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Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Bob Kucera; Mr Max Trenorden; Mr Eric Ripper; Deputy Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Dr Geoff Gallop; Mr Bernie Masters; The Acting Speaker (mr A.P. O'gorman); Mr Dan Barron-Sullivan; Mr Paul Omodei; Acting Speaker

COLLIE B POWER STATION

Matter of Public Interest

THE SPEAKER (Mr F. Riebeling:): I received today in the prescribed time a letter from the Leader of the Opposition outlining a matter of public interest motion in the following terms -

That this House supports the construction of Collie B Power Station.

If sufficient members agree to this motion, I will allow it.

[At least five members rose in their places.]

The SPEAKER: The matter can proceed.

MR C.J. BARNETT (Cottesloe - Leader of the Opposition) [2.57 pm]: I move the motion. This is a straightforward motion, which I move particularly for the benefit of the member for Collie. I want to give him an opportunity to stand up in this House and, for the first time in four years, support the construction of Collie B. I am giving the member an opportunity. He has sat there and said very little on behalf of his community and its industry. I will give him the opportunity to get on his feet. He can have a full half-hour to back his Collie community. I am willing to back Collie - I want the local member to back Collie. I want the member to stand up for his community and its coal miners, retailers, small business people and other workers of Collie. Here is the member's opportunity. What will the member do? This motion is not tricky at all. It states -

That this House -

Therefore, it refers to individual members within the House -

supports the construction of Collie B Power Station.

I am sure that the Minister for Energy will amend this motion in some way. However, what will the member for Collie do? Will he vote for the amendment? Will he be a wimp in the eyes of his electorate or will he have the courage to cross the floor to vote for his community? It is right on the line for the member for Collie. Will he vote for the Collie B power station or will he engage in a bit of semantics to try to get around the issue and to find an excuse? It is right down the middle. The member for Collie used to play footy. Will he go straight down the middle or will he run out to the wing and finesse or sit on the bench for a while?

Mr M.P. Murray interjected.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: If the member was a centre half-back, he should know how to play this one; he should go straight for it. This is interesting. What will the member for Collie do? Will he back his community or let it down? If he does anything or votes in any way to amend, change or defeat this motion, he will be on the public record as deserting his electorate and the reason for which he stood for Parliament.

I remind members of a little history. Right through the 1980s and early 1990s the Labor Party talked about building a power station. Bob Hawke, as Prime Minister, announced that. I am not sure why he announced it, but he did. That went on for about 10 years. Who was the Minister for Energy in the Lawrence Government? It was none other than the now Premier. I remember, as will some other members, when we debated the Collie power station. After years of indecision and with the cost of the project having increased to more than \$2 billion, the now Premier walked into this Chamber and said, "We are moving into a decision zone." That is so like him. He could not make a decision in an iron lung. He never made a decision on Collie. It was the coalition Government - I happened to be the minister - that made the decision to build Collie A. That is a fact. It was opened in 1999 by the then Premier and me.

Mr R.C. Kucera: What a joke! I was down there a couple of weeks ago and they reminded me of what you did.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: We built Collie A. The member should look at the plaque at the power station. It states that the power station was opened by the Premier and Minister for Energy of the day. He should give it a polish for us and give it a tick, because the coalition Government built that power station. That is something that this Government could never do. I remember attending a meeting at the football oval with the now Premier. They booed him and cheered me! I remember it well.

Mr M.P. Murray: I was there. I didn't hear that.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I remember it well; it was fantastic. What will the member for Collie do? Will he be a man and stand up for his electorate or will he wimp out? We will all watch how he votes. Will he put his

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electorate, his constituents, the coal mining industry and power generation in Collie ahead of the Labor Party, or will he put the Labor Party first? That is what we will discover today.

Power generation has been an absolute farce under the Labor Government. What a joke! It has been a litany of mistakes and errors. Dr van der Mye, a well-known terrorist target, commuted from Melbourne to run Western Australia's power supply system. He would sometimes go home to Melbourne on Wednesdays. He would be driven to and from the airport at both ends in limousines that were paid for by Western Australian taxpayers. What a brilliant appointment that was! The Government defended him for weeks and weeks.

There are some issues about the supply of power in Western Australia. Western Australia does not have an interconnected system. Therefore, a higher reserve margin is required. There are long lead lines to areas of low population or low load levels. It is one of the most difficult power supply situations in the world. However, one advantage for Western Australia is its great natural gas and coal resources, not for export but for domestic power generation. Both the gas and coal reserves will last for 100 years. We need a Government that has a plan for future power generation that incorporates both public and private investment; balances base-load, mid merit and peak plants; and balances coal and gas. The Government needs to make a decision, but it cannot. The last decision of any significance that was made on power generation in this State was to build the Cockburn A station. That decision was made by the previous Government and Western Power's board. That power station was built during the time of this Government. This Government has failed to make a major decision on power generation. That culminated last February in Western Australia running out of electricity because we had a couple of hot days. It was a disgrace.

Now, as we head into summer, companies are being told that they cannot use or must cut their use of power and are being asked to put in backup energy supplies. There are programs telling people that they cannot run their airconditioners. What a joke! This is third world stuff in a State that has abundant power supplies in terms of gas and coal fuels. Western Australia is facing third world conditions because of this Government and this minister, who, like his predecessor in the Labor Party, the now Premier, cannot make a decision. What is happening? Blackouts were experienced last summer. Western Australia will rent generators that I think were used in the Athens Olympics. Second-hand units are being brought into Western Australia. Do members know how much it will cost to operate those units? That is an interesting question. To generate electricity on the grid costs 6c, 7c or 8c for base-load power generation. Power generated by these units will cost about 30c a unit. That power will be sold to householders for 12c and to businesses for 16c. That is brilliant economics! Every time the Government turns on its rented meccano set, it will lose money for Western Power and the State. That is great planning by the minister!

