

BAY VILLAGE WORKER CAMP — WOODSIDE ENERGY — KARRATHA

Standing Orders Suspension — Motion

MS M.J. DAVIES (Central Wheatbelt — Leader of the Nationals WA) [4.25 pm] — without notice: I move —

That so much of standing orders be suspended as is necessary to enable the following motion to be moved forthwith —

That this house condemns the McGowan Labor government for approving Woodside Energy to build a 700-bed work camp in Karratha against the wishes of the Karratha community.

Standing Orders Suspension — Amendment to Motion

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Leader of the House) [4.25 pm]: I move —

To insert after “forthwith” the following —

, subject to the debate being limited to 15 minutes for government members and 15 minutes for non-government members

Amendment put and passed.

Standing Orders Suspension — Motion, as Amended

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms S.E. Winton): As this is a motion without notice to suspend standing orders, it will need the support of an absolute majority in order to succeed. If I hear a dissentient voice, I will be required to divide the Assembly.

Question put and passed with an absolute majority.

Motion

MS M.J. DAVIES (Central Wheatbelt — Leader of the Nationals WA) [4.26 pm]: I move the motion. This is an important issue for the community of Karratha and the Pilbara, but, more broadly, it goes to the heart of this government’s regional development credentials. We asked the question of the Premier today whether he had sought an assurance or a guarantee from Woodside Energy that only construction workers associated with the projects listed would reside in the new camp that has been approved hand in hand with Woodside and the local member for Pilbara. We also asked what provisions or regulations would be put in place to ensure that Woodside would not pull operational staff out of other existing camps and put them into Bay Village. We are concerned about the impact that this new 700-bed camp will have on businesses and the community.

The government has shown itself to be completely ignorant of the issues that this community has been trying to put forward. The community is very concerned. During question time, the Premier would not answer those questions. I will tell members why. It is because he does not like the answers. He would prefer to talk about this local jobs portal, which we know is simply window-dressing. He would not answer the questions we asked during question time today because we know that Woodside has already commenced discussions about downsizing its requirements at existing accommodation facilities in Karratha. The very act of endorsing this 700-bed camp in Karratha has meant there is already movement away from existing businesses and an undermining of confidence across the community. This Premier, the member for Pilbara, the Minister for Regional Development and those who were involved have a tin ear when it comes to community concerns. We have seen it right across the state. This is the first opportunity we have had to consider the actions of this Labor government —

Mr D.J. Kelly: What tinea?

Ms M.J. DAVIES: No—a tin ear. Government members cannot hear; they do not listen!

Several members interjected.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: I thank the Minister for Water for highlighting the point that his Premier does not listen to the community. Woodside can stand hand in hand with the member for Pilbara, and the government can announce its window-dressing, which we all know will not come to pass; it will not come to pass that those jobs will go to locals. There is huge opposition —

Mr P.J. Rundle interjected.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: I have five minutes, team!

There is huge opposition to this project. The decision was made in spite of the information that was provided to government ministers on numerous occasions by the City of Karratha. The Karratha and Districts Chamber of Commerce and Industry made representations on behalf of its businesses—the ones that the member for Pilbara

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proposes that he is so close to. The City of Karratha provided reports to this government that state that 4 300 fly in, fly out beds are already available in Karratha. There are 480 hotel beds, of which 60 per cent are occupied. There is scope for the new workers being brought in for upcoming and current projects to be housed within the current housing stock of Woodside, of which 120 houses are sitting vacant at the moment, along with the FIFO beds and the hotel beds. There was plenty of support from the community for working with Woodside and the government. All the government had to do was to send the right signal, instead of saying that the community was not up to the task; it is much easier for the government to bow down to Woodside's preference. This is about economics. Let us make no bones about it. It is much better for Woodside —

