole set of commitments at the next election and then the Liberal Party will produce a whole set of commitments at the next election, and considering the Liberals and Nationals do not go into coalition anymore, both sets of commitments will be loaded onto the taxpayers of Western Australia. So, if the conservative forces of this state are re-elected at the next election, or at any time in the future whilst this arrangement subsists whereby they do not go into coalition and do not calibrate their policies together, the taxpayers of Western Australia should be very, very frightened. Last time when they were in office, the Liberal and National Parties drove the state's debt to extraordinary levels when economic times were good and revenues were growing. Imagine what they might do were they to get back into office! Imagine the disaster that would befall the people of Western Australia if the Liberals and Nationals come back to office any time, I expect, in the next 10 years.