For the first time Western Australia is relying upon imported oil. Oil is being stockpiled in Western Australia as if it were a backward African state in fear of invasion. Western Australia is stockpiling oil when it has a 100-year supply of coal and gas. The oil is being bought at a world record price. It will cost at least \$100 million a year. What a ludicrous policy and situation!

Where is the environment minister? The plan of the previous Government was to retire the old, inefficient, unreliable and relatively polluting power plants; that is, Muja A and B and the older units at Kwinana. The Government is not only leaving those units in production but also patching them up so that they will go for longer. I went to Collie the other day. The smoke billows out of Muja A and B. It will, or should, be closed on environmental grounds by 2007. The Government is spending money to try to keep it going. The thing goes clank, clank. It is nearly 40 years old.

Surely the Government and private enterprise should have been making good, sound decisions on power generation. The Government has not made a decision. It is talking about installing tiny generators around Perth. How expensive and inefficient will that be? The Government has made no decision and has taken no action to provide long-term power generation for this State. This State will potentially need 1 000 megawatts or more of electricity over the next eight to 10 years. The Government has not made the decision on base-load power generation. Instead, it has made a decision on the peak plant that operates for 10 or 12 days a year. It needs to make a decision for the State on a base-load and mid merit plant, yet the Government has not made any decision. What is occurring is absolutely chaotic.

Collie coal is not premium, export grade coal. If it were put in a ship, it would be likely to combust and set the ship on fire. However, it has some advantages. It is not the highest calorific coal, but it has a low sulfur and ash content and it has no methane content. In other words, it does not produce the amount of greenhouse gas that other coals do. It is quite a clean coal. With a modern, efficient coal-fired generating plant, there could be an environmental gain. The environmental gain will come by replacing old, inefficient coal plants such as Muja A and B with a clean, efficient plant such as Collie B. The second 300-megawatt unit in Collie should replace the

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240 megawatts of old, relatively dirty generation by Muja A and B. That is what the Government should be doing. However, there has been no planning for this. The Government has no plan at all.

The Government is relying on a power procurement process. This is so typical of the Premier and the Deputy Premier. The Government will not make a decision. It will not select the next base-load generation for this State until September 2005. The Government will wait almost another year before it even decides which of the two coal projects or the one gas project will go ahead. Once it does that, there will be a long period of contract negotiation. Then there will be a period of engineering work before construction even begins. The Government cannot afford to do that. I know that the power procurement process has been laid down. The minister will stand and say that that was my legislation, and it was. However, he must make decisions. He has an indeterminate process.

Mr R.C. Kucera: Are you suggesting that Parliament break the law?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I am suggesting that the Government apply replacement plant, which is not breaking the law. It is not breaking the law.

Mr R.C. Kucera: Of course it is. You are saying that the Treasurer should break the law.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: It is replacement plant, as was Cockburn 1. The minister knows so little about this matter that he should go to sleep. He has already been sacked from the health portfolio, and he will be sacked from the tourism portfolio before too long.

Mr R.C. Kucera interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, minister!

Mr C.J. BARNETT: This Government has a process that means that it will not select a proponent until September next year. We had a situation on 18 February when this State ran out of electricity, yet this Government will not even begin to make a decision until September next year. It owes it to the people and industry of this State to make a decision. That is all it has to do. If it wants to amend schedule 7 of the Act as part of that decision, it should do it; it will have our support. The Government should refine the Act, because ultimately it will replace old coal generation with new coal generation. It will leave Western Power with roughly the same generating capacity it has today. This is not net new generation, as is referred to in the schedule. If there is any confusion, the Government should amend the law.

Mr E.S. Ripper: So why did you go on about a shortage of capacity if it is not an addition to capacity?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: There is a chronic shortage of capacity. The minister's decision making is poor; it is appalling. The minister can make a decision.

Mr E.S. Ripper: You can't have it both ways.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Listen, mate. The minister has sat in that seat for four years and said that he cannot do this and he cannot do that. He is even saying that today. For goodness sake, make a decision.

Withdrawal of Remark

Mr R.C. KUCERA: Mr Speaker, you constantly remind members of the need to use titles in this House. The term "mate" is not a title that is used in this House.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I withdraw the term "mate".

Debate Resumed

Mr C.J. BARNETT: This is not rocket science. The Government had a power crisis last summer. It has a whole lot of makeshift measures to try to keep the power on this summer. Western Power panics every time the temperature is forecast to be above 30 degrees. People have been told that they cannot use their airconditioners. Companies in Perth have been asked to use their backup supplies. They were never intended to power and aircondition buildings; they are emergency backup supplies. Hospitals and industry have been told that they cannot expect a reliable power supply over summer. That is a catastrophic situation. The building of Collie B will not solve the problem for a couple of summers; it will take three years. The Government will need to do other things, but of a permanent nature. It will need to build the Collie B power station, which will take 36 months, but it must at least make the decision now to start it. It might also need to bring on Cockburn 2, which will come on line quicker. It may also need to bring on some private sector generation. More than anything else, it needs to make a decision. All the Government needs to do is pick one or the other, but it needs to make a decision. This minister's strategy is to wait until September 2005. The minister wants to keep to the power procurement process, but he started with 13 contenders, which are now down to three; the process has become a

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shambles. The Government will let it go on until September and then it will start a range of commercial negotiations. For the sake of Western Australia, customers, householders, the elderly, schools, hospitals, small businesses and industry, the minister should make a decision. I can tell him that the easiest decision of the lot to make - that is why we have committed to it - is to build the Collie B power station. Why? The minister should look at the site. I looked at it the other day. It was the first time I had been there since we opened it. It is a pristine, new industrial site. It is surrounded by a buffer of plantation that is probably a kilometre wide. There is a cleared area. The power station has all the infrastructure it requires, such as an immense cooling tower, a coal handling facility, a water supply and effluent pipe. All the infrastructure has been designed for two 300-megawatt units. That was commonsense. We built the plant and installed the first of the 300-megawatt units with the intention of adding the second unit. It is the easiest thing. The whole site has environmental approval. The environmental approval for the second unit -

Mr M.P. Murray: You did not say that in 2000.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The whole site has environmental approval. It is a pristine power supply site. It has been perfectly designed with wide buffers. It is a beautiful plant that operates efficiently. The Government might have to reactivate the environmental process. It has been approved. I would just approve it. There is no downside to this. It is cleaner than the old power plants in Collie that it will ultimately replace. When it comes on line, Muja A and B stations should be closed. The same amount of coal or more would be used. There would be an improvement in the efficiency and volume of power generation, a lower cost of generation from Collie and a major environmental gain by closing the old unreliable, expensive plant and replacing it with new technology.

