

MITCHELL FREEWAY — NORTHERN SUBURBS RAIL LINE — CONGESTION

115. Mr A.P. O’GORMAN to the Minister for Transport:

I refer to the congestion crisis on the Mitchell Freeway and on the Clarkson rail line.

- (1) Can the minister confirm the Public Transport Authority advice that the number of railcars ordered will be at least five short of the number needed to meet the increased congestion?
- (2) Has the minister made approaches to the suppliers of the ordered railcars to advance the delivery dates to cope with that congestion; and, if not, why not?
- (3) Given the urgency of the congestion problems facing Perth, will the minister commit to contacting the railcar suppliers to advance all delivery dates; and, if not, why not?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL replied:

- (1)–(3) The basic thrust of this question from the member for Joondalup is that we can deliver railcars ahead of the time lines on which companies can make them. The unfortunate reality —

Mrs M.H. Roberts: It depends on when you place the order, does it not?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: We placed the order for the railcars last year. I met with Downer EDI, or Bombardier—the company that makes them—along with senior officials of the PTA. We asked them to give us advice as to the shortest possible time line to deliver those railcars. The shortest possible time line to deliver those railcars is the first half of 2013. I asked them why—which is the question the member asked me—and they said there are some quite complicated components that they have to order from offshore, and that is physically how long it takes to deliver the railcars. If I could physically get the railcars here earlier, I would. But the facts are that that is how long it takes to produce railcars. I cannot pluck a figure out of the air. I am aware that the former government, in its rush to get railcars here in the early days of a previous order, had railcars delivered that could not be used, claimed they were here, parked them on some train track somewhere, and subsequently had them fitted out.

Mr M. McGowan: You’re making it up as you go along!

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I am not making it up at all.

Mr M. McGowan: You couldn’t keep the trains running last week, and now you’re making things up!

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: What am I making up—the youth unemployment rate? What am I making up—the elephant from the Perth Zoo?

Mr M. McGowan: Well, you look like it!

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Mandurah, I formally call you to order for the third time today.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Leader of the Opposition, that is right. I do have a challenge around the waistline, member for Rockingham! I do not think that is hidden from anybody. But I am working on it with my morning attendance at boxing at Bill’s gym in Northbridge, and perhaps the member for Rockingham and I could meet there one morning —

Point of Order

Mr A.P. O’GORMAN: Mr Speaker —

Mr M.P. Whitely: I’m enjoying it!

The SPEAKER: Member for Bassendean, I formally call you to order for the first time today. Member for Kimberley, I am going to instruct you to be more careful in the words you choose to use in this place. I think you had a point of order, member for Joondalup.

Mr A.P. O’GORMAN: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I clearly asked the question in three parts. The first part was: are we going to be five cars short when they are delivered? The minister has not addressed that, and he is deteriorating into clown activities rather than answering a very serious question.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Let me explain it again. Last year, this government committed \$164 million to procure trains. Those trains will arrive —

Mr A.P. O’Gorman: Will you be five short when they are all delivered?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I will be very clear on this, member for Joondalup, because the member needs to understand it, so I will explain it slowly. Those trains were ordered in 2011. The lead time is approximately two years. When we ordered those trains, we were told by the opposition that they should have been here last year or the year before. If they should have been here last year or the year before, members opposite should have ordered them when they were in government. Those trains will arrive here on the shortest possible lead time.

I will just close with this and get back to the Leader of the Opposition's reflection on my portly challenge. If we do meet in the ring, Leader of the Opposition, I am concerned that if your feet keep growing at the rate that Alston has them growing, you will not fit in the ring with me!