

EXPORT OF AUSTRALIAN URANIUM

**56. Mr P.D. OMODEI to the Premier:**

Given that only three per cent of electricity generated in the world's most populous nations, China and India, is generated by nuclear energy, and given that both of those countries are embarking on major investment in future nuclear generation, I ask -

- (1) Does the Premier support the sale of Australian uranium to China and India in strict accordance with the provisions of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty?
- (2) Given the likelihood that Australian uranium miners will be able to sell into these markets in the near future, will the Premier continue to stand in the way of creating jobs and profits for Western Australians?
- (3) When will the Premier join the modern world and accept the reality that nuclear power generation is vitally important if we are to improve living standards and reduce greenhouse gas emissions?

**Mr A.J. CARPENTER replied:**

(1)-(3) I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. This is a very interesting debate. I note that the Leader of the Opposition asked when I would join the modern world.

**Mr P.D. Omodei:** The first question was -

**Mr A.J. CARPENTER:** I know what the first question was. The Leader of the Opposition asks the questions and I get to give the answers. I had a meeting yesterday with the new ambassador for Belgium, which was very interesting. He pointed out to me that Belgium was going through the process of phasing out its nuclear energy capacity, even though that country is very much a part of the modern world. I think the Germans are doing the same. Belgium prides itself on being at the forefront of the modern world. It is the home of the capital of the European Union. As the Leader of the Opposition rightly pointed out, these issues are not without their challenges. Where will such countries get their alternative energies from? The argument is that countries that invest in nuclear energy do not invest in alternative energies, they never get around to developing alternative energy supplies. As the Leader of the Opposition knows, Western Australia is on the verge of becoming a supplier of liquefied natural gas to China. We see great potential in that market over and above the volume we have already been guaranteed. I think the first shipment to be sent to China in the first half of the year will be sent from your electorate, Mr Speaker. The issue of world energy capacity and world energy sourcing is fascinating and complex, and it presents challenges to various countries around the world. Different countries are responding in different ways. The federal government has a question to answer, and it is the same question that the Leader of the Opposition first asked. Obviously, the government of Western Australia does not support the export of uranium from this state. We do not allow the export of uranium from this state.

**Mr P.D. Omodei:** The first question was -

**Mr A.J. CARPENTER:** I know what the first question was; I am giving the Leader of the Opposition my answer. We do not support the export of uranium, and we do not allow the export of uranium from this state. The Australian government can answer for itself.

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** You don't know where you stand.

**Mr A.J. CARPENTER:** Yes, I do.

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** No, you don't.

**Mr A.J. CARPENTER:** We do not support the export of uranium. We do not allow -

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** You don't control the export -

**Mr A.J. CARPENTER:** That is right. We do not control the export of uranium outside of Western Australia. We do not allow the export of uranium out of Western Australia, because we do not allow the resource to be mined and developed for export. That is our position.

**Mr G. Snook** interjected.

**Mr A.J. CARPENTER:** South Australia has a different position - I know that. I think Queensland exports uranium, but its Premier does not intend to expand that capacity. I will point out one thing. Just over 12 months ago we had a state election. At that election we were elected with a certain set of policies. One of those policies, which was widely debated and a matter of keen interest to the community, was our position on uranium. We were elected with that position.

Several members interjected.

**Mr A.J. CARPENTER:** Yes, it was. That was our policy. Perhaps this is why members opposite did not do very well in the election. They did not know what the issues were! They also created another issue - the canal from the Kimberley - which probably absorbed a lot of their attention. However, for other people, there were other issues. One issue, particularly among people who take an interest in the environment, was uranium. That was a very keen issue and one on which we had a strong policy. That policy was put to the state Labor Party conference towards the end of last year and was endorsed unanimously.