Mr M.P. Murray interjected.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The Government could then build another one if it wanted. What will the member for Collie do? Will he stand in this place today and speak on the issue, after sitting there for four years? When he campaigned for and won the seat of Collie - good on him - he campaigned for coal and power generation in Collie. Today is his day of reckoning. He will go to the election in a couple of months and I and the people of Collie want to know whether he will vote now in this House to build the Collie B power station or whether he will play games, amend the motion and do anything else but stand up and be a man. He reckons that he is a back-line player, but I can tell him that he has been like a forward pocket in this Parliament.

MR M.W. TRENORDEN (Avon - Leader of the National Party) [3.16 pm]: We have experienced four years of failed activity by the Minister for Energy. In fact, in those four years in the portfolio I do not know that he has achieved -

Mr M.P. Murray interjected.

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: I opened the Bendigo Bank there. The opening of the Bendigo Bank in Collie was a great thing. Who did that in Western Australia? I did. How long after the National Party lost the seat of Collie was I back there to open the Bendigo Bank?

Mr M.P. Murray: Why did you lose the seat of Collie? Because you neglected it.

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: We lost it because the member ran a campaign that he would do something for power in the seat of Collie. In four years he has done absolutely nothing. He speaks beautifully for his local paper. It is a pity we cannot find him in this Chamber. It is a pity that he never participates in the debates on power in this Chamber.

Mr M.P. Murray: It is a pity we couldn't put wind power on your mouth; we'd have a few megawatts!

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: That is precisely what is being said about the member for Collie.

Mr M.P. Murray: You're all huff and bluff.

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: It is very interesting. I visited Boddington, which will now fall within my electorate. The people of Boddington have never seen the member for Collie; he has never been there. What a hardworking member he is!

Mr R.F. Johnson: Did you take a picture of him with you?

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: No, but I should have. As the leader of a political party, I thought I had better do something for my electorate, so I bowled down to Boddington, as I will do again on Monday. The people said to me that I was the first pollie they had seen since the last election.

Mr R.C. Kucera: Rubbish!

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Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: How would the minister know? No-one has seen him since the last election. Where has he been?

Several members interjected.

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: This is a very critical issue. The very important issue of energy in this State has been absolutely botched. In a list of one to 100, it would be very hard to find anything to tick on the minister's slate.

Something I am very keen to talk about today is what we are facing this summer. The Government is spending \$120 million, and for what? What will we get for the money? There is a lot of silence from the other side of the House. We will get the lights to stay on and that is it. The Government will burn \$80 million worth of diesel fuel. I understand that the fourth generator is arriving in Fremantle right now. The minister should be very excited.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Is it from Bangladesh?

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: Either Bangladesh or somewhere in the depths of the subcontinent. The minister is able to go to Fremantle and say that it is a piece of the Third World that the Government is giving to Western Australia so it can burn some more diesel at a cost well above the recovery cost of power. It is absolute nonsense. However, that is the case. Where will the Government put it? On top of the Gnangara mound, north of Perth. It will burn diesel on top of the mound. The Government will run 100 trucks a day up and down the freeway when the diesel generators are running at full pelt. Has the minister thought about what that will do? It is astonishing. The Leader of the Opposition has talked about the units that will be placed around the city. At least they will keep the lights on. They will generate 100 megawatts of power, but they will also burn \$120 million. At the end of the summer, what will we get for that money? I know what Madam Deputy Speaker hopes to get - a return to her seat. If the lights do not stay on, it will be awfully difficult to convince her electorate that she really is the nice person she is. It is as fundamental as that. The minister knows that he must keep the lights on. He could have done something about it in the past four years, but he has not bothered. He has been in an argument about the break-up of Western Power that, in the end, died in the upper House. He cannot tell members on this side that it was the coalition that killed his program for breaking up Western Power.

Mr E.S. Ripper: Yes, I can.

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: What about the Greens?

Mr E.S. Ripper: You played your part; you must take responsibility.

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: My point precisely. The minister played his part and he has to take his responsibility. He failed. He put up a botched plan that nobody other than him and his caucus group liked.

Mr E.S. Ripper: Tell that to industry.

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: I was just going to make that point. As we now run to the election, where are the industry groups? What are they saying about the breaking up of the Western Power? Nothing. They do not agree with the minister any more. Four years ago they did. But now, in 2004 and moving into 2005, they no longer agree with the minister's position. There is silence in response to the proposition. The argument is about new generation, as it should be. The argument is: where is the member for Collie in this significant debate about Collie B? Where is all the economic and financial benefit that will go into the greater area of Bunbury? I am told that 60 or 70 per cent of people who work in the system live in Bunbury or Australind.

Mr M.P. Murray: Rubbish!

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: That is what the shire tells me. The member can tell the shire that it is rubbish if he wants to. I do not live in Collie, so I cannot debate that figure.

Mr R.C. Kucera: You know nothing about Collie other than the fact that your party lost its seat.

Several members interjected.

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: I am hearing a lot of banter across the Chamber about lost seats. Within three months, some members of this Chamber will lose their seats. Losing seats is part of the democratic process. Hilda Turnbull, the previous member, lost the seat of Collie by 34 votes. However, she was an outstanding servant of Collie. She was fantastic. She deserves every credit for promoting the Collie A power station. She wanted Collie A and B at the time.

Mr R.C. Kucera: You left her hanging in the air.

