

COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTRES

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

I refer to the 40 per cent cut in funding for community resource centres detailed in the budget and note that the CRC network will meet next week and will want to know the following.

- (1) How many centres will be closed as a result of budget cuts?
- (2) Which towns will lose access to these vital government services as a result of these cuts?
- (3) Why has the budget been cut prior to the completion of a review by the Premier's own government into the functions and locations of these CRCs?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

- (1)–(3) No doubt the Leader of the National Party will be able to tease out the exact details about the issue and which centres are affected during the estimates process. To ask me in this place which of the 60 or 80 of these centres are going to be cut and expect that I would have those exact details of which ones were being cut is, I think, expecting a little bit much of me. I do know this: we are delivering on commitments all over regional Western Australia. I look around the house and I see some outstanding regional members of Parliament.

Ms M.J. Davies interjected.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the National Party, I call you to order for the second time.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I see some outstanding regional MPs, and they represent Labor. The largest regional party in this house is Labor. I look back here and I see some outstanding regional MPs. We saw one asking a question before—the member for Pilbara—who is an outstanding MP and a great human being who has overcome great adversity in his life to do great things. He is in this chamber and, despite the criticism and some of the undertones that the members of the opposition engage in towards him, he will endure because he has enjoyed much worse than the opposition throws.

We support royalties for regions and our regional communities. We are supporting a whole range of programs across the regions. But we cannot do everything! We cannot do every single thing. The community resource centres, of course, were prominent back in the 1980s and 1990s, as I recall. I have been into them regularly over a long period. Obviously, some of their functions have changed or will need to change. I recall going in and there was a computer there that people could use to access the internet. That was the historic role of a number of them. These days, people have mobile phones so there have been some changes to their role.

Mr D.T. Redman interjected.

Ms M.J. Davies interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Warren–Blackwood and the Leader of the National Party, who is on three.

Mr M. McGOWAN: There have been some changes to their role. Obviously, as I said earlier, in order to ensure that we can support important programs across the community, we need to get our budget repair measures through Parliament. I note that the National Party was the principal party responsible for bad financial management in the last government. It was very neck-and-neck between the Liberals and the Nationals—very close—as to which was the worst, but the National Party, I think, pipped the Liberals at the post in terms of bad financial management. Maybe the National Party should take some responsibility and support budget repair measures.