

2017–18 STATE BUDGET

**439. Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE to the Treasurer:**

I refer to the budget, which outlines a clear path of returning the budget to surplus.

- (1) Can the Treasurer outline for the benefit of those opposite the importance of getting the budget back into surplus?
- (2) Can the Treasurer outline how this will enable the government to control and bring down debt?
- (3) Is the Treasurer aware of anyone who is opposed to getting the budget back into surplus and opposed to reducing debt?

**Mr B.S. WYATT replied:**

- (1)–(3) This afternoon I have enjoyed listening to the budget reply of the Leader of the Opposition and the shadow Treasurer. If I could summarise it, members, it is basically this: “You didn’t do enough to fix the wreck that we created!” If I could summarise the position of the Liberal Party, it is, “You didn’t do enough to fix the mess that we created over the last eight and a half years!” It is almost as though the Leader of the Opposition got to his feet and said, “Look what I did! You haven’t done enough to fix that!” That is what the Leader of the Opposition did. It is interesting that his one response out of all this is to ask me to spend more money. That where is we are. That is the interesting point, Leader of the Opposition.

But, again, I want to make a couple of key points. What we saw in respect of the credit rating downgrade of the former government and it then being put on negative watch was commentary around the ability of the Parliament to respond to its circumstances. The former government never had revenue measures blocked in the upper house—never, not once. Now the Liberal Party and its former colleagues—I am not sure what they are the moment, but its coalition partners, the National Party—have abrogated responsibility, Leader of the Opposition. They have. To be frank, I am not surprised, but a higher standard is expected of the Liberal Party. I tell members what: if, as a result of the performance of the National Party, and if that is supported by the Liberal Party, we see WA face another credit rating downgrade, I will be in here as a government member to suspend standing orders to pin that to your chest, Leader of the National Party. I will pin a downgrade to the National Party. That will mean for every single Western Australian, on the debt pile that the former government left us, higher interest rates. Let me tell members this: that will impact on households in Western Australia. So, I say to you, Leader of the National Party, by way of an aside to the Liberal Party, there are consequences for the bitterness that now awashes your party—there are consequences. The Leader of the National Party can make her political point. But ultimately, if in the end that is what happens, I will be coming in here, I will be suspending standing orders, and I will be holding her to account.