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: We did not leave her hanging in the air. Before we last won government, there was not a skerrick of activity in Collie. The only people who build power stations in Collie are those in the National

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Party. This time it will be the coalition. It was Hendy Cowan and Hilda Turnbull who did all the fighting for the previous Collie power station. The benefits that have flowed through to the greater Bunbury region are because of that. The member for Collie represents a region that has fantastic potential. The questions about Harvey Water, Wellington Dam and the Collie River make a fantastic story. The member should be out there trying to make a difference in that electorate instead of being absent and just making headlines in the local newspaper about what a local member does. He should do some work and visit a place like Boddington. If the member for Collie would like to come down on Monday, I will show him where Boddington is. It is actually in his electorate, believe it or not. Four years have passed since the last election but all we have is absolute stagnation in energy. There has been no extra generation, only enormous deterioration of the infrastructure. The population is very unhappy. This summer the State will burn \$120 million for no benefit at all. Once February and March have come and gone, there will be nothing to show for the expenditure of \$120 million. This is a very important vote. I will be very interested to see how the member for Collie goes.

Amendment to Motion

MR E.S. RIPPER (Belmont - Minister for Energy) [3.27 pm]: I move -

To delete all words after "supports" and substitute -

the procurement process for the next base-load power station which gives Collie coal producers a fair and equitable chance to win and notes that this process is in any case required by the Electricity Corporations Act passed by this Parliament in 1994.

Point of Order

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The original motion is very clear. It is to support the construction of Collie B power station. For the Government to propose to change the motion to an issue about procurement negates the motion. That is a completely separate topic. It is the principle of this Parliament that members vote on a motion. If they do not like it, they can vote against it. A motion cannot be fundamentally changed to something else. If the minister wishes to move the amendment as a motion in another debate, he can do so. However, the motion is about the Collie B power station and nothing else. Madam Deputy Speaker will fail in her duty to this Parliament if she allows the Government to change the total nature of this debate. It will be a failing of her duty as the Chair.

Mr E.S. RIPPER: This issue is about the way in which the next base-load power station should be provided. The amendment I have moved is completely relevant and totally appropriate to the motion.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is no point of order. The amendment is not a direct negative. If it were a direct negative, it would state that the House did not support the construction of the Collie B power station. That is not what the amendment states. It can be construed that procurement leads to construction. I do not rule the amendment as a direct negative.

Mrs C.L. EDWARDES: Can the Opposition have a copy of that motion before the debate continues so that we can look at it in the context of your ruling, Madam Deputy Speaker?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Certainly.

Mr E.S. RIPPER: Is it now possible for me to proceed, Madam Deputy Speaker?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes. Since I have effectively ruled and I hear no dissent from that ruling, I will continue.

Debate Resumed

Mr E.S. RIPPER: Madam Deputy Speaker, I thank you for the very sensible ruling that you made on that amendment.

I want to go back to some history on the building of coal-fired power stations in Collie because the history is not as the Leader of the Opposition would have us believe in the remarks he made earlier. As far as I am aware, there have been only two directions from ministers in the history of the State Energy Commission of Western Australia and Western Power Corporation. One of those was a direction that I was proud to give to require Western Power to reinstate fully the uniform tariff in regional areas, overturning a policy instituted by Western Power under the Leader of the Opposition when he was Minister for Energy. Another direction, given by the former Minister for Energy to the State Energy Commission of Western Australia, states -

I have to advise you that Cabinet decided in the context of the wider and long-term interests of the State, that it will not recommend to the Governor in Executive Council the approval under the SEC Act

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of the Power Purchase Agreement with ABB Energy Ventures West Pty Ltd . . . for a 2 x 300MW privately funded built, owned and operated coal-fired power station at Collie for commissioning before the year 2001, as and when SECWA were to seek such approval.

The Leader of the Opposition, when he was Minister for Energy, directed the State Energy Commission to halve the size of the coal-fired power station that the previous Government wanted to build in Collie. SECWA was, therefore, going down the track of building a 600-megawatt coal-fired power station in Collie and it was not allowed to continue with that consideration; it was directed by the former Minister for Energy to halve the size of that power station.

Mr C.J. Barnett: That's not true.

Mr E.S. RIPPER: The Leader of the Opposition says that it is not true. I am holding in my hand a copy of the direction that he gave and it is signed by Colin J Barnett, Minister for Energy. The direction continues -

It will be clear to you from these decisions that any further negotiation by SECWA with ABBEVW in regard to the proposed 2 x 300MW coal-fired power station at Collie, which would commission before the year 2001, will be fruitless.

The previous Government told SECWA not to bother talking about a 600-megawatt station as that would be fruitless because it would not approve it. That is what the former Minister for Energy told SECWA. He comes into this place now and pretends to be the champion of coal, when one of the only two directions on record to the State Energy Commission and Western Power is a direction from him to cut the size of the coal-fired power station proposed for Collie. The former Minister for Energy then went on to make an extraordinary and costly decision for which the taxpayers and the electricity customers of this State are still paying dearly. He left an enormous legacy with the second part of his direction. Because of that very costly outcome, I will read what it says -

In recognition of the recent involvement of ABB in this matter and the endeavour which it has shown for the 2 x 300MW project, Cabinet considered that a relevant ABB entity should be given the opportunity to build, on a turnkey basis for SECWA, a 1 x 300MW coal-fired power station. Accordingly, and with the support of Cabinet, I direct the Commission to seek negotiations with the relevant ABB entity with a view to having it undertake this turnkey project on the preferred time schedule indicated above.

There was no tender and no competition; there was a direction from the minister, apparently with the support of Cabinet, to give this company the project. What a way to conduct business! What a cowboy! What do members reckon the result usually is when Governments do not go through proper tender processes? The result usually is that taxpayers get stung; and stung they were in a very serious way. Mr Robert Taylor, writing in *The West Australian* on 24 January 2004, summed up the situation -

Colin Barnett as energy minister in Richard Court's government built what is generally considered to be the world's most expensive generator at Collie and soured Western Power against coal.

