

For the third year in a row, the government will deliver a balanced budget. I have no idea from where the member dreamt up these figures. They do not resonate with me whatsoever.

NORTH METROPOLITAN AREA HEALTH SERVICE

194. Dr K.D. HAMES to the Minister for Health:

As a supplementary question, is it a coincidence that the chief executive of the North Metropolitan Area Health Service, John de Campo, handed in his resignation on the same day that the opposition received those details about his budget through FOI?

Mr J.A. McGINTY replied:

Conspiracy theories abound in the opposition. Given the recent experiences of members opposite, I can understand why their mindset is focused in that direction. John de Campo is a remarkable man. We recruited him from Victoria. One of his weaknesses is that he barracks for the Melbourne Football Club! Nonetheless, he came to Western Australia to be a change agent.

Mr T.R. Buswell: Did you recruit him?

Mr J.A. McGINTY: Yes.

Mr T.R. Buswell: Did you hand-pick him? Did you pluck him out?

Mr J.A. McGINTY: No. It happened on my watch. I am delighted with the job that he has done in playing a crucial role in changing a lot of the thinking within the health system, such as to enable the health reform process to proceed to the extent that we will see now, substantially as a result of John de Campo's input, very significant change in our health system, the structure of our hospitals and the way in which services are delivered. John de Campo resigned because he wants to go back to Melbourne to be with his family; it is nothing more or less than that. His wife came to Western Australia with him. She was a radiographer at Princess Margaret Hospital for Children and wanted to return to Melbourne to be with their children. That is the reason for his resignation. It is a bit rich for the opposition to suggest that there is anything more to it than a purely family-related reason.

Mr P.D. Omodei: It beggars belief that nobody notified you about that FOI application.

Mr J.A. McGINTY: I am aware of FOI applications that are made from time to time.

Mr P.D. Omodei: Therefore you know about the \$69 million deficit.

Several members interjected.

Mr J.A. McGINTY: This year the government will deliver a balanced budget for the health system. Some areas are up; some areas are down. The reason that John de Campo has decided to leave is purely personal. It is a bit of a low blow to suggest that the reason for his resignation was anything other than purely personal to do with his family.

The SPEAKER: I call to order the members for Leschenault and Vasse.

APPLEYARD REPORT

195. Mrs J. HUGHES to the Minister for the Environment:

I refer to the Appleyard report, "Options for bringing water to PERTH from the KIMBERLEY: An Independent Review" released yesterday. Is the minister aware of the environmental impacts that would result from pursuing the canal option?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

I thank the member for the question.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, members!

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: I call to order the members for Roe, Cottesloe and South Perth.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I thank the member for the question.

Professor Appleyard's independent report points out that the canal proposal would be not only a financial catastrophe, but also an environmental disaster. He says that there would be a very high risk of extensive, irreversible environmental damage as a result of building a canal. He points out in the report that there would be a dramatic -

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for South Perth to order for the second time.

Mr M. McGOWAN: He points out in the report that there would be a dramatic impact on fauna and flora along the route of the canal, a dramatic impact on surface hydrology, movement of fauna across the region in the area of the canal, an impact upon national parks and A-class nature reserves along the route of the canal, and a potential impact on the Ramsar Convention's list of wetlands. In addition, 33 000 hectares of land would be cleared to build the canal. Of course, as the water was transported along the route, 200 gegalitres of water would be lost that this state -

Mr P.D. Omodei interjected.

The SPEAKER: I call the Leader of the Opposition to order.

Mr P.D. Omodei interjected.

The SPEAKER: I call the Leader of the Opposition to order for the second time.

Mr M. McGOWAN: We would lose 200 gegalitres of water along the route every year, which this state can ill afford to lose, and it would be environmentally disastrous. It gets worse. This report directly refers to the canal being an opportunity for what it terms dangerous biota to move along its length. Dangerous biota is basically cane toads.

Several members interjected.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Cane toads coming down the canal! Cane toads in swimmers surfing along the canal!

Mr M. McGOWAN: The member for Cottesloe thinks he is not only C.Y. O'Connor, but also Ferdinand de Lesseps. Now he thinks he is David Suzuki. He knows everything about engineering and the environment. The member for Cottesloe knows everything about these things. There is a prospect that cane toads will come from the north of the state into backyards and the wilderness areas and wetlands of the southern part of this state under this proposal.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Cottesloe to order again and the member for Roe.

Mr M. McGOWAN: This report refers directly to that prospect. Anyone who has seen cane toads will understand that they are an ecological disaster. We do not need a cane toad autobahn transporting them from the north to the south of the state. This canal would be a river of ecological ruin. Fortunately, the people of the state recognised that at the last state election when they gave us a thumping victory.

FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES AUTHORITY - BUSH FIRE BRIGADE PROTECTIVE CLOTHING

196. **Mr B.J. GRYLLS to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services:**

The minister told us yesterday that he would investigate why the Fire and Emergency Services Authority of Western Australia has not funded level 2 protective clothing for Western Australia's 250 bush fire brigade volunteers capable of attending structural or building fires.

- (1) Will the minister please provide the number and cost of level 2 full uniforms supplied directly by FESA to volunteer brigades since the introduction of the emergency services levy, and at what cost?
- (2) What would be the cost of providing full level 2 protective outfits to all volunteer brigades in WA?
- (3) Is the minister aware that a country brigade captain called ABC talkback radio today claiming -

Ms J.A. Radisich: After receiving a call from the member for Merredin!

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: It is not a laughing matter if a person has to fight a fire without the proper protective equipment.

- (3) Is the minister aware that a country brigade captain called ABC talkback radio today claiming that he had just three sets of lower level protective clothing for 20 volunteers to attend grassfires?
- (4) What does the minister intend to do to redress this disastrous situation in which many of the state's 25 000 volunteer firefighters are forced to attend potentially life-threatening fires without proper protective clothing?

Mr J.B. D'ORAZIO replied:

I thank the member for some notice of the question. I gave a commitment that I would follow up the question he asked me yesterday. The Fire and Emergency Services Authority advises that, in conjunction with local government, the levy funds equipment for 250 volunteer brigades. The equipment and requirements depend on the role the particular the brigade has. In the case of level 2 equipment, which the member asked about yesterday, safety equipment is made available to fire brigades and units that are trained to combat structural fires.