

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS — HUAWEI

701. Hon CHARLES SMITH to the minister representing the Minister for Planning:

I refer to the commonwealth's decision last week to effectively block the Chinese-owned telecommunications company Huawei from involvement in Australia's 5G network due to security concerns. In a ministerial statement, the commonwealth stated that it had blocked vendors —

... likely to be subject to extrajudicial directions from a foreign government that conflict with Australian law.

- (1) Given the longstanding security concerns relating to Huawei, why did the Premier allow the Minister for Transport to commit to a \$205 million contract with the Chinese state-owned company for the Perth rail network without taking the contentious decision to cabinet for final approval?
- (2) Can the state government provide any assurances to the people of Western Australia that the security and integrity of the Perth rail telecommunications system and its data will not be compromised by a company that is known to cooperate in Beijing's intelligence-gathering activities?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question. I am answering this question on behalf of the Minister for Transport, not the Minister for Planning.

- (1)–(2) Cabinet approval for the radio systems replacement project, including funding, was given in the 2015–16 budget process and was reviewed and endorsed by cabinet in subsequent budget processes. The Public Transport Authority undertook the procurement process to award the contract, undertaking the appropriate due diligence and probity processes, whilst keeping the Minister for Transport informed as required. This process included seeking and implementing cybersecurity advice from experts, including the relevant commonwealth security agencies, which confirmed that there was no security risk for the radio systems replacement project to proceed.