The former Minister for Energy made a disgracefully irresponsible financial decision. What we got at Collie was a power station that cost double what it should have cost, and taxpayers and electricity customers still bear the burden of the debt from that power station. A power station that is built for double what it should cost compromises the ability of coal to properly compete in the system.

The former Minister for Energy went on to construct new legislation governing Western Power. That new legislation inserted schedule 7 into the Act, which made it a legal requirement that when Western Power wanted new capacity, it had to offer the private sector an opportunity to provide it through a power procurement process. It is a requirement of the law of this State that Western Power go through a power procurement process.

Mr M.W. Trenorden: Change the law!

Mr E.S. RIPPER: Is it not interesting, Madam Deputy Speaker, that the Opposition says that we should change the law? The previous Government introduced the law, we complied with the law the Opposition introduced, and it now says that we should not worry about that and should change it. The Opposition made it a requirement of the law of this State that a power procurement process be entered into.

It was amusing to listen to some the comments of the Leader of the National Party on the number of bidders in the power procurement process. A tendering process is designed to include a large number of bidders and get down to one bidder who gets the contract and builds the plant.

Mr M.W. Trenorden: Do you reckon you can do it within a decade?

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Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Bob Kucera; Mr Max Trenorden; Mr Eric Ripper; Deputy Speaker; Mr Mick Murray; Dr Geoff Gallop; Mr Bernie Masters; The Acting Speaker (mr A.P. O'gorman); Mr Dan Barron-Sullivan; Mr Paul Omodei; Acting Speaker

Mr E.S. RIPPER: It is not like a National Party preselection process. The object of the exercise is to ultimately get the best candidate. The Leader of the National Party appears to have a very strange idea. He is complaining that we have a shortlist and he wants a long list. It is part of the process to start with a large number of bidders who are made to compete, are whittled down to a shortlist and, ultimately, there is one winner. The logic of the Leader of the National Party's absolutely stupid and hilarious argument is that somehow it is a failure of the power procurement process to get to one preferred bidder and do a deal with that bidder. Obviously the Leader of the National Party believes that we should do a deal with 13 bidders, not one. That is an absolutely stupid position.

What the Opposition is arguing for is absolutely contrary to the law. This afternoon a number of members opposite attempted to confuse the issue of base-load power provision in 2008 with peak-load power provision in 2004. They have absolutely confused two different arguments. The underlying difficulty with peak-load provision in 2004 is the gas transport capacity on the Dampier to Bunbury natural gas pipeline, which was privatised by the former Minister for Energy. The Opposition has never accepted any responsibility for the terrible effects of the botched privatisation engaged in by the Leader of the Opposition on our community. The Opposition continues to try to avoid any discussion of that issue. It messed up that privatisation and imposed on the community of Western Australia a gas transport constraint that will be overcome as a result of our facilitation of the sale of the Dampier to Bunbury natural gas pipeline. Furthermore, the Opposition adds insult to injury by coming into this House and objecting to any measures that we put forward to overcome the evil effects of that botched privatisation. It does not accept responsibility for the problem, and when we try to fix it, it harasses us and objects to our energy policy.

Let us now look at the present. The coalition's promise is, quite frankly, a con job. On the one hand it says that it will immediately build Collie B. However, its policy statement reads -

This commitment is given conditionally and is dependent on the negotiation of competitive coal contracts that ensure the delivered end price of electricity is competitive to that of a gas-fired power station.

The Opposition will not build it immediately. It will negotiate coal contracts with the very people whom it has just denied the right to bid in the power procurement process. When it has gone through those negotiations, it will have to call for tenders and go through a new process to choose who will build the power station. That is a recipe for delay. If the Opposition's policy is implemented, the base-load power station will not be available in 2008; it will be available about a year later. That is not good for the Collie community, and nor is it good for our electricity customers.

Mr M.W. Trenorden: Tell us why.

Mr E.S. RIPPER: The Leader of the National Party is bleating and is asking me to tell him why. Obviously he does not believe me, so I will quote what was said by a coal producer. One would think that a coal producer might know what is in the best interests of the coal industry and what is in the best interests of Collie coal. I refer to a media release from Griffin Energy Pty Ltd -

Responding to the Coalition's Position Statement on Power Generation, Griffin Energy has urged the leader of the Opposition, Mr Colin Barnett, to reconsider his proposals. While some may see the Liberal proposal as good for coal, the real effect will be quite the opposite.

In the media release, Mr Trumble is quoted as saying -

Mr M.W. Trenorden: Why, minister?

Mr E.S. RIPPER: The Leader of the National Party should listen. Mr Trumble is quoted as saying that -

... the Coalition's proposed changes to energy policy will have a detrimental effect on WA's coal industry, Collie, the South West and Western Australian electricity consumers . . .

That is a pretty devastating and wide-ranging set of criticisms from a major coal producer in Collie. If the Leader of the National Party wants more detail on Griffin Energy's views, I will quote further. The media release also reads -

Mr Trumble said the effect of the Coalition policy will be to:

- 1. Delay construction of a new coal fired power station.
- 2. Reduce coal consumption as older plants are retired and no new coal generation is added.

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- 3. Increase reliance on gas through the unconditional commitment to construct Cockburn 2, subsequently lowering energy security and competitiveness.
- 4. Reduce private sector involvement through Western Power's direction to construct and operate new plant.
- 5. Result in higher overall generating costs through the removal of market forces in the procurement of new generating capacity.
- 6. Reduce new private sector investment in Collie and the South West.

Mr Trumble, representing Griffin Energy, has six very strong reasons that he will not agree that the coalition's policy is good for Collie coal. There are only two coal producers in Collie -

Mr M.W. Trenorden: Tell us what Wesfarmers said.

Mr E.S. RIPPER: The Leader of the National can tell us that group's views if he has any evidence that he wants to put on the record.

