

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

**563. Dr D.J. HONEY to the Deputy Premier:**

I have a supplementary question. How can the Deputy Premier possibly contend that police officers need such extreme powers when any remaining COVID-19 health issues can be adequately managed by the Public Health Act?

**Mr R.H. COOK replied:**

I am very pleased to see that the Leader of the Liberal Party is now a convert to the Public Health Act. I have always thought it is a great piece of legislation, but it clearly was not to the member's taste during COVID-19. Let us look at some of the measures associated with the Emergency Management Amendment (Temporary COVID-19 Provisions) Bill 2022. The bill includes the ability to control or use property for the purpose of managing COVID-19 at a particular point in time. We can see the reasonable, commonsense approach associated with that. For example, it would allow WA police to quickly set up accommodation and establish an operation centre, such as the successful Operation Tide, which was initially based at Optus Stadium. The powers concerning movement and evacuation exist under a state of emergency. However, COVID-19 declarations give the ability to impose restrictions on access to remote communities to protect more vulnerable people. This was successfully applied during the pandemic. Just like with other natural disasters, authorities will have the ability to move people out of communities for their safety. The bill will also ensure that necessary temporary powers will be available to support the state's ongoing management of COVID-19 for the next two years if required. However, they will fall away after two years if not required. These are all measures that we would expect any government to have in its control in order to respond to an emergency associated with COVID-19. These are all measures that other state governments are embracing in a similar fashion. We are all moving beyond the Emergency Management Act provisions, which require ongoing triggering as the situation requires. This is a sensible, commonsense approach to the ongoing vigilance that we need to have in relation to COVID-19 over the next two years. It is sensible and common sense. That is why the other side just do not get it.