Ms R. Saffioti interjected.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: It is for Woodside's economics, absolutely. It is easier for Woodside to make a decision to have a 700-bed camp than to try to work with the community to continue the good work done by the previous Liberal–National government to develop a proper regional development program for the Pilbara. In one fell swoop, the government has undone all of that and gone back to the old ways of having a dormitory in the middle of town. The community is unhappy, and if the member for Pilbara does not understand that, he is clearly not in his electorate. People are beating down the doors of our members when we visit. We do not even have to visit; they are on the telephone saying that they dislike this decision intensely. The government has undermined the community; it does not want to be a dormitory, and the Premier has ignored everything the community has put in front of him. I am very glad that the Premier, along with the member for Pilbara, took responsibility for that. When this all unravels in the future, and we see none of the promises of local jobs in the flashy media statement the government put out come to pass, we will be calling this house back to those very comments, and the comments in the Woodside media statement and the Premier's media statement that they took responsibility for effectively undermining a community that just wants to normalise. It just wants to have a future that looks like that of the rest of the communities in Western Australia. The Premier's government has made this decision, and he should stand by it and be ashamed of the outcome.

MR D.T. REDMAN (Warren–Blackwood) [4.32 pm]: I also want to make some comments about this motion from the Leader of the Nationals, but before I do I want to put the record straight about the Chevron decision, which the Labor Party waves around as some sort of platform to suggest that I somehow support putting work camps close to communities. The Ashburton North Strategic Industrial Area is under the control of LandCorp, which comes under the Minister for Lands, the portfolio I held in the previous government. An improvement plan was put over that by the Minister for Planning. The jurisdiction was taken on by the Minister for Planning at the time. There was a process of applying for the camp to be an operational village, rather than a construction village. I had no authority to intervene on that, other than to sign off on the project being progressed. When it came back to me to issue the lease, I had authority to put conditions on that lease, and I would have put a two or three-year condition to get the accommodation back into Onslow. That was my plan. The government should not wave that piece of paper around and say that that in any way dissolves my position on supporting having operational camps in and around towns.

The decision by this government is totally contrary to regional development. The government cannot say that it supports regional development while making a decision like this. The principle here is that mining companies will pursue a cost-effective solution for their workforces, which is to put them in a work camp surrounded by a fence, and retain total control over how that works. We can understand why they come to government and say that they want this outcome. The companies did not like it when we were in government, but now this government is clearly prepared to roll over and have its belly tickled. The real value for the community from a regional development point of view is in people and businesses. Putting FIFO workers into a work camp in a regional community of 26 000 people is contrary to supporting people and businesses in those communities, and the window-dressing around the media release needs to be accounted for. The community and the local government do not accept it.

The Premier needs to say what has changed. Woodside has been operating and doing business in the City of Karratha. What has changed to allow approval for a work camp? The projects mentioned in the Premier's media release—Scarborough, Browse and the upgrade of Pluto—are down the timeline. They have not been approved, and they were not even mentioned in the application form that went to the government for the establishment of a work camp. Those projects were not actually a part of the application, but they were in the Premier's media release. He also talks about it being a construction workforce. Responding to a question today from the Leader of the National Party, the Premier did not make the distinction between a construction and an operations workforce, suggesting to us that he is happy to accept an operations workforce sitting in a 700-bed work camp right next to the City of Karratha, totally in conflict with that community and the principles of regional development that we all espouse.

The government has put the cart before the horse in approving this. It is saying that it supports things happening in Karratha, but this is totally counter-productive to that outcome. I saw in one of the media releases, or it might

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have been a newspaper article, that the very temporary member for Pilbara said that when the announcement was made, it was the best day of his life. He clearly thinks that the best day of his life is when the government shafts the community of Karratha, because that is what has happened here. If we walk the streets, we find that 80 per cent of the community there does not want this. There have been no studies or work done by the government, and it has tabled nothing to suggest that the groundwork has been done to determine that this work camp is worthwhile and should be constructed at the cost to the community. Where is the work showing that there is not enough accommodation in town? Where is the work suggesting that the current privately owned work camps in and around the community are insufficient to support a construction workforce and, indeed, an operational workforce for these projects, which are not even approved yet? We do not know the timelines for that. I have recently looked at the Woodside website to understand what the timelines are, but find that they are not even articulated, yet the government is approving a 700-bed work camp right next door to this community. This is totally against regional development outcomes, and this government should stand condemned for it.

