

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS — HUAWEI

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

I refer to the Premier's statement in the house last week regarding the Huawei Metronet contract, and I quote —

There was a proper tender process and ASIO advice ... and no concerns were expressed.

I also refer to today's article by the hardworking Fairfax journalist Nathan Hondros.

- (1) Can the Premier confirm the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation expressed no concerns because it did not actually provide any direct advice to him or his government other than a general security briefing early in the procurement process, and well before Huawei was awarded the \$206 million Metronet project?
- (2) Will the Premier explain why he continues to mislead the house over the nature of the project, ASIO's advice and when he became aware of the issues regarding the Huawei contract?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

- (1)–(2) The advice that the journalist received from ASIO was as follows. There were three points, not one; only one point appeared in his story. The three points were these. Firstly, ASIO provides briefings on a range of intelligence matters to the Prime Minister and other ministers, the Leader of the Opposition, state government representatives, and officials. Secondly, in this instance ASIO provided a general security briefing early in the procurement process to the WA government. Thirdly, ASIO has also provided advice to government via the Critical Infrastructure Centre in the Department of Home Affairs. As is longstanding practice, ASIO will not comment further on the advice provided to government. In other words, the advice the journalist received indicated that there were a range of sources of advice to government and a range of occasions on which government received that advice. There was written advice to government, there was verbal advice to government, and there was also the advice to the Public Transport Authority.