

NUCLEAR ENERGY

897. Mr R.C. KUCERA to the Minister for Energy:

What will the state government do to ensure that the federal government does not build nuclear reactors in Western Australia?

Mr F.M. LOGAN replied:

That is a very good question. I thank the member for Yokine for the question. I was very disappointed to hear the federal Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Ian Campbell, state yesterday that he would not rule out the federal government overriding state powers by using the Corporations Act to allow the federal government to get its way and build nuclear power stations in Western Australia. That is a very disappointing statement, particularly when we take into account the statements that have been made by Professor Greg Craven on the High Court's WorkChoices decision and how he now interprets the powers of the federal government to override the states. If the federal government did that, as is pointed out in the Switkowski report, we could end up with two nuclear power stations in Western Australia. As the Switkowski report states, they would have to be within tens of kilometres of the central business district, and they would have to be close to the river or close to the sea. What does that mean? When Switkowski was put under the hammer by the media, he refused to be drawn on where those nuclear power stations would be. If we think about it, it could be Mandurah, Rockingham, Cockburn, South Fremantle, North Fremantle, Hillarys or Scarborough. They are all within the distance from the CBD that has been proposed by Switkowski.

Mr C.J. Barnett: It could be Swanbourne.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: It could be Swanbourne, right in the heart of the member for Cottesloe's electorate. The member for Cottesloe and the member for Hillarys should not worry. We will make sure that that does not happen. We will look after their interests, and we will look after the interests of Western Australians, because we will use whatever powers we can to stop the federal government having its way and building nuclear power stations in Western Australia. We will use environmental legislation, planning legislation, legislation relating to transport and health legislation, and we will also use the powers under the Electricity Corporations Act to ensure that any nuclear power station does not transmit power over powerlines owned by the state government. We will also direct Synergy to not purchase the power in the first place. That is what we will do. We will use every blockage that we possibly can to ensure that Western Australia stays nuclear free. However, I have a question of the Leader of the Opposition. Is the Leader of the Opposition willing to state that Western Australia should be nuclear free, as has his counterpart the Leader of the Liberal Party in New South Wales?

Mr P.D. Omodei: I am interested in making sure that all those wooden poles stay standing, because at the moment they are ready to fall over.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: Is that right? The Leader of the Opposition will say that, but he will say nothing on nuclear power. The Leader of the Liberal Party in New South Wales has been quite clear on this issue. However, the Leader of the Opposition in this state has sat there and said nothing. Once again, it says a lot about his leadership.