We should take notice of those sorts of views. They are not the only views that have been expressed by industry in response to the coalition's policy. I have a copy of a letter from the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia to the Leader of the Opposition. The letter, which was taken from CCI's web site, is written by John Langoulant, the Chief Executive Officer. It reads -

However, it is of considerable concern that some of the key measures in the statement will have the opposite effect of their stated objectives.

For instance, moves outlined in the position statement to scrap the current power procurement tendering process and have Western Power build and own a new coal-fired power station in Collie obviously excludes an independent power producer from fulfilling this role.

Of equal concern is that this will perpetuate an unwarranted consolidation of Western Power's domination of the sector for many years. This in turn will reduce the likelihood of lower tariffs that would be created in a more diverse market with greater private participation.

CCI believes the current tendering process should be retained, as this process has the greatest prospect of delivering the cheapest and most efficient fuel source, technology and design for generation built by an independent power producer.

The CCI's key point is that -

Interrupting the tender process at this point and replacing it with another process is unlikely to result in any meaningful shortening in the deliver of a new power station.

The coalition thought that it would have great success with its power generation policy. However, it has gone down like a lead balloon because, rather than bringing forward the provision of a coal-fired base-load power station, the coalition's policy will delay the arrival of a coal-fired base-load power station. It will delay it for three reasons. First, and as the coalition concedes, the coalition will have to change the law.

Mr M.W. Trenorden: No we don't.

Mr E.S. RIPPER: Why not?

Mr M.W. Trenorden: Because it is replacement generation.

Mr E.S. RIPPER: So the coalition argues that we need the power station for additional capacity and then it argues that it will be legal because it is replacement capacity, not additional capacity. It cannot have it both ways. If it is needed for additional capacity, it is needed for additional capacity. It is not legal to do it outside the power procurement process. Given the way the coalition is approaching this, the law would have to be changed. The second thing the Opposition will have to do, as is stated in its own policy, is renegotiate the coal supply contracts. It will have to go through a process of determining whether those contracts are competitive. The very people that it will have to negotiate with are the very people that it has just dudded during the power procurement process. Imagine approaching Griffin and Wesfarmers and saying, "We'd like to negotiate a coal supply deal with you, even though we've just chopped you out of the power procurement process. Don't worry about the millions you've spent in preparing your bids. You are now out of that process but, by the way, we would like to get some cheap coal from you." That is not a good bargaining position. Furthermore, it would say, "We're in a hurry; we need to conclude this quickly." What sort of deal will the Opposition secure under those circumstances?

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Thirdly, the bidders are already procuring their supplies and going through the approvals, design work and the like. The process will have to start all over again if Western Power is to procure someone else to build that power station. Those are the three reasons for this being a stupid, short-sighted and anti-Collie coal policy that will delay the arrival of the base-load power station. What we have seen from the Opposition is disgraceful and opportunistic politicking on the question of base-load power; indeed, on all energy questions. There is no credibility on the other side of politics with regard to the energy issues. I would like to say a lot more, but I want to let my very important colleague the member for Collie get to his feet because I know he has strong views on this matter and I want to hear them.

MR M.P. MURRAY (Collie - Parliamentary Secretary) [3.50 pm]: It is with great pleasure that I stand here today to put in my two bob's worth. I have listened to the hot wind coming from the other side and I have heard it back in Collie. Those opposite say one thing in Collie and another thing in this Chamber. Let us not forget how much support the Liberal Government has given to Collie over the years - absolutely none! I refer to one of the things dear to my heart; that is, the time the current Leader of the Opposition shut the underground and then went public and bragged about it being one of the favourite moments of his political career. It is good to see that he is nodding his head. I will not be fooled by the Collie B proposal and that is why I support the amendment. The fact is that if the Opposition's process goes ahead, 142 000 fewer tonnes of coal will be burnt in the industry. The people of Collie will not be fooled. The Liberal Government took them for fools once and that is why I stand here. I am saying that 142 000 tonnes -

Mr M.W. Trenorden: You want gas.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: I know where the gas is coming from! Some 142 000 tonnes of coal will go out of the system.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! All I can hear is this great roar from my left side. It might be an idea to at least give the member a chance to get a few minutes into his speech.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: I will make sure that the people of Collie read this *Hansard* report.

Mr M.W. Trenorden interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, Leader of the National Party.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: The net gain under the Liberal Government's plan will be a measly 60 megawatts of power, which, combined with the inefficiencies, will mean a loss. It is despicable to think that those opposite have tried to cover the mistakes they made in the early 1990s when they cut the power station in half. The Leader of the Opposition stood and took the accolades, waited till the election was past and then put out a directive to Western Power to cut the power station in half; in fact, he directed Western Power to cut it in half, which created more problems than we have today. If that 600 megawatts of power had been allowed to run as per the process, we would not have the problems that we have with our power system today. It goes right back to the Liberal Party's policies.

Mr M.W. Trenorden: What have you done in four years?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr M.P. MURRAY: I want to refer to a couple of quotes from *The West Australian*. On 14 November 2001 the Leader of the National Party said that Colin Barnett never showed any interest in rural issues when he was a minister in the Court Government, and he has not shown any interest as a Liberal leader. The Leader of the National Party said the Leader of the Opposition had consistently opposed uniform electricity charges for country businesses and spending money on electricity infrastructure. He said that the Leader of the Opposition had publicly opposed country road building programs, including the \$100 million southern transport corridor that would open links to the Geraldton port. Another article stated that the Leader of the Opposition hardly ever went near the country areas, even though he was Minister for Energy, a vital portfolio for country WA. Another article dated 27 February 2001 stated that Liberal leadership contender Rod Sweetman said he stood against Colin Barnett to ensure country people were not overlooked by the Liberal Party. He should not come into this House and grandstand for country people. He has let country people down by getting out there only just before the election. Let us be realistic.

Mr M.W. Trenorden: What have you done in four years?

Mr M.P. MURRAY: I have been the biggest advocate in this House, bar none, for the coal industry and for country regions. I have been one of the greatest advocates for coal. Ask the people on the block who know! The Leader of the Opposition wandered down there in the road train - or the bus train. The first meeting he went

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to was cancelled; he could not get enough to turn up. For the next one he charged people \$20 to listen to his policies. What sort of Government is that - what sort of Opposition is that when it charges?