MR V.A. CATANIA (North West Central) [4.37 pm]: The best day of his life—that is what the member for Pilbara said. He said that it was the best day of his life to construct a 700-man camp in the centre of Karratha. How is that the best day of his life? I feel sorry for his wife and kids, because the best day of his life should be his family, but no, it is getting a camp for Woodside in Karratha. He is going back to the good old days of the Labor government before 2008. Do members know why? I was a member of that government, and our policy was to always argue against camps and FIFO. Do members know who taught me that? It was the former member for Pilbara, Hon Tom Stephens, and before that, Tom Stephens was taught by Larry Graham. There has been a strong tradition of Labor Party people opposing camps and FIFO, but we now see the modern Labor government, led by the Premier, approving a 700-person camp, I should say, in the heart of Karratha. It is going against everything that the Premier, as a member of the Labor Party, and everyone sitting opposite are actually against. The government has just approved something that has a dramatic effect on Karratha.

When the mayor, Peter Long, conducts a survey of 750 residents, of whom 80 per cent said no, we must wonder why the local member, who has lived in Karratha and has advocated against camps and FIFO, is now saying that this is the best day of his life. How is that so? How can he go to watch the Karratha Cats play football, and then say that the best day of his life is seeing a camp, which will hurt the football club? When he goes to buy a coffee, and says that this is the best day of his life that the town has a camp, it will hurt the small business of the guy who is selling the coffee, or the pub that is selling the beer, or the community groups that survive off people who want to make Karratha their home. This is something that the previous government worked on for eight years—to turn away from the traditional green roots, or green shoots, I should call them from the other side, of building these camps. Yet we are seeing a green shoot pop up in the middle of Karratha. I go back to when I was doorknocking in 2007–08 at the start of the height of the boom, if you like, and how there was no planning for Karratha. As a local member, I found there were 180 empty houses during a time when we needed to have those houses occupied to reduce the rent and the cost of accommodation in Karratha. How many of those 180 houses were owned by Woodside? A lot. Has some sort of deal been struck? I am sure it will come out. Does it have something to do with Darling Range and their executive from Woodside? I do not know. But I can say that this goes against the community and the spirit of regional development. The member for Pilbara has only two and a half years left because the people of Karratha have woken up. He has lost the Dampier water police, he has lost the Dampier camp school, he has lost the society and he is losing Karratha hand over fist because of the way he said, “This is the best day of my life that I’ve got a camp. I’ve achieved a camp for Karratha.” Shame on you, member for Pilbara! Shame on you, Premier!

DR M.D. NAHAN (Riverton — Leader of the Opposition) [4.41 pm]: It has been a longstanding policy in regional development across many governments of both ilk to ensure that particularly operational facilities are located in larger communities, such as Karratha. I have not seen a case to build a camp.

MR M. McGOWAN (Rockingham — Premier) [4.41 pm]: I have a few points to respond to this motion by the opposition. Firstly, Woodside Energy is a good Western Australian corporation—I think it is the second largest company in Western Australia after Wesfarmers—that employs thousands of citizens, and I support it continuing to do that. The North West Shelf has been a magnificent achievement for our state. It has provided gas to our citizens and an export industry that assists our state and national economies.

Secondly, when the member for Pilbara and I launched the policy a couple of weeks ago, the member for Pilbara was very clear that he was extremely excited about the local jobs portal. He said it was one of the best days of his life to launch the local jobs portal because it will guarantee that local people in the City of Karratha and all the communities there will be first to get jobs on offer in Karratha from Woodside. That it is a great thing that has not been done before. We expect that other companies will join the portal, whether it is BHP, Rio Tinto, Fortescue Metals Group or the like, to ensure that local people get the first benefit. If people raise their families and own a house there, it is a great thing. The member for Pilbara was very clear, despite some of the verballing I have just heard, that the local jobs portal —

Mr R.S. Love interjected.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I was at the press conference, my friend, and that is what he said.

