

WATER CORPORATION, COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY CONTRACT

241. Mr J.P.D. EDWARDS to the Premier:

I refer the Premier to his policy on accountability in relation to government contracts, which promises that Labor will make all government contracts publicly available, with specific claims of commercial confidentiality to be strictly and independently validated on a case by case basis, and ask -

- (1) Is the Premier aware that his Minister for Government Enterprises approved the Water Corporation granting a \$69 million computer technology contract to Computer Sciences Corporation without an open and competitive tender process?
- (2) Is the Premier also aware that the contract was awarded without tender following recommendations in an internal Water Corporation report that his minister has refused to release, because it contains information that is, according to the minister, commercial in confidence?
- (3) Does the Premier support such secrecy in the awarding of a major government contract and if not, will he subject this contract to a full and independent validation as promised in his accountability policy?

Dr G.I. GALLOP replied:

- (1)-(3) I will answer the last point first. The Water Corporation, like other government agencies in Western Australia, is subject to the analysis of the Auditor General, who looks into the accounts of all government agencies and puts forward a range of reports and makes a range of recommendations. It is fully possible for the Auditor General to look at what the Water Corporation has done in that instance.

The question of the processes followed by the Water Corporation has been a matter of some public debate. The minister responsible for the Water Corporation satisfied himself that the corporation had followed proper processes in reaching that conclusion. An independent board has been set up to make sure that the Water Corporation operates effectively. I think it is chaired by a former Liberal member of this House, Hon Peter Jones. If the member feels that any aspect of that process needs examination, I would be only too happy to hear from him.