

TREASURER'S ADVANCE AUTHORISATION

**49. Mr O'GORMAN to the Treasurer:**

Is the Treasurer aware of a report in today's *The West Australian* in which the Leader of the Opposition has claimed that the \$157 million of funding to be authorised through the Treasurer's Advance authorisation is a consequence of decisions made by the Labor Government? If so, will the Treasurer please inform members whether this statement is correct?

**Mr RIPPER replied:**

I thank the member for the question, and I have some advice for the Leader of the Opposition. However, first, I have some advice for him on energy. That advice comes from the President of the Chamber of Minerals and Energy of Western Australia, Mr Peter Lalor, who said on radio this morning -

Energy costs are too high in this state, we must get our energy costs down to be more competitive in terms of the cost of energy, those sorts of areas, the ones that the Government will have to focus on and try to present and implement policies which will enable us to get the investment we need.

I hope the Leader of the Opposition takes that advice on board and moves to support electricity reform in this State rather than oppose it.

I turn now to what the Leader of the Opposition said yesterday. I am, of course, aware of the claims of the Leader of the Opposition. As part of this Government's commitment to accountability, I asked Treasury for a report on the accuracy of the claims made by the Leader of the Opposition. It is clear from the Treasury report that the Leader of the Opposition misunderstood what he was told in the briefing that he received from Treasury officials. The Leader of the Opposition has based his claims on a document given to him during that briefing which lists supplementary funding requests that impact on the Treasurer's Advance. That list outlines clearly which items were included in the pre-election financial statement and which were not. However, when the Leader of the Opposition added up the items which were not included and arrived at the total of \$157 million, he made a mistake when he then assumed that all those items were the result of decisions made by the Labor Government. He has tried to hold this Government responsible for policy decisions that were made but not funded while he was in office and a member of the Cabinet Budget Standing Committee.

The Treasury advice states -

... these items do not necessarily represent decisions of the new Government, but in the majority of cases, simply represent the most recent projections of budget pressures which have existed since the commencement of the 2000/01 financial year ...

The Treasury advice states also -

... there is little suggestion that they -

That is, the items comprising the \$157 million -

represent active policy decisions of the new Government, but rather are indications of the latest agency budget positions that historically always emerge at this time of the financial year.

Therefore, that Treasury advice corrects the very erroneous impression that the Leader of the Opposition tried to present to this House and to the public. He is wrong on energy and on budgets.