

HARDSHIP UTILITY GRANT SCHEME

493. Mr R.S. LOVE to the Minister for Community Services:

I ask a supplementary question. I thank the minister for that answer, and I am glad she has those concerns. But I am still not certain whether in the minister's mind it is more important to keep the lights on in Western Australian households or to build the government's Metronet?

Ms S.F. McGURK replied:

What is astounding is that the member's side—the National Party but also the Liberal Party—has elected to support the gold industry and say that the gold industry should not get slugged when in fact at every turn when we say — Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Nice move, member for Carine, but you are a bit early.

Ms S.F. McGURK: When we say that members of Parliament, senior public servants and judges will accept a pay rise, we do not know what the opposition's position is. When we say that we should share the burden and make sure that our budget is put on a sustainable footing and that it would be good not to make any increases to charges and utilities—there should be some increase, but not too excessive—the opposition complains about that. When we say that the gold industry should pay its fair share, of course, we know that the opposition blocks it. What are the opposition's answers for budget management? None at all.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Through the Chair, minister.

Ms S.F. McGURK: The reason that government members are all the way across this side of the chamber is that Western Australians understand. They wanted a government that would manage the budget and ensure that not only is the current budget managed, but also this state could be managed, the economy diversified and the budget managed for future generations. The opposition is just digging itself into a deeper and deeper hole.