Mr M.W. Trenorden: You're the Government! Good point.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: They breezed into town in a bus. They could not fill the bus; only half the shadow Cabinet went down. The rest were probably getting on the grog in Bali or having a bit of a tout at the Melbourne Cup. We know what we are talking about. They are country members and they will not go to the country regions.

I will get back to some of the more serious issues to do with the coal issue. There is no doubt that coal is recognised worldwide as a fuel of the future. In the past year in California, where there have been problems, 2 000 megawatts of coal-fired power have been installed in what is called the greenest state in America. That really says something. Technology has moved on, and it really puts coal back at the forefront. On the east coast, export coal is now bringing \$100 a tonne. That rules it out for local production. We must use what we have in Western Australia. The Leader of the Opposition earlier referred to the qualities of Collie coal and the lack of methane. I have referred to this a number of times in this House. I worked underground for 12 years. I do not think the Leader of the Opposition went underground once. I used to smoke cigarettes underground because there was no methane, but when I lit a cigarette at a mine recently, those Heathcote blokes ran out of the mine very quickly. There is no methane, the ash is low and it is naturally stored in the underground so that when it is wanted, it can be used. It is not like the gas, which bubbles out and has to be pushed back. If there is a blowout, all sorts of major problems occur. Sometimes it cannot be pumped down because the compressors are off. We have it stored and ready to go. There is 100 years worth of coal left at least, if not more. They are only the identified reserves.

Mr M.W. Trenorden: Why aren't you doing something about it?

Mr M.P. MURRAY: We are. As the Minister for Energy has said, the companies are quite happy with the power procurement process. They have come out and said that publicly. They are pushing the barrow. They said they would not have time to do what the Opposition has asked, so those opposite should not put up this furphy that the new station can be built in a week. It would have to go out to tender; or will those opposite do the same thing as they did with Collie A, and make it the dearest power station in Australia - not in Western Australia but in Australia - because they did not take it to tender? They told the people to build it and that the Government would pay for it. It cost the State millions and millions of dollars. The only reason those opposite want Collie B is to cover up the mess they made before; that is what it is all about.

Mr C.J. Barnett: So Labor doesn't support it. Now we know.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: I support any coal-fired power station at all. If the proposal stacks up, I will support it to the hilt, but at this moment it does not stack up. We will lose 140 000 tonnes of coal under the Opposition's proposal. It is an absolute disgrace. It is all smoke and mirrors, and they will not get away with it in our town. We have seen what those opposite have done to us before. They have burnt us before and we will not put up with it again.

In conclusion, the one thing that worries me with the power station issue is that the Shire of Collie and Griffin Coal Mining Company Pty Ltd are both proposing industry parks so that the power can be sold over the fence to attract new industry to the town, which we have done well in the past three years. We have 100 new jobs in town. We want it to go further than that. Under this proposal, Western Power will be directed to do that and it will take away the competitive edge whereby we could attract new industry into the town. Under our proposal, 800 megawatts of new power will be created in Collie. The Leader of the Opposition wants to ruin that by taking away the competitive process. His plan will absolutely ruin the expansion of Collie, and he should be ashamed of himself. I am sure his grandstanding will be seen for what it is on election day. Let us see if he is around the polling booths in my area on election day.

DR G.I. GALLOP (Victoria Park - Premier) [4.00 pm]: Government members support two principles in this debate: first, we support a proper process for determining our new base-load power station, and, second, we support the member for Collie, who is an excellent representative of his community. When the next state election occurs -

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, members on my left; that is quite enough! Members should remind themselves that they are in a House of Parliament, not a football field. The rugby has not started yet.

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Dr G.I. GALLOP: When the next state election occurs in Western Australia, the member for Collie will be returned with an increased majority because of his advocacy for his community and his support for proper processes.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr C.J. Barnett interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Leader of the Opposition, I am on my feet! I will call you to order for the fourth time. Do not mess with me or you will be out of here!

MR B.K. MASTERS (Vasse) [4.02 pm]: Both the Minister for Energy and the Leader of the Opposition have missed the point about energy and electricity production in Collie.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, Leader of the Opposition!

Mr B.K. MASTERS: Western Australians are profligate energy users. Along with the rest of Australia, we have one of the highest energy consumption rates in the world, and one of the highest energy intensities of any nation on the planet.

Mr R.C. Kucera: We have the highest standard of living in the world.

Mr B.K. MASTERS: The minister might like to be educated for a change.

This in itself is not necessarily a bad thing if we used energy as efficiently as possible and we exported energy-intensive products so that importing countries were able to minimise their pollution or use of low-efficiency, energy-dependent industries. However, the reality is that Western Australia has a poor record of energy conservation and energy efficiency going back through this Government and previous Governments. I give the House a few examples.

I remind all members that on 18 February this year, a severe crisis occurred within the electricity production area of Western Power caused by a huge increase in the number of airconditioners bought mainly by Perth residents because airconditioning was seen to be more affordable. In a climate like Western Australia's, particularly in the south west corner of the State, there is no justification for additional heating and cooling beyond that provided by the environment itself. If our houses were properly designed, we made use of solar energy and we were sensible in the way that we consume electricity, most houses would not need airconditioning or artificial heating. If people install airconditioning or heating facilities and are sensible in their energy use, those items would be needed for a few days of the year at most.

I give another little example. Forty per cent of houses with airconditioners installed have no roof insulation. That means that between one-third and one-half of the energy that people in those houses consume is wasted; namely, cooling passes through the roof in summer and heating is lost through the ceiling spaces in winter. A significant problem in Western Australia could be immediately solved if we were to require all domestic houses to have \$1 000 worth of roof insulation fitted.

I give a third example. We drive some of the most energy-inefficient sport utility vehicles - SUVs - and four-wheel-drive vehicles available on the planet, and we do precious little federally and in the State to discourage purchase of these vehicles by urban people who never use and do not need the capabilities of such vehicles.

