

ELECTRICITY — DECARBONISATION

**301. Ms J.L. HANNS to the Minister for Energy:**

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's \$3 billion investment in this year's budget to address climate change and decarbonise the state's main electricity network.

- (1) Can the minister update the house on how this funding progresses Western Australia towards a renewable energy future, including through the use of big batteries?
- (2) Can the minister advise the house whether he is aware of any alternative proposals to decarbonise Western Australia's electricity grid?

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON replied:**

- (1)–(2) I thank the member for her question. I know how deeply engaged she is with Western Australia's energy system. Representing the people of Collie, we have to thank the people of the south west for their efforts over the last 50 to 60 years to power the state. The good news is that Collie people will continue to power Western Australia as we transition away from coal power because we will build a big battery down in Collie. It will have a 500-megawatt capacity and 2 000 megawatt hours of storage, along with the existing big battery build in Kwinana, the second stage of which we have just announced. The current battery is 100 megawatts, 200 megawatt hours, and we are now expanding that for another 400-megawatt hour capacity, and we are going to do 200 megawatts and 800 megawatt hours of capacity in Collie to provide 500 megawatts of capacity across those batteries, which exceeds the current capacity of the Muja power station.

This is an important step, along with the other announcements we made with the Premier on the weekend for the construction of wind farms to complement this investment in big batteries. This is all about taking advantage of Western Australia's renewable energy to replace our coal-fired power stations. I want to emphasise an element here. All we are doing is replacing the coal-fired power stations. We know there is massive potential growth in demand for electricity in Western Australia. We look forward to the private sector taking those opportunities. The private sector is already making it clear to us that it wants to take advantage of that. That is why we are also working through the SWIS demand assessment to support the private sector with that massive additional demand. This is a real step forward.

I am asked whether I am aware of any alternatives. Of course, the Liberal Party and the Nationals WA have now set out their agenda to use nuclear power instead of renewable energy. I am very surprised by this. Perhaps the member for Moore can remind us exactly where Wilbinga is. I think it is in his electorate. That was the site chosen by Sir Charles Court's Liberal government to build the nuclear power station that was intended to be built, and was only stopped by the election of a Labor government in 1983. It looks like nothing changes on the other side of politics. A policy that was rejected by the people of Western Australia in the 1980s is being revived by them. I am really surprised that they are choosing their own electorate as the location for these facilities—or are they saying it is not acceptable to have them in their own electorate and they want to send them to Collie? According to the federal National Party, the best place to put a small nuclear reactor is where the coal-fired power stations are. In Western Australia, that means Collie. Which location are they choosing? Are they choosing the coast in the electorate of Moore, are they going to choose the coal-fired stations in Collie or are they saying they may be in Kwinana, which is where the old coal-fired power station was located, or perhaps even South Fremantle, which still has the remains of the old coal-fired South Fremantle power station?

The National Party and the Liberal Party need to start being honest with the people of Western Australia and tell us where they will build these nuclear power stations that they are promising will be built.