

ELECTRICITY SUPPLY — REGIONS

594. Mr P.J. RUNDLE to the Minister for Energy:

I have a supplementary question. Thanks, minister; that is welcome news for our regional small businesses. Can the minister clarify when the trial will finish; and when, potentially, will the long-term implementation take place for our solar providers and the like?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON replied:

As I just explained in my answer, the trial will run from now until 31 March on the specific feeders that I mentioned. Western Power is confident that it can successfully implement this approach and that will even out the supply. The only reason it can do this—I want to make this absolutely clear—is that the McGowan Labor government has invested in the new technology of that advanced metering infrastructure.

Mr M. McGowan: They would have sold it.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: As the Premier says, I remind people that the plan of members opposite was to sell Western Power. In Victoria, the advanced meters are owned by the retailer. If a customer changes their retailer, they lose their meter and it is taken away by their retailer. It is not until the next day that the other retailer turns up and puts one in. That is ridiculous. That is the privatisation pathway that members opposite wanted to see here in Western Australia, and we rejected that. That was their entire policy at the 2017 election. It was the first thing that members opposite wanted to do. They said that we could not have effective budget management in Western Australia without selling Western Power. We kept it in public hands. There are more day-labour staff at Western Power today and more people in regional Western Australia are working on wages for Western Power now than there were when members opposite were responsible for Western Power. We have reintroduced apprentices to Western Power, which members opposite stopped. They are all things that we needed to do. The only reason we are able to deliver for regional Western Australians is that we rejected the National Party's privatisation agenda.

Visitors — Kingston Primary School

The SPEAKER: Just before I give the member for Riverton the call, on behalf of the member for Murray–Wellington, I would like to acknowledge the teachers and student leaders from Kingston Primary School in Australind. I very much welcome you here for question time in Parliament today.