

LIBERAL–NATIONAL GOVERNMENT — BUDGET SAVINGS

217. Dr A.D. BUTI to the Treasurer:

It was a great summit, minister. Can the Treasurer explain to the house how savings booked into the budget by the previous Liberal–National government are now being jeopardised by the Liberal and National Parties, and what will be the consequences if these savings are stripped from the budget?

Mr B.S. WYATT replied:

I thank the member for Armadale. I certainly can answer that question. Members will recall that we had a debate not that long ago about the Loan Bill, which is currently working its way through the upper house. The opposition put to me on a number of occasions: “Why is it you’re seeking such a full amount of money?” I explained why I was seeking that amount of money. I accept that it is not the job of the opposition to make the government’s life easy, but I expect the opposition to at least stick to its own budget decisions. Right now in the upper house, the Liberal–One Nation coalition is joining forces with the Greens, the Liberal Democrat and the National Party to move its own disallowance motion to pull out savings that were put in the budget last year. Members may recall that the 2016–17 budget, in a rare example of a tough decision by the former government, made the decision to no longer exempt from stamp duty motor vehicle purchases. Currently, that entitlement applies to local government authorities. The previous government did not say anything about it until December, but what is interesting —

Dr M.D. Nahan interjected.

Mr B.S. WYATT: Take responsibility, Leader of the Opposition. Does the Leader of the Opposition support what is going on in the upper house?

To clarify for the house, the Leader of the Opposition, when Treasurer, booked into the budget \$10 million in savings from removing that concession.

Mr D.J. Kelly: Per annum.

Mr B.S. WYATT: Yes, per annum; thank you, Minister for Water—\$10 million per annum. Now, with the first shot of grapeshot in the upper house, the opposition is joining with its One Nation coalition, the Greens, et al, to remove that from the budget. I do not expect the opposition to make life easy, but I expect it to at least stick to the decisions it made in the budget to find savings, and not to come in here like some sort of fiscal vandal and make decisions, taking control of the upper house. It is the Leader of the Opposition’s own saving that he is pulling out of the budget. The Leader of the Opposition, of all people —

Dr M.D. Nahan interjected.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, I call you to order for the first time.

Mr B.S. WYATT: The Leader of the Opposition, of all people—the person whose entire career has been spent standing for things other than what he delivered on while he was actually in government—is now playing the role of nothing more than a fiscal wrecker. I tell you what, Mr Speaker, let me guarantee one thing: this fiscal wreckage that is the Liberal Party will have an impact on the budget, and I will be looking to ensure that I extract it from places the opposition does not like.