

ELECTORAL REFORM AND NATIVE FORESTRY — REGIONS

**523. Ms M.J. DAVIES to the Premier:**

I refer to the release of *Ministerial Expert Committee on Electoral Reform: Final report* and the legislation about to be debated in this Parliament and the decision last week to shut down the native forestry sector. Given the Premier raised neither of these issues before the election and outright denied multiple times that electoral reform was on the agenda, what other attacks on regional communities can we expect from his government over the next three years?

**Mr M. McGOWAN replied:**

Just to address the question: we handed down the budget last week—\$9 billion of infrastructure will be spent in regional WA, the biggest road-building program in history across regional WA. Hospitals are being built all over regional WA. There is funding for an upgrade to the patient assisted travel scheme to provide people from the regions with additional resources to come to the city. More permanent full-time paramedics will be employed in regional WA, more full-time firefighters will be employed in regional WA and we will retain the royalties for regions scheme in regional WA. All those things are part of regional WA and on top of that there is a \$400 million package for softwood timber planting; part of that is a \$50 million transition plan out of native hardwood forest.

To address the forest issue, the forest management plan comes up every 10 years or so. We provided two years' notice of our intentions on the forest management plan and consulted people across the board in June this year. The overwhelming feedback was that people did not want us to log native forests anymore. From the questions asked by the Leader of the Liberal Party and the Leader of the National Party, they do want to log native forests again. They want to keep logging native forests. I will tell the people of Cottesloe that is the Leader of the Liberal Party's plan. I will tell the people of Vasse that the Liberal Party wants to continue to log these ancient and beautiful forests, and that is its plan.

We are investing heavily in regional WA. We will preserve native forests. We will invest \$350 million in new softwood plantations and, as the Minister for Forestry pointed out the other day, during the term in office of members opposite, in some years they did not plant a single tree. What does that mean? It means that in future years—admittedly very few of us will still be in this chamber at that time—there would be no supply. That is what that means. They did not put in place the effort to fund it, so we have used the state's good economic and financial management to fund that important program.

This government has many regional members in this chamber and in the upper house of state Parliament and we will continue to do the right thing by the people of regional WA.