

STATE BUDGET — COST-OF-LIVING INCREASES

143. Dr D.J. HONEY to the Premier:

I have a supplementary question. Right now, families are making a choice between putting fuel in their cars and buying groceries. When will the Premier step up to the plate and deliver the social dividend of his eye-watering surplus during this global energy crisis?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

I just answered the member's question about the things that we have done compared with the last time the Liberal and National Parties were in office, and the fact that we have been the most economically responsible government in Australia in a long time. In the lead-up to the state budget, we will be able to consider these matters. I just told the member that we provided free RATs to people. We provided grants for electricity. We kept electricity and water charges down at historically low levels—certainly compared with the last Liberal–National government. We have done all those things, and just a couple of months ago, we brought in the two-zone fare cap across the state. We kept the Country Age Pension Fuel Card and extended it to various volunteer organisations. We have put in place all those sorts of things since we have been in office because we actually manage the finances properly. But we are very sympathetic to families. We understand that there is a significant issue out there. It is not of our making. As the member knows, petrol excise is not a state government matter—we do not impose it.

Dr D.J. Honey: But that's fixed.

Mr M. McGOWAN: The Leader of the Liberal Party does not understand anything really. He does not understand, and certainly his performance yesterday shows that he does not understand much at all about proper behaviour. But in any event, fuel excise is not something that we control. I have not campaigned on that, unlike the South Australian Premier, the Tasmania Premier and the like. I realise it is a difficult issue for the commonwealth government to deal with. I urge all governments nationally to take account of these issues and certainly it is something that we are considering as we go forward.