

“SPECIAL INQUIRY INTO GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS: FINAL REPORT”

71. Ms J.J. SHAW to the Premier:

Before I begin today, on behalf of the member for Bicton I acknowledge the year 6 students from Santa Maria College in the gallery.

I refer to the findings of the Special Inquiry into Government Programs and Projects that there was a disregard of proper process by the Liberal and Nationals ministers and the revelation that billions of dollars’ worth of decisions were made by these ministers without business cases. Can the Premier outline to the house how this disregard of proper process has impacted on the state and how the McGowan Labor government will ensure that this is never repeated?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

I thank the member for Swan Hills for the question. It is very clear to everyone across Western Australia that we can never go back to the shocking practices and processes of the Liberals and Nationals when they were in office. As the member just quoted, the special inquirer said, and I quote again, that ministers showed disregard for established cabinet processes as set down in the cabinet handbook. The special inquirer talked about business cases. Business cases are necessary for commercial projects, but the business cases that went before the Liberal–National cabinet were —

Dr M.D. Nahan interjected.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition!

Mr M. McGOWAN: The Leader of the Opposition needs to take responsibility. He needs to apologise to the people of Western Australia.

Dr M.D. Nahan interjected.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, I call you to order for the first time.

Mr M. McGOWAN: The Liberal and National Parties need to apologise to the people of Western Australia for what they did to our state. This report shows that the Liberal–National government, in office from 2008 to 2017, was the worst financial manager in the history of this country. I quote the report —

It is notable that a significant number of projects examined did not have adequate or indeed any business cases.

There was also the case of the cabinet —

Dr M.D. Nahan interjected.

Mr M. McGOWAN: When are you going to apologise?

Dr M.D. Nahan interjected.

Mr M. McGOWAN: We will keep raising these issues until you take responsibility for what you did.

Dr M.D. Nahan interjected.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition!

Mr M. McGOWAN: Then there is the case of cabinet shutting out Treasury. The report states that Treasury was not consulted by agencies in the preparation of some cabinet submissions. The special inquirer stated that Treasury —

... was excluded from many areas where it had responsibility.

Who was the Treasurer, Mr Speaker? It was the Leader of the Opposition—one of seven Treasurers, to be fair. I quote the inquirer —

Too many major projects have been undertaken on an ad hoc basis and without adequate planning. Cost and time blowouts have been common outcomes.

This government has already commenced the establishment of Infrastructure WA. Previously, we undertook machinery-of-government changes to ensure better collaboration and coordination across government. We are also enforcing the 10-day rule for cabinet submissions. This morning, we set out what we will do in a comprehensive submission to the state’s press. We are going to ensure that all agencies are properly and adequately consulted on cabinet submissions. We have set standards for business cases and risk analysis. We have also established a central project management office for major projects. The lessons of the failed Liberal–National government’s time in office are set out in the report by John Langoulant.

I will tell members opposite who has apologised for the Liberal and National Parties' time in office: Hon Dr Steve Thomas, Liberal member of the upper house. I quote what he said this morning —

I apologise to the people of the South West, for the financial outcomes that they've been left with.

Mr D.T. Redman interjected.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I will repeat it now that I have been interrupted. I quote again the apology of Hon Dr Steve Thomas, Liberal MLC —

I apologise to the people of the South West, for the financial outcomes that they've been left with. It's probably —

Mr A. Krsticevic interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Carine!

Mr M. McGOWAN: Mr Speaker, I will quote Dr Steve Thomas again so that members opposite will hear it —

I apologise to the people of the South West, for the financial outcomes that they've been left with. It's probably multi-generational debt that'll have to be paid back by our children and grandchildren.

There is a Liberal who has taken responsibility. When will members opposite take responsibility for what they did to taxpayers, children and grandchildren in this state? It was an appalling time in office and members opposite are all responsible!