

URANIUM MINING BAN

534. Mr J.M. FRANCIS to the Premier:

I refer to calls this week by Western Australian Greens Senator Scott Ludlam for Australia's three uranium mines policy to be phased out, and reports in today's *The Australian* that members opposite are tearing themselves apart over the state Labor Party's nonsensical ban on uranium mining. Could the Premier outline what impact a ban on uranium mining would have on Western Australia and the efforts of developing countries around the world to reduce greenhouse gas emissions?

Mr C.J. BARNETT replied:

I thank the member for Jandakot for the question. Like he, I was shocked by the media reports. With the possible exception of the member for Fremantle, all members on this side of the house support the Australian uranium mining industry and support the development of a uranium mining industry in this state. Australia has the largest reserves of uranium in the world—36 per cent of uranium. Because of the ban the previous Labor government had in place, there was no exploration or development activity taking place in Western Australia. There is now, and four projects are likely to go into construction, if not production, over the next two to three years. They are obviously concerned about what policies the major parties might have. I accept that the Greens (WA) have always opposed uranium mining and the nuclear industry. At least we know where they stand. The Liberal and National Parties support the industry, particularly uranium mining in this state.

The member for Jandakot has drawn to my attention the article in today's *The Australian*. It is headed "Party row looms over uranium". We were shocked. I will read one paragraph. It states —

Several well-placed sources —

I wonder who they were —

suggested that the two MPs being actively considered to replace Mr Ripper, Ben Wyatt and Mark McGowan, would immediately move to reverse WA Labor's ban on uranium mining.

I think we need to know, in the interest of openness, whether the member for Rockingham, the member for Victoria Park and maybe the member for Mindarie support the uranium industry in this state. Yes or no? Do they support it? They do not have to rely on FOI documents or minutes of meetings. They can just say now whether they support uranium. I say to the member for Rockingham that it is not hard.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: I am interested in hearing the Premier's response. Please continue.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The member for Rockingham is the shadow Minister for State Development. He has a responsibility to say whether he supports uranium mining in Western Australia—yes or no. He does not have to go through FOI or search documents; he just has to think for a moment and say yes or no. We will be asking that question consistently. This is the only time the member for Rockingham has ever mattered. The industry wants to know what he thinks. We will wait to hear a response.