

MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING — REGIONAL AREAS

4. Mrs L.M. HARVEY to the Premier:

I first acknowledge the individuals from the Country Women's Association of Western Australia and our regional members who came to Parliament today. I also acknowledge the year 6 students of St John's School, Scarborough, and their teachers, Ms Bottega and Mr Beresford, from my electorate who are at Parliament today.

I refer to the Premier's unenviable record as the only Premier in the history of Western Australia that the Country Women's Association has protested against. When will the Premier stop being so arrogant and listen to the CWA and the people of Western Australia —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: — and backflip on the remainder of his ill-conceived education cuts?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members on my right!

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

As I said outside, I have enormous respect for the Country Women's Association, and, as I said outside Parliament House, as a primary and high school student who attended regional public schools, I have enormous respect for people in the regions.

Mr D.C. Nalder interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Bateman!

Mr M. McGOWAN: I find it a little bit rich, though, to have the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party, the member for Scarborough, come in here and talk about this when she put up TAFE fees by 500 per cent.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr M. McGOWAN: For all those students not destined for university, but who were going through high school aiming for a TAFE course, she put up the fees by up to 500 per cent—and sometimes more. If someone wanted to do a trade, a traineeship or one of those courses that gave someone an opportunity in life, there was a 500 per cent increase in fees under the member for Scarborough.

Mrs L.M. Harvey: Did you reduce them?

Mr M. McGOWAN: That is what she did. When we came to office, we delivered on our commitment to freeze TAFE fees, and it is currently in place.

Mrs L.M. Harvey interjected.

Mr M. McGOWAN: The member put them up 500 per cent; that is her record in education.

I addressed the Country Women's Association, a terrific organisation, as I said, out the front of Parliament House, and I explained to them that we inherited from the Liberal and National Parties forty thousand million dollars' worth of debt. That is what they did across the forward estimates.

Several members interjected.

Mr M. McGOWAN: That is what they did.

Several members interjected.

Mr M. McGOWAN: The shadow Treasurer has some hide. He says it is only \$32 billion.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr M. McGOWAN: He says it is only \$32 billion; he is a detail man. He has got the detail. He said that it was that they put it out by only \$32 billion, not \$40 billion. He ignored the forward estimates. Woe betide future generations of Western Australians if the Liberals and Nationals get back in. We will go back to that shocking budgeting and ignorance of the financial situation and ignorance of the forward estimates if they ever come back to office.

We have made some tough decisions, but at the same time we have invested heavily in communities across Western Australia in educational initiatives like education assistants, regional learning coordinators and capital

works in schools across the state, because we are getting the balance right. When it comes to education and fixing the finances, we are getting the balance right.