Thirdly, obviously, it was a difficult decision to enter into negotiations for the lease of Bay Village. I want to make a couple of things crystal clear to members opposite so that they understand. Our first priority is the long-term future of Karratha and of Western Australia. To guarantee the long-term future of Karratha and of Western Australia, Browse gas has to come to the North West Shelf. If Browse gas goes elsewhere, like Inpex gas went to Darwin or was processed offshore, the future of Karratha is dim; in fact, it is non-existent, and the people who bought houses and invested in houses, and the schools and the public infrastructure will find it to be worthless! What is the government's role? What is my role as Premier of Western Australia? It is to bring that gas onshore. I will not allow stupid politicking to get in the road of bringing that gas onshore. Woodside and the joint venturers have invested a significant amount, but under the former government that gas was not going to be processed in Karratha. I was a member of this house and I saw what the former government did: it went elsewhere and lost the state \$100 million in the process. We are saying: bring that gas to the North West Shelf. Woodside is working towards a final investment decision. I want Woodside to make that final investment decision, and I want to help along the way to make that happen to guarantee the futures of all those people I know in Karratha. Members opposite can come up with all the reasons and arguments about that, but the Labor government of Western Australia will fight to bring that gas onshore. What do we need to do? We need to provide the capacity for the construction workforce. That is what we need to do —

Mr D.T. Redman interjected.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I did not interrupt the member for Warren–Blackwood.

Otherwise, we will see that gas go elsewhere. That is the reality. Members opposite can ignore the reality, but we have to deal with the real world. I think that when the people of Karratha look at this issue, they understand that central point. They understand that the government has made a difficult decision, but it has made the right decision and in the process it has secured local jobs at the work camp. The government has secured a local jobs portal, so that local people will be the beneficiaries of Woodside jobs in Karratha, of which there are many and these are growing. What is the alternative? They pipe the gas to Darwin. They process it offshore.

Another major point members opposite do not seem to grasp is that Woodside currently has approval for a camp at what is called Civeo, next to the old Gap Ridge Village, which is further out of town than Bay Village. The approval was granted in 2011 when members opposite were in government. Woodside can build a camp on a site approved when members opposite were in government —

Mr D.T. Redman interjected.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Let me speak. Show me the politeness that I showed you.

Woodside can build a camp at Civeo, on the old Gap Ridge camp, much further out of town. The planning approval is for 1 000 beds, which is 300 more than at Bay Village. It is a 15-year lease with a possible five-year extension.

Members opposite are not getting two things. First, Woodside can process the gas elsewhere, as we saw with Inpex and Prelude. We know that can happen. Secondly, Woodside was granted approval for a camp further out of town with far more beds when members opposite were in office. What is my alternative? Okay, if I knock back Bay Village, Woodside will go further out of town to a much bigger camp. Is that the outcome members opposite want? That is the outcome that was granted when members opposite were in office; it is called Civeo. Members opposite know that and they can come out with their arguments, but their arguments are flawed because those are the alternatives. We have taken a practical, pragmatic and reasonable decision to allow the lease on Bay Village to be negotiated and to have a high number of local jobs as part of that—85 per cent local jobs in construction and at least 85 per cent local jobs in operations—and we have secured a local jobs portal, so that when the jobs come, local people will get first preference. There it is.

Is the Liberal Party going to vote against that? I heard what the Leader of the Opposition said. Is the Leader of the Opposition going to vote in favour of this ridiculous motion? Honestly—the Nationals wagging the Liberal Party dog.

Dr M.D. Nahan: We're asking you to explain.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I just explained the situation.

Mr D.C. Nalder: No, you haven't.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Oh, my God; you are thick. I explained the situation to the member just now. I will say it very clearly. The gas can be processed elsewhere. Okay, does the member understand that?

