

LIVE EXPORT — SHEEP AND GOAT ELECTRONIC IDENTIFICATION SYSTEM

**322. Mr P.J. RUNDLE to the Premier:**

I refer to last week's proud budget announcement of \$22.2 million to complete the implementation of the sheep and goat electronic identification system. In the words of the Minister for Energy —

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Sorry, just before we go on, can I just caution the member for Landsdale and the Leader of the House.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Sorry. If you would like, you may start again, and hopefully we will hear the question in silence.

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** I refer to last week's proud budget announcement of \$22.2 million to complete the implementation of the sheep and goat electronic identification system. In the words of the Minister for Energy, I ask whether the Premier has any understanding of the implication of his silence on the banning of the live sheep export industry and the fact that the Premier is overseeing the demise of the sheep flock in WA and confidence in the industry while funding an electronic ID system, the use of which will diminish by the day?

**Mr M. McGOWAN replied:**

The sheep and goat identification system is something we have funded to the tune of, as the member said, \$22.2 million. I recollect that we also funded the lumpy skin disease research project. There is lumpy skin as well. To go back in history, agriculture ministers in Labor governments have always done great things. I remember Kim Chance took on the issue of karnal bunt, if anyone remembers that issue. He was on the case about karnal bunt, which was out there impacting agricultural communities as well.

**Mr R.S. Love:** It might sound funny to you, but it is a serious issue.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** Thank you for your advice.

We have been taking on these issues out there. The member might also recall that, contrary to what the former government did, we have invested \$320 million for new agricultural facilities at Murdoch University. Those facilities had been languishing for decades. The government is replacing them. The government has undertaken a whole range of initiatives to support agriculture. That was an interesting segue.

**Ms R. Saffioti** interjected.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** That is right; that old chestnut! The National Party closed down tier 3 rail. Do members remember that? It closed down tier 3 rail and then privatised the whole thing.

**Mr R.S. Love** interjected.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** There have been ongoing issues ever since. Do you remember doing that?

**Ms R. Saffioti:** Whose decision was it? The PTA?

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** The PTA? Hold on: the opposition leader thinks that the wheatbelt rail service was run by the Public Transport Authority! Were there trains out there transporting people between Wyalkatchem and Mukinbudin?

*Point of Order*

**The SPEAKER:** Premier, please resume your seat for a moment; there is a point of order. I remind members that points of order are heard in silence.

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** Madam Speaker, I refer to standing order 78 and relevance. The question was about the live sheep export industry, not tier 3 rail or other issues that the Premier has moved on to.

**The SPEAKER:** As I understand it, the Premier was drawing an analogy. I ask the Premier to answer in a relevant way.

*Questions without Notice Resumed*

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** We are funding initiatives for agriculture. The opposition is attacking us for funding those initiatives for agriculture because another government is making another decision.

**Mr P.J. Rundle:** You're not standing up on behalf of Western Australia.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** I realise that the retention of information is not the member's strong suit, but I have been on the record numerous times about this matter. The member for Roe has asked me about it numerous times in the Parliament. I have commented on the record again and again, both publicly and in here, yet the member continues to repeat the same questions over and over. The commonwealth government has made a decision and it is beyond the next federal election. At the next federal election, people will get to vote on it again. Whatever the outcome,

the commonwealth government will need to fund whatever transition is put in place. That is the reality of the situation. Despite the best efforts and protestations of members opposite, we will continue to support the agricultural community with important programs like the sheep and goat identification system, the lumpy skin program, the new agriculture headquarters and everything else that is out there.