

**INSURANCE COMMISSION OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA — STATE REVENUE**

*Standing Orders Suspension — Motion*

**MR B.S. WYATT (Victoria Park)** [12.21 pm] — without notice: I move —

That standing orders be suspended so far as to allow the following motion to be moved forthwith —

That this house condemns the Premier for the introduction of legislation requiring the Insurance Commission of Western Australia to pay a dividend of 65 per cent of profits to the state government that will result in an increased financial burden on all Western Australian motorists.

The Premier will be pleased to know that this motion has been typed. The Premier's first issue of consternation with the previous suspension was the fact that it had not been typed, which reflects something about this government and the "appearance" versus the "reality" of what is going on. I will outline why this debate is urgent. Yesterday in question time the Treasurer was asked what impact this would have on Western Australians. He replied, "Well you'll find out; I might even bring it on tomorrow." So there is a red-hot chance that the debate on this matter will come on this afternoon. It will be declared urgent by the Treasurer, as he threatened yesterday, and debated today. As we know there is significant interest in this piece of legislation simply because it was an issue —

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** The gallery is packed!

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** Sorry?

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** There is no interest at all. There is no-one up there listening.

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** Well, I am interested, Premier, funnily enough. The "appearance" issue that the Premier is worried about—he is gazing up at the media gallery and saying, "Clearly it is not an area of interest because the media is not here." As soon as the media does not turn up, let us shut down Parliament because, clearly, that is what drives the Premier. Perhaps that is why his chief spin doctor got a 52 per cent pay increase just a few weeks ago and now the rest of the public service is expected to pay for that. This matter is urgent because it was an issue during the election and the Premier in his response to the RAC reassured it that the Insurance Commission of Western Australia Act did not allow the state government the payment of such dividends. That is true, it does not, but I daresay the Premier did not go on to say, "But we will be changing that legislation to ensure a dividend is paid by ICWA to the state government." This motion is urgent because this will impact every Western Australian motorist.

Yesterday we heard the Treasurer say the impact would be minimal, and later on in the media he said there would be no impact, and now we have an assurance that the compulsory third party insurance will be affordable. Clearly, Treasury has done some modelling on the impact on third party insurance if ICWA is required to pay a 65 per cent dividend to the government. For the Treasurer to make those statements he has obviously asked along the way what impact this will have: "If I can go out there and say it will be minimal"—which has now changed to affordable—"then I need to know what impact that will have." This strikes me as an echo of the electricity price rises at or around the rate of inflation. Western Australians should be nervous. They have had a 45 per cent increase above the inflation rate in electricity prices, and I daresay that in another year there will be a compulsory third party insurance increase. The urgency to bring on the Insurance Commission of Western Australia Amendment Bill 2013—because it will be declared urgent—and the urgency of this debate is, as the bill points out, the government seeking to get that dividend this financial year. This is not a budget measure for 2013–14; this is a measure to bring some money into the government's finances this financial year. I note that the Treasurer said in *The West Australian* today that —

It is the Government's view, that like all GTEs ... the insurance commission should be subject to our dividend policies ...

If that is indeed the case, why was it not part of the last budget? If this government is trying to bring in revenue this financial year, why was it not part of the 2012–13 budget? Since the Premier wrote that letter to the RAC—I look forward to the Premier hopefully releasing that letter—saying that the current legislation does not allow for the payment of dividends, has he warned the RAC? Going by the RAC's media statement today, it certainly does not look like it. This echoes a number now—the dirty dozen of broken election promises made by the government and by the Premier who has simply walked away. We all know the political theory in which the government brings in the nasties early on, but this Premier has set an absolute land speed record in walking away from things he said earlier this year during the election campaign that we are still debating today.

*Point of Order*

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** The member has been speaking for five minutes to make his case as to why he believes this debate should be brought on with a matter of urgency. He has spent most of that time going to the substance of the issue. I think five minutes is quite a sufficient amount of time for him to make his point, and he is now straying into a range of other issues and needs to conclude his argument.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Victoria Park, your comments should be directed towards the urgency of the matter and not to the substantive nature of the matter.

*Debate Resumed*

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** Of course it is urgent, Mr Speaker; you are right, and I will bring myself back to why this motion is urgent. Yesterday in question time the Treasurer said, “I might bring it on tomorrow.” After question time today, I am expecting the Treasurer to get to his feet, declare the bill urgent, and force it through the Parliament. That is what the Treasurer said yesterday he would do.

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** You have just been told that it is not happening.

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** Well, the funny thing is that we have been told over the past four weeks what is happening in this Parliament, only to come in and have something entirely different happen. So excuse me if we do not believe the leader of government business. I know it is not his problem. His problem is sitting just to the right of him at about two o'clock. That is his problem and he has to manage it, and I feel sorry that he has to manage a Premier who has no interest in the issues the leader of government business must raise. This motion is urgent and we need some clarity on this bill because when it was first raised in 2011 by Treasurer Christian Porter, the insurance commission responded then to the issue of a dividend policy. On the Insurance News website on 24 October 2011 it states —

ICWA Chairman Michael Wright says the moves could have a “materially adverse impact” on the commission’s future performance.

