

CORONAVIRUS — GOVERNMENT RESPONSE — BANKS

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

Before I ask my question, I will put on the record my thanks to the Premier for his response just before question time to the questions we raised about 417 “backpacker” visas, and for raising that matter at the national cabinet meeting; we appreciate it.

I refer to statements that the Premier has made in this place and in the media calling on banks to be responsible when it comes to loan repayment arrangements for businesses and individuals in these trying times. Can the Premier advise the house whether he or his cabinet ministers have convened a meeting with heads of banks here in Western Australia to discuss the current COVID-19 situation and how they will be responding in the short to medium term?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

As I have outlined in the house now for the best part of a week, I am very concerned that banks and landlords do the right thing by their customers and their tenants. I have expressed that publicly. If action is required, I urge the commonwealth government, which regulates the banks, to do the right thing. I expect that banks are coming under a great deal of pressure currently from not only customers, but also the commonwealth government—I certainly hope so. I have communicated my views on this matter to the Prime Minister and the commonwealth government, which regulates the banks. This is a time for economic nationalism on the part of the banks. It is a time for them to act as Australians first, and I urge them to do so. I will continue to raise this matter at the national cabinet meetings. It is incredibly important that the banks—we have four large ones—which, in effect, receive some protection because of the law of the nation, do the right thing by the nation.