

COMMISSION OF INQUIRY — PERTH ARENA

**81. Hon MICHAEL MISCHIN to the Leader of the House representing the Premier:**

Madam President, I take this opportunity to congratulate you on your election to your post and wish you well in the discharge of your responsibilities.

I refer to the commission of inquiry into decision-making processes, risks and contract terms of selected projects that the Premier claims were mismanaged and that he claims will recommend safeguards to prevent that happening again.

- (1) Given that the Perth Arena project the Barnett government inherited from Labor took three years longer to complete than had been planned and cost some \$300 million more than had been budgeted, and so fits the criteria of a dealing that has “exposed taxpayers to hundreds of millions of dollars in additional costs and contributed to WA’s record State debt”, why is that project not being examined in the interests of high-level scrutiny, transparency and accountability?
- (2) Does the Premier believe that nothing is to be learned from that example and that it can and will form the model for his government’s future projects and management?
- (3) Is that and other examples of incompetence in decision-making and implementation of projects by the then Labor government and of ministers of that government who are now part of the McGowan cabinet, and which have contributed to the state debt, too politically embarrassing to be investigated?

**Hon SUE ELLERY replied:**

The honourable member really does lead with his chin, but I thank him for some notice of the question.

- (1)–(3) As the honourable member noted, the commission of inquiry is to prevent the financial deterioration that occurred under the previous Barnett government from happening again. This deterioration is represented by debt rising from \$3.6 billion, when the Barnett government took office, to \$33.2 billion this financial year in the *Pre-election Financial Projections Statement*, projected to reach \$41.1 billion at the end of the forward estimates with three consecutive years of deficits. As such, the current list of 26 projects and contracts from the then Barnett Liberal–National government is the appropriate focus for the commission of inquiry.