

DEPARTMENT OF PRIMARY INDUSTRIES AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT — STAFF SURVEY

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

I have a supplementary question. Will the Premier apologise to the hardworking public servants in the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development for his failed machinery-of-government agenda, one that has caused distress, confusion and mental ill-health for a majority of the staff?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

We have had five weeks away. The Leader of the National Party has had all that time to come up with questions —

Ms M.J. Davies interjected.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the National Party! I call you to order for the second time.

Mr M. McGOWAN: — and she has gone through *The West Australian* today, found an article, and thought to herself, “I’ll ask a question about that.” That is the extent of her research.

Ms M.J. Davies interjected.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the National Party, you are on two.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Two years ago, we amalgamated the Department of Regional Development and the Department of Agriculture and Food. Does that not make sense? I mean, those two bodies deal with overwhelmingly regional issues. There are synergies there. They each have offices in country towns. They each work together on projects across the regions. It makes total sense that those two agencies be together, as they are in virtually every other state in Australia. The Nationals have come in here with some thought bubble, saying, “Oh, no; let’s split it apart.” Woe betide Western Australia if they get back to office, if that is the depth and level of their thinking. I call on the National Party, which is now predominantly a city party, to apologise for what it did to agriculture across Western Australia when it was in office.