

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS — STOLEN WAGES

**18. Hon SALLY TALBOT to the Minister for Indigenous Affairs:**

Given the fact that the minister's predecessor in the Indigenous affairs portfolio is on the record several times apologising for the Barnett government's tardy response to the stolen wages report, can the minister tell the house how and when he plans to deal with the vitally important unfinished business arising out of the report?

**Hon PETER COLLIER replied:**

I thank the honourable member for the question. I assure the member that it is a really vexed issue. I am very, very conscious of it. I have been briefed extensively. We are dealing with an issue relating to payments up to 1972. One of the big issues, as we have always found with any issue such as this, is trying to follow the paper trail in terms of accessibility for the stolen wages, who is eligible and the appropriate amount to be paid. I can assure the member that we are looking at this issue. It is important to me. We have to go to cabinet once we work on a proposal. The issue remains—it would be the same for any government organisation or department—that we need to ascertain who is eligible for the stolen wages and the amount of the stolen wages. That is the biggest issue that we are faced with, but at the same time it is important.