

COST OF LIVING — COMMUNITY SERVICES SECTOR

5. Ms L. METTAM to the Premier:

I have a supplementary question. How is it right that Western Australian charities are being asked to do more with less when demand is increasing and the government has the capacity to better support them?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

That question was factually inaccurate. We have significantly increased the support for charities around Western Australia because we have changed the indexation and provided additional, boosted support for all those charities around the state. As I outlined before, we have also increased Lotterywest's support to some of the emergency relief funds and so forth by tens of millions of dollars. We met with the board of Lotterywest to talk about these issues and seek its support for these sorts of initiatives. That is the sort of support that we will continue to provide to charities around the state. It is all well and good for the opposition to say what it would do, but when its members were in office, they did not do it. It is all well and good to make a two-year commitment that expires before the next state election. I am not quite sure how the opposition thinks that is particularly believable, but if it is believable and we add up everything that has been committed to in the last two weeks, it is more than \$3 billion. We have to remember that the last time the Liberals and Nationals were in office, they nearly bankrupted Western Australia. We had to turn that around.

I can tell members one thing: I was at the national cabinet meeting last week with the other Premiers and Chief Ministers, and they are incredibly envious of Western Australia's financial position. Our position is the strongest of the states. Members opposite might not understand this, but it means that we spend less as a state on interest payments. It means that we have a AAA credit rating, which reduces our interest payments and also means that we are a more attractive place for investment than other states in Australia. That is the legacy of this government. We had to turn around what the Liberals and Nationals did in office; it looks like they have not learnt any of the lessons.