

As the extract below from the transcript of the 9 March hearing in Perth outlines, Senator Chris Back asked for information that was taken on notice for a reply

Senator BACK—Okay. Let me then ask you this question: in the event that Western Australia does not sign up, as a result of being dissatisfied with what Premier Barnett understands to have been the COAG agreement that he reached with then Prime Minister Rudd, would that 30 per cent of funding coming from the federal government be at risk in Western Australia? I am not asking for your opinion; I am just asking what the machinery, the mechanism, is.

Mr Brown—I would concur with my colleague's comments that it is probably information that we do not have available to us because we are in a different area of government in Western Australia. It is probably a question for officials from the Department of Training and Workforce Development, who make those allocations.

Senator BACK—Sure. You obviously cannot take it on notice, then, because you cannot act for them, but I think it is information that we do need to have. Perhaps it needs to go back to Minister Collier.

Mr Brown—Yes, we can take that back to Minister Collier.

Senator BACK—Because I think it is important, as a Western Australian senator, that I have some understanding as to whether or not those funds are likely to be placed at risk.

The advice provided from the Department of Training and Workforce Development is that it is not aware of any discussions either official or unofficial that would suggest that support for the NVR is a condition of funding under the national funding agreement. Similarly there has been no suggestion of a national partnership or reward payment for being a party to the NVR. In short, there is nothing to suggest that national funding is at risk from the position WA has on the NVR.