I am happy to point out that next month the Economics and Industry Standing Committee will issue a discussion paper on energy efficiency and energy conservation. I commend it to the Minister for Energy and the Leader of the Opposition, and ask them both to read the document and recognise that between 10 and 20 per cent of the current energy consumption in Western Australia can be saved, and that includes electricity production. If we were wise in our use of energy and conserved it where we could, this debate could be deferred for 10 years or more. We would reduce our energy and electricity consumption to such an extent that we would not need another electricity power station in this State until that time.

The Government's greenhouse strategy that was released earlier this year was a great disappointment because it committed the Government to very little in the way of innovative and effective energy conservation measures. Also, the Minister for Energy's direction to state government agencies to reduce their energy consumption has been an abject failure to date. This has not been a sensible debate and both parties have missed the point.

Amendment (words to be deleted) put and passed.

Motion, as Amended

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The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr A.P. O'Gorman): The question is that the words to be inserted be inserted.

Amendment on the Amendment

MR D.F. BARRON-SULLIVAN (Mitchell - Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [4.06 pm]: I move -

To delete all words after "procurement process" and substitute -

being amended to support the people of Collie, Bunbury and the south west in their efforts for the Collie B Power Station to be built to ensure continuity of jobs in Collie, economic growth in the south west and a secure electricity supply for all Western Australians.

This is a telling time for two members of Parliament in this Chamber: the members for Collie and Bunbury. This Government is putting off until after the election a crucial decision that affects the south west, and Collie in particular. The Labor Government is in bed with the Greens (WA) and is beholden to it on this key issue. The Labor Government is ignoring the workers of Collie and the need for economic growth and development in Bunbury and the south west. There is no single economic development issue in the south west and Collie that is more important than this. Never before in their parliamentary careers has it been more important for the members for Collie and Bunbury to stand firm for their local communities and to support the amendment that the coalition has just moved, to show their support for Collie B and for the community.

The Leader of the Opposition has just indicated that I can pass on an offer on his behalf - because he cannot speak at this stage - that he invites the Premier to visit Collie to debate with the Leader of the Opposition in person our respective parties' policies. The coalition is totally supportive of workers and families in Collie, and we totally support the people of Bunbury and the south west. This is an opportunity for the members for Collie and Bunbury to show that they support the local communities and that they will not toe the Labor Party line.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr A.P. O'Gorman): The Treasurer.

Mr R.F. Johnson: The Deputy Premier used up his time.

Dr G.I. Gallop: He did not.

MR E.S. RIPPER (Belmont - Minister for Energy) [4.08 pm]: I believe I have a minute left in which to speak.

Point of Order

Mr P.D. OMODEI: The Minister for Energy's time had expired.

The ACTING SPEAKER: According to the clock in front of me the Minister for Energy has a minute in which to speak. The Minister for Energy.

Debate Resumed

Mr E.S. RIPPER: Mr Acting Speaker -

Several members interjected.

Point of Order

Mr D.F. BARRON-SULLIVAN: I seek some clarification. A technical issue might be involved. The clock had most definitely been sitting on the one-minute mark for some time while the previous Labor member had been speaking. Does the Minister for Energy now have one minute or the remaining component of that minute in which to speak?

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr A.P. O'Gorman): The Minister for Energy will have one minute. In these types of debates time has always been marked in minute segments.

Mr P.D. Omodei interjected.

Debate Resumed

MR E.S. RIPPER (Belmont - Minister for Energy) [4.09 pm]: Thank you for your support, Mr Acting Speaker. I disagree with the statement of the member for Warren-Blackwood that your ruling is somehow rubbish. The amendment is totally fallacious. The power procurement process does support the economic development of the south west, as the member for Collie so eloquently explained. The member for Collie explained the ambitions and aspirations of the people of Collie for not only a base-load power station but also additional industry, which will flow if the right decisions are made for the construction of the next power station. We have heard from the Opposition a proposal that in the end would delay the power station in Collie.

Opposition members: Time! Time! Time!

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Mr A.J. Carpenter: That's the most enjoyable minute I have ever had; better than sex! Amendment on the amendment put and a division taken with the following result -

Ayes (19)

Mr R.A. Ainsworth Mr C.J. Barnett Mr D.F. Barron-Sullivan Mr M.J. Birney Mr M.F. Board	Dr E. Constable Mr J.H.D. Day Mrs C.L. Edwardes Mr J.P.D. Edwards Mr B.J. Grylls	Ms K. Hodson-Thomas Mr R.F. Johnson Mr P.D. Omodei Mr P.G. Pendal Mr R.N. Sweetman	Mr M.W. Trenorden Mr T.K. Waldron Ms S.E. Walker Mr J.L. Bradshaw <i>(Teller)</i>
Noes (27)			
Mr P.W. Andrews Mr J.J.M. Bowler Mr C.M. Brown Mr A.J. Carpenter Mr A.J. Dean Mr J.B. D'Orazio Dr J.M. Edwards	Dr G.I. Gallop Mrs D.J. Guise Mr S.R. Hill Mr J.N. Hyde Mr J.C. Kobelke Mr R.C. Kucera Mr F.M. Logan	Mr J.A. McGinty Mr M. McGowan Mr A.D. McRae Mr N.R. Marlborough Mrs C.A. Martin Mr M.P. Murray Mr J.R. Quigley	Ms J.A. Radisich Mr E.S. Ripper Mrs M.H. Roberts Mr D.A. Templeman Mr M.P. Whitely Ms M.M. Quirk (<i>Teller</i>)

Pairs

Mr M.G. HouseMs S.M. McHaleMr A.D. MarshallMr P.B. WatsonMr W.J. McNeeMs A.J. MacTiernan

Independent Pair

Dr J.M. Woollard

Amendment thus negatived.

Motion, as Amended Resumed

Amendment (words to be inserted) put and passed.

Question (motion, as amended) put and passed.