

PUBLIC SECTOR JOBS — REGIONAL SERVICES

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

I have a supplementary question. I thank the Premier very much for confirming that he will be rationalising and sacking people in regional WA. I ask for the Premier's clarification.

- (1) What percentage of jobs will be lost in regional WA compared with the metropolitan area?
- (2) Which departments will lose their regional presence?
- (3) Where will the cuts be made?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

- (1)–(3) There are no percentages. The member has created a straw man based upon a conspiracy theory. I think it would be fair to say the Western Australian branch of the National Party is the most irresponsible branch of any political party in the country. To be fair, that is saying something. It is the most economically irrational and irresponsible branch of any political party in the entire nation. I know I have a group of people supporting me in that, and that is the Liberal Party—it had to deal with the National Party in government. The stories we hear about the dual budgeting processes, about the fact that ministers could not work with National Party ministers and about the fact that Treasury had no oversight of what it was doing, are legend in government. You should be —

Several members interjected.

Mr M. McGOWAN: And the Leader of the Opposition agrees, and he had to endure it.

The SPEAKER: Members of the National Party, please, listen to the answer. It might not be the answer you want, but it is the one you are going to get.

Mr M. McGOWAN: The National Party was, as I said, grossly irresponsible in office, and has not learnt anything since. There are no percentages of any of these things. We want to create stronger agencies that deliver more jobs, more service delivery and less red tape, and in the regions that is the exact approach we will be taking. I will tell members opposite one of things we will be doing: our regional development commissions will be focused on jobs, unlike when the National Party was in office when all the regional development commissions were focused on was delivering on National Party pork-barrelling.