

STATE FINANCES

**797. Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE to the Treasurer:**

I refer to the Cook Labor government's record of maintaining a strong, diversified economy and responsibly managing the state's finances. Can the Treasurer advise the house how this government's efforts to drive further investment in Western Australia is strengthening WA's finances and how does this government's sensible and responsible financial management compare with that of those opposite?

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:**

I thank the member for the question. Of course, this government has a proud record of strong economic management and stewardship of the state's finances. Last week, in Japan, we were able to outline to private sector investors and those institutions that buy government bonds to help support WA government projects the strong fiscal discipline and the strong economic growth of this state. We were able to outline that we are repaying the former Liberal–National government's debt, we are saving money on interest payments and we are the only state in the nation to have a AAA credit rating from both major rating agencies. At these presentations, investors came up and said they just could not believe how strong our economy is. As I said, we have created over 250 000 jobs and have economic growth of over four per cent and one of the lowest unemployment rates in the nation. We continue to drive private sector investment and diversification of the economy and make sure that we provide services to the Western Australian community. Compare and contrast this approach to that of the previous government. The former Liberal–National government brought WA to its knees. It brought on a recession and lost our AAA credit rating. Its chaos and dysfunction was there for all to see. Now in opposition what do we have? The same chaos and dysfunction, members. At least they are consistent. As they operated in government they are now operating in opposition.

Members might remember that earlier this year I found a Liberal Party hat in the car park. As members know, I hang around in car parks sometimes looking for little bits of memorabilia, and I found a Liberal Party hat. Of course, we know it was the Leader of the Opposition who was wearing that Liberal Party hat on the day of the Rockingham by-election. We were all shocked by that, but what is even more shocking is the background story to how that happened. We understand that the Leader of the Opposition went up to the member for North West Central and said, "Look, it's a sunny day; I need a hat. Do you have anything you can lend me?"

Several members interjected.

*Point of Order*

**Dr D.J. HONEY:** I have a point of order.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Sorry; I am going to hear the point of order.

**Dr D.J. HONEY:** The minister's deliberations at the moment have nothing whatsoever to do with the question that was asked of her and it is wasting valuable question time.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Order, please, members! Yes, I am sure quite a number of you were really enjoying that; however, I uphold the point of order as it does not have any relevance to the question that was asked.

*Questions without Notice Resumed*

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** Thank you. I will be brief and finish very quickly.

Of course, we now know why the member for North West Central had the Liberal Party hat in her office! The Leader of the Opposition might have picked something up earlier on when he was driving down to Rockingham: "Why did the member for North West Central have a Liberal Party hat in her bag?" Now, of course, they are fighting over another hat—the Leader of the Opposition hat! We are not sure who is going to be wearing the Leader of the Opposition hat by the end of the week.

*Point of Order*

**Dr D.J. HONEY:** Point of order.

**The SPEAKER:** I understand what your point of order is. Minister, you are stretching the limits here.

*Questions without Notice Resumed*

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

What we are demonstrating is that the chaos and dysfunction that was the hallmark of the former Liberal–National government has carried on in opposition—no regard for the finances and no agreement on key policies. I do not know who the shadow ministers are now because they seem to change quite a bit. I think we will have more to say about that in the next couple of days. The opposition is chaos and dysfunction compared with the government, which

is delivering across the services, helping support the cost of living and, of course, managing the finances responsibly while growing jobs and the economy.