

CENTRE FOR NATIONAL RESILIENCE — BULLSBROOK

336. Mr P.J. RUNDLE to the Premier:

I refer to the Centre for National Resilience in Bullsbrook that remains under the management of the state government.

- (1) What will this centre provide for WA for the remainder of the 12 months of its management?
- (2) Noting the pressure on housing, workers' accommodation and social housing, with increases in homelessness, will these 500 beds remain empty or be used to temporarily supplement the government's housing deficit?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

- (1)–(2) Again, the week after the budget the member is asking me about a commonwealth government facility. It is very odd.

Mr P.J. Rundle interjected.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Okay, we will deal with that.

What happened, of course, is that the last federal government, the Morrison government, decided to build a facility, which it gave a very interesting term, the Centre for National Resilience. It is a bit like the United States Inflation Reduction Act. It does not really relate to what it does, but in any event, it decided to build that. Its investment started at, I think, \$250 million, and ended up, with the escalation of costs, at around \$400 million to build it out in Bullsbrook. The site it originally selected was Jandakot. It tried there and that did not work, which is probably understandable, so it moved the centre to Bullsbrook. The good thing out of that is, as a consequence, which we demanded, the federal government would put some scheme water into parts of Bullsbrook that did not have scheme water. That was one of the things that we secured from the commonwealth, which was a good thing. In terms of our agreement, it was to operate it for one year. If we want to do a cost–benefit analysis for the cost of I think \$13 million, we got a \$400 million investment into the state, with hundreds, if not thousands, of people receiving work and business out of it. That was a good economic benefit to the state.

In terms of its use, homelessness is an issue. We have an excellent minister who is dealing with it, providing additional homes, hostels and so forth. I think the idea that a group of homeless people would go out and live in the middle of the bush in Bullsbrook and there would not be problems is fanciful. Firstly, they would not stay and, secondly, it is not designed for those purposes. The number of services and so forth that we would have to have around it, particularly with people staying there, would not work. I think anyone who has any knowledge of this issue would tell us the same thing.

In terms of its other potential uses, we are continually looking for other uses. One of the things we need to do is realise that we do not want the state to then have to pay a building or mining company to put its workers there. If a company wants to use the centre, it should pay for it. If someone's business is going to bring in people from interstate or overseas, or provide us an opportunity for their fly-in fly-out workforce or what have you, they need to pay. We attempted initially to find a way in which industry would pay for the use of the facility, and we could not find any industry that would do that. We continue to search, but we have not been successful in that regard thus far.