Dr M.D. Nahan: We understand that.

Mr M. McGOWAN: There is approval that was granted when the Leader of the Opposition was in office for another site further out of town for more beds that Woodside can use.

Dr M.D. Nahan: Is it only for construction activity or does it include operational facilities?

Mr M. McGOWAN: Sometimes when one is the opposition leader, just being political all the time does not work.

Dr M.D. Nahan: No, there's a fundamental difference.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I am speaking, Madam Acting Speaker.

The government had to make a difficult choice, but I think it made the right choice. The ghost of Brendon Grylls obviously pulls the strings of the National Party.

Ms M.J. Davies: You are really clutching at straws.

Mr M. McGOWAN: He does. If I close my eyes and listen to members of the National Party, I hear Brendon Grylls' arguments, which were very flawed. Obviously, the National Party tail is wagging the Liberal Party dog. Woodside, a major Western Australian corporation that employs thousands of our citizens and wants to bring that gas to the North West Shelf, and every businessperson in the mining industry and in the oil and gas industry in Western Australia, needs to now understand that the Liberal and National Parties of this state are their enemies. That is what this means. They are their enemies. If the Liberal Party of Western Australia is going to vote for this silly proposition, we will make sure that the entire mining industry and the entire oil and gas industry knows that it does not support bringing that gas onshore, it does not support local jobs and it does not support a local company. That is what the Liberal Party does not support. It does not support the future of Karratha. As I said once, and will say again and close on: this is about guaranteeing the long-term future of Karratha. If we do not get that Browse and Scarborough gas into North West Shelf and Pluto, Karratha will die. That is what will happen. To make sure that that happens and to guarantee the next 50 years of that community, we have to make this decision. If the opposition wants to put its head in the sand about it, it shows it is not worthy ever of coming back to government.

MS R. SAFFIOTI (West Swan — Minister for Transport) [4.51 pm]: I rise to oppose this motion and to support the Premier's comments. The Premier has been very clear all along—it is all about ensuring the future economic development of the north and jobs for local people. That has been the key priority of everything we have done as part of this process—to ensure that we grow the economy into the future and that we have local jobs. That includes making sure that local people have access to jobs from Woodside. That means having a much better process where the local people get to participate in that program. It extends to further construction to make sure that local people are involved in construction and in operating the facilities. That is what our plan is.

To be honest, listening to the National Party on this issue after what it did in relation to Chevron is an absolute disgrace. Let us go through it. I have a letter from the government to LandCorp in 2014, which states —

As you would be aware, the Minister for State Development ... supports the Wheatstone Project's intention to accommodate its FIFO operational workforce at its Ashburton North Strategic Industrial Area ... accommodation.

Tabling of Paper

Mr D.T. REDMAN: The minister is quoting from an official document. Could the Acting Speaker (Ms S.E. Winton) please ask her to table that document?

Debate Resumed

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Yes, I will table it, but I will go through it first. I am going through looking at securing where are the local jobs and where are the local content requirements in this. There are none. The National Party knows that the shire was against it. Where was the member for North West Central? He was in here mouthing it but did nothing to prevent it. He did nothing to prevent it. Let us go through it.

Mr V.A. Catania: He'd never been up to Onslow before that time.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: What did the member do to stop that camp?

Mr V.A. Catania: You signed off on it!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: What did the member do to stop it?

Mr V.A. Catania: You signed off on it!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The previous government gave a commitment. It made a commitment that basically led to the situation. Let us go through it.

Mr V.A. Catania: You signed off on a permanent work camp there.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: What did the previous Minister for Lands do?

Mr V.A. Catania: He did not sign off on it.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Yes, he did.

