

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AMENDMENT (TEMPORARY COVID-19 PROVISIONS) BILL 2022

562. Dr D.J. HONEY to the Deputy Premier:

My question is to the Deputy Premier representing the Premier. I refer to the Emergency Management Amendment (Temporary COVID-19 Provisions) Bill 2022 that is currently being debated, which will allow police officers to exercise what the Premier has described as draconian powers, including taking control of personal vehicles and buildings. Can the Premier explain why his government is embedding such draconian powers for the ongoing management of COVID-19?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

I have had a bit of experience with COVID-19. We all remember the journey we have been on since around March 2020. One of the constants during that whole time —

Ms S.F. McGurk: The virus changed; they didn't.

Mr R.H. COOK: Thank you, Minister McGurk; I could not have put it better myself!

One of the great constants has been the carping, undermining and whingeing from those opposite. When the Western Australian community was pulling together and trying to get through one of the most challenging historical experiences we will ever confront, one group of people was pulling the other way. At every step of the way, the opposition took the opportunity to undermine the consensus and efforts of everyone who wanted to do the right thing. Every time opposition members would stand up and say they wanted something else, whether it was by supporting Clive Palmer, supporting the Morrison government, which was supporting Clive Palmer, or trying to second-guess the great scientists, police officers and hotel quarantine workers who were all working together to try to get us through this difficult time. The one thing that was constant was the carping, whingeing and undermining by the opposition.

That continued through the course of this year, when those opposite joined others in saying that we should dismantle the Emergency Management Act rules that we are working under and move on like all the other states are doing. They demanded that we bring into this place legislation in a similar vein to legislation introduced by other state governments to make sure that we could continue to have the appropriate measures in place while moving beyond the Emergency Management Act. It is perhaps one of the few suggestions from those opposite that we have implemented. Here we are, on the cusp of the opposition actually having something go right for it once during the entire global pandemic, and it cannot even take this win! What we are doing is precisely what is happening in other states; that is, we are putting in place appropriate measures so that we can continue to address the dangers the COVID-19 pandemic represents. Not even you get that!