Mr M. McGOWAN replied:
Firstly, on behalf of the member for Bassendean, I acknowledge the members of the Swan Districts Football Club board who are in the gallery today.
Secondly, I acknowledge the work of the member for Pilbara and I thank him for tabling that petition in Parliament yesterday. He is here fighting for jobs for the people of the Pilbara and Western Australia. He is taking up the fight for the workers on the Sino Iron project, in the Pilbara. These workers have every right to be concerned about the behaviour of Mr Clive Palmer and his company Mineralogy, which holds the leases underpinning the project via a state agreement. It is a serious issue for the state’s reputation as a place to invest. It is a serious issue for the 3,000 Australian workers employed at the project. The operators of Sino Iron, CITIC Pacific, simply want to expand their tailings area onto the adjoining leases. They have been in discussions for a long time now with Mineralogy trying to organise a reasonable outcome. If CITIC is denied access to these leases by Mineralogy, that puts at risk the future development of this important and large magnetite project. I am very disappointed in Mr Palmer’s unreasonable response and his behaviour on this matter. Three thousand Australian jobs are at risk and the ongoing investment of hundreds of millions of dollars is in limbo. I urge Mr Palmer to resolve these issues with CITIC as soon as possible in the interests of Western Australia, Australia and the livelihoods of 3,000 Australian workers and their families.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr M. McGOWAN: State agreements are an important instrument. They are a privileged instrument for the companies that are a party to them, and by their very nature they are there to ensure the state’s best interests are looked after, but there is a responsibility on the beneficiary, Mineralogy, to do the right thing. I noted the recent comments of the opposition leader and his offer to help the government do all he can to sustain the project including altering the state agreement. I thank the opposition leader for this commitment. It appears we are as one on this issue, which is good to know. I am pleased we both agree that this issue needs to be resolved. Clive Palmer and Mineralogy are now on notice. At the end of the day, this government will do what is in the best interests of Western Australia and the 3,000 hardworking Australians who work in CITIC’s operations.