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Mr V.A. Catania: No, he did not.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Yes, he did. He supported the proposal. That is what he did. That proposal —

Mr D.T. Redman: You have got your head in the sand.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members, thank you.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Everyone knows that the previous government was too weak to stop it. Now the National Party comes in here —

Mr V.A. Catania interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: After what the previous government did, this Premier fights for local jobs and future economic development. Let us go through it. In March 2014, Chevron signed a contract of sale to purchase 50 residential lots for staff housing and a nine-hectare “superlot” for its Wheatstone workers’ village at LandCorp’s Barrarda estate within the town of Onslow. In August 2014, the then government agreed to Chevron housing the majority of its operational workforce for the life of the project in the Wheatstone construction camp instead of the estate. That is what the previous government did. The National Party can try to walk away from it, but I remember the debate. I remember the member for North West Central standing up and shouting but not doing anything to secure a good outcome. That is what I remember.

Several members interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: They do not like the mirror showing their performance. In government, National Party members were puppy dogs to the Liberal Party. They just followed along. As long as they got their cash, they did not care about the long-term future of the towns and cities across WA. Populations reduced in regional WA and unemployment went up. They basically helped drive regional economies off the cliff. They did nothing for tourism. There was no plan for regional economies.

Mr D.T. Redman: You’re in the big sandpit now.

Mr D.J. Kelly: You can talk—hopeless!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Seriously! The former government worked nine to two every day!

Mr D.J. Kelly: On days when they chose to turn up!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: On days that they turned up—from nine to two every day. They did not work with business to secure our future and now we are hearing concerns about the economy. Today we were condemned for not sending a man to the moon in our first year. I cannot believe the Minister for Science did not do that! I cannot believe we did not do space travel in our first year. Honestly! Let us reflect on that. Out of every matter of public interest, the Liberal Party chose to do that when the National Party thought this was such a concern. The opposition is all over the place. We are working to secure local jobs. That is what we are doing. The previous government did nothing to secure local jobs. It drove the economy off the cliff, it saw people leave regional WA, it had no plan for tourism and it had no plan to diversify the economy. It comes in here with this sort of fake outrage. The National Party is very good at fake outrage. People just simply do not believe it.

Tabling of Paper

Mr D.T. REDMAN: The minister also read from a second document. If it is an official document, the minister should table it.

Several members interjected.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: There were two documents.

Ms R. Saffioti: There are two pages.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: No—the minister was reading from another document.

[See paper 1387.]

Division

Question put and a division taken, the Acting Speaker (Ms S.E. Winton) casting her vote with the noes, with the following result —

Ayes (15)

Mr I.C. Blayney
Mr V.A. Catania
Ms M.J. Davies
Mrs L.M. Harvey

Dr D.J. Honey
Mr P. Katsambanis
Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup
Mr R.S. Love

Mr W.R. Marmion
Dr M.D. Nahan
Mr D.C. Nalder
Mr K. O’Donnell

Mr D.T. Redman
Mr P.J. Rundle
Mr A. Krsticevic (*Teller*)

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Noes (36)

Ms L.L. Baker	Mr W.J. Johnston	Mrs L.M. O'Malley	Ms J.J. Shaw
Dr A.D. Buti	Mr D.J. Kelly	Mr S.J. Price	Mrs J.M.C. Stojkovski
Mr J.N. Carey	Mr F.M. Logan	Mr D.T. Punch	Mr C.J. Tallentire
Mr R.H. Cook	Mr M. McGowan	Mr J.R. Quigley	Mr D.A. Templeman
Mr M.J. Folkard	Ms S.F. McGurk	Ms M.M. Quirk	Mr P.C. Tinley
Ms J.M. Freeman	Mr K.J.J. Michel	Mrs M.H. Roberts	Mr R.R. Whitby
Ms E. Hamilton	Mr S.A. Millman	Ms C.M. Rowe	Ms S.E. Winton
Mr T.J. Healy	Mr Y. Mubarakai	Ms R. Saffioti	Mr B.S. Wyatt
Mr M. Hughes	Mr M.P. Murray	Ms A. Sanderson	Mr D.R. Michael (<i>Teller</i>)

Pairs

Mr S.K. L'Estrange	Mrs R.M.J. Clarke
Ms L. Mettam	Ms J. Farrer

Question thus negated.