

McGOWAN GOVERNMENT — AUDIT FINDINGS

45. Dr D.J. HONEY to the Treasurer:

I have a supplementary question. Does the substantial deterioration in government entity audit performance demonstrate the failure of the machinery-of-government changes and show why the Premier should hand over the role of Treasurer to someone who has the time to do the job properly?

The SPEAKER: All right, so you have snuck a second question in there. I am again going to advise people that I will get harsher on that if people continue to do it.

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

Madam Speaker, Richard Court was the Treasurer. Colin Barnett was the Treasurer. Charles Court was the Treasurer. Sir David Brand was the Treasurer. Sir Ross McLarty was the Treasurer. They were all the Treasurer. Ray O'Connor was the Treasurer; he was the Treasurer.

Several members interjected.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Sir James Mitchell was the Treasurer. There you go! I am confident that the member for Cottesloe will never be the Treasurer. They were all Treasurers. Colin Barnett loved it so much he was Treasurer three times. That is the reality.

During my time as Treasurer and Premier, we have turned around the state's finances. Seven years ago, we were the worst-performing state financially in the commonwealth. We are now the best by far. We are the only state that has recovered the AAA credit rating. The Liberal–National government lost it in 2013. We recovered it. That government had record revenues during parts of its time in office. We recovered it, even though the former government lost it. I have been the Treasurer or Premier during that time. As my ministers will attest to, we are careful with money. The previous government was not careful with money. Admittedly, the member was not there, but his predecessor and those ministers were not careful with money. They did not care about money. They had two budget processes—the Liberal Party process and the National Party process. As Liberal Party ministers of that era will attest to, they hated it because government did not work properly. The Liberal–National model does not work because there are two governments within the one government. It is dysfunctional, as members can see in New South Wales. It is dysfunctional in how it operates. Go and ask any Liberal in New South Wales and they will tell members that it does not work.

Members opposite condemn us. One day members opposite are saying that our surpluses are too big and then they are saying that I have failed as Treasurer. Which one is it? We are either too successful with the money or we are not successful enough! It is hard. The thing about oppositions, and I was opposition leader for five years, is that they have to have some consistency. They cannot say one thing one day and another thing the next and expect the people upstairs not to notice. They are going to notice when the opposition is saying everything to all people. Eventually, if an opposition is everything to everyone, it is nothing to anyone. That is the position this opposition is in. As we pointed out yesterday, opposition members complained about housing the other day and then they were opposing every housing development. How can they be taken seriously? How can the Liberals and Nationals be taken seriously on anything?