

EMERGENCY SERVICES REGIONAL RADIO NETWORK — FUNDING

416. Hon MATT BENSON-LIDHOLM to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Commerce:

I refer to the budget allocation of \$80.3 million for the minister's department to coordinate the regional radio network for Western Australia Police, the Fire and Emergency Services Authority and the Department of Corrective Services.

- (1) Given that the police claim this amount is for its capital component alone, does the minister anticipate that the other agencies will need to seek additional funds for their components?
- (2) If yes to (1), where will that money come from?
- (3) As this amount does not include any recurrent funding, how does the minister anticipate that funds will be made available?

Hon NORMAN MOORE replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

- (1)–(3) The current Western Australia Police's regional radio network is obsolete and at risk of critical failure. The previous Labor government did not provide any funding to upgrade the network, and the network is so obsolete that the police have been reduced to buying spare parts on eBay.

In the recent budget, this government provided \$80.3 million for a long-overdue upgrade to the network and we have a clear plan for rolling out the new digital network. An amount of \$300 000 has been allocated in 2010–11 for the planning and running of a tender process that Commerce will coordinate with the WA Police, FESA and Corrective Services. The \$80 million will then be spent over 2011–12 and 2012–13 in building a modern digital radio network. That funding is broken up as follows: \$30 million in 2011–12 and \$50 million in 2012–13.

Commerce's role is coordination of the technical specification and procurement only. The police will be responsible for rolling out the new network. It is hypocritical of Labor to be criticising us regarding this spending, given that it did nothing for eight years and we are now addressing this problem. As Commerce's role relates to coordinating the construction of the network, it will be a matter for the WA Police, FESA and Corrective Services to fund the recurrent costs of the network. The government will be resolving this issue in detail during the planning stages of the project. Any further questions in relation to operating costs should be directed to the relevant minister.