The Treasurer may very well bring on legislation this afternoon using the government’s numbers to force it through, a piece of legislation that could very well have a “materially adverse impact” on the commission’s performance, and that is why this motion is urgent. That is why we need to hear from the Premier today about why the government’s position on government trading enterprises has changed from before to after the election. Why, in that letter to the RAC, did the Premier obviously not say, “Well, even though the current legislation does not allow for a dividend, we will change that legislation”? I know that the Premier did not want to go to an election campaign with motorists fully aware that their compulsory third party insurance, their registration, would go up. “How do you know?” That is inane commentary from the Premier. You are taking 65 per cent of the profits of an insurance company. We all know that insurance companies’ burdens fluctuate from year to year and that the insurance companies need those profits in their reserves for protection in future years. We know that! We also now know that the Premier wants to get his hands on that money. This will have an impact on the sustainability of the Insurance Commission of Western Australia, and, as pointed out by its chairman in 2011, it will have “a materially adverse impact”.

This is urgent. The backbenchers of the government have been sold a pup. Whoever brought this to the party room has sold them a pup. They must stand up to the Premier. No-one else will. Stand up to him. Find out what impact this will have on motorists. Found out what impact it will have on the sustainability of ICWA, because its chairman thinks it will have a materially adverse impact on ICWA. That is why this is urgent. Their silence will condemn them.

The house has already heard the silence from the Minister for Finance. Do not stand by and let ICWA face an uncertain financial future just to help the Premier through his current financial troubles, troubles created by the Premier. That is why this matter is urgent.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Member for Victoria Park, a point of order has been raised about giving the reasons the matter is urgent. The member should not digress to the substance of the motion. I understand why you have said it is urgent. If you have anything further to add, add it; otherwise, do not digress to the substance of the motion.

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** I thought I was speaking directly to why this matter is urgent. The future sustainability of the Insurance Commission is urgent. We may well debate that this afternoon.

**Mr J.H.D. Day:** No, we’re not.

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** No. The Treasurer said yesterday, in answer to my question, “Opposition, we may well bring it on tomorrow.” The Leader of the House is now saying, “No.” Every other piece of legislation the house has debated so far has been declared urgent. I dare say there is a red-hot chance. All the Premier needs to do is turn around and say, “Come on, John, bring it on. We’ll ram this through before Paul Murray can get more of a head of steam on this issue.”

*Point of Order*

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker —

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members!

**Mr B.S. Wyatt** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Victoria Park is not to talk while a member makes a point of order.

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** Mr Deputy Speaker, members in this house are to be referred to —

**Mr B.S. Wyatt:** Mr Speaker.

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** My apologies, Mr Speaker. Members in this house are to be referred to by the electorate they represent or the portfolio they hold, not by their first name.

*Debate Resumed*

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** Thanks for that useful contribution to the debate, minister. It is another great example of appearance over substance in this government.

This is urgent. It is time for the Treasurer and the Premier to explain exactly what impact this will have on Western Australian motorists. They know it will have an impact. Get up and explain it.

*Question to be Put*

**MR J.H.D. DAY (Kalamunda — Leader of the House)** [12.32 pm]: I move —

That the question be now put.

*Division*

Question put and a division taken with the following result —

Ayes (35)

Mr P. Abetz	Ms M.J. Davies	Mr A.P. Jacob	Dr M.D. Nahan
Mr F.A. Alban	Mr J.H.D. Day	Dr G.G. Jacobs	Mr D.C. Nalder
Mr C.J. Barnett	Ms W.M. Duncan	Mr S.K. L'Estrange	Mr J. Norberger
Mr I.C. Blayney	Ms E. Evangel	Mr R.S. Love	Mr D.T. Redman
Mr I.M. Britza	Mr J.M. Francis	Mr W.R. Marmion	Mr A.J. Simpson
Mr T.R. Buswell	Mrs G.J. Godfrey	Mr J.E. McGrath	Mr M.H. Taylor
Mr G.M. Castrilli	Dr K.D. Hames	Mr P.T. Miles	Mr T.K. Waldron
Mr V.A. Catania	Mrs L.M. Harvey	Ms A.R. Mitchell	Mr A. Krsticevic ( <i>Teller</i> )
Mr M.J. Cowper	Mr C.D. Hatton	Mr N.W. Morton	

Noes (19)

Dr A.D. Buti	Mr F.M. Logan	Mr J.R. Quigley	Mr P.C. Tinley
Mr R.H. Cook	Mr M. McGowan	Ms M.M. Quirk	Mr P.B. Watson
Ms J. Farrer	Ms S.F. McGurk	Mrs M.H. Roberts	Mr B.S. Wyatt
Ms J.M. Freeman	Mr M.P. Murray	Ms R. Saffioti	Mr D.A. Templeman ( <i>Teller</i> )
Mr D.J. Kelly	Mr P. Papalia	Mr C.J. Tallentire	

Pairs

Mr B.J. Grylls	Ms L.L. Baker
Mr R.F. Johnson	Mr W.J. Johnston

Question put and passed.

*Standing Orders Suspension — Motion Resumed*

**The SPEAKER:** As this is a motion without notice to suspend standing orders, it will need an absolute majority in order to succeed. If I hear a dissenting voice, I will be required to divide the Assembly.

Question put.

**The SPEAKER:** A division is required.

*Division*

Division taken with the following result —

**Extract from *Hansard***  
[ASSEMBLY — Thursday, 13 June 2013]  
p1514c-1517a  
Mr Ben Wyatt; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr John Day

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Ayes (19)

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Ms S.F. McGurk  
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Mrs L.M. Harvey  
Mr C.D. Hatton

Mr A.P. Jacob  
Dr G.G. Jacobs  
Mr S.K. L'Estrange  
Mr R.S. Love  
Mr W.R. Marmion  
Mr J.E. McGrath  
Mr P.T. Miles  
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Mr A. Krsticevic (*Teller*)

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Pairs

Ms L.L. Baker  
Mr W.J. Johnston

Mr B.J. Grylls  
Mr R.F. Johnson

Question thus negatived.