

SOUTH COAST HIGHWAY — UPGRADE

890. Mrs R.M.J. CLARKE to the Minister for Transport:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to supporting local jobs and local businesses through its record investment in regional roads.

- (1) Can the minister update the house on the work underway on upgrading South Coast Highway?
- (2) Can the minister outline to the house how this and other transport projects across regional WA are helping to support the state's economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:

- (1)–(2) I thank the member for Murray–Wellington for the question. Of course, Mr Speaker, I joined your good self in Albany this morning to turn the sod on stage 3 of our \$30 million upgrade to South Coast Highway. At the last election, we committed \$30 million to upgrade South Coast Highway. The works that we are commencing now include widening and reconstruction works, and the construction of two new passing lanes between Bluff Creek and Kojaneerup West Roads. These projects will commence today and will finish in May next year.

Mr F.M. Logan: Well done, minister!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Thank you! I am glad someone is giving me credit for this.

Mr P.C. Tinley: You deserve it!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Thank you.

Stage 1, the Mead Road section, has been completed. That includes widening the pavement from seven to 11 metres. Stage 2, the Kalgan section, has also been completed. Western Australian company Ertech Pty Ltd was announced as the successful contractor for stage 3. As I said, the works commenced today and will be finished in May 2021. This road services a lot of the tourism community, and of course the farming community. It is really servicing freight movements, and also tourism and caravanners and tourists all up. It is an essential upgrade. Of course, other major projects are happening in Albany. Works are progressing on the Albany ring-road. That project will basically create over 1 000 jobs, together with all the other jobs in the community.

Unlike the National Party, we have always supported spending on roads, members. We did not think it was not a priority to spend on roads. That is why we have incredible expenditure across the state. Whether it is in Geraldton, on Brand Highway or Indian Ocean Drive, or through the Kimberley and the Pilbara, there are works absolutely everywhere.

This is a government committed to regional road safety and spending on roads. We do not need bumper stickers to tell us how to prioritise our expenditure. Spending in regional WA is in our DNA.

Several members interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: It is in our DNA. We do not need bumper stickers to remind us.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members, I want to hear this. This is good news.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: We do not need bumper stickers to remind us that we have to spend money in regional WA. That is what we do in regional road spending. I do not know why National Party members take issue with us. I do not know why they take issue with the Labor Party. I do not know why they take issue with me or the Premier in this place. The National Party's problem is not on this side of the chamber. The problem is the person who normally sits behind the Leader of the National Party, the member for North West Central, Vince Catania, who is creating division in the National Party and intimidating and bullying members of the National Party. The question is, Leader of the National Party —

Point of Order

Mr D.T. REDMAN: Mr Speaker, I think the minister is bringing someone's name into disrepute.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Minister, just get back on track, please.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Extract from *Hansard*

[ASSEMBLY — Wednesday, 11 November 2020]

p7791c-7792a

Mrs Robyn Clarke; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Shane Love

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Sure. The question for the National Party is: is he worth it? As has been demonstrated, that member is creating division and intimidating and bullying members. On this side of the house, we are concentrating on delivering —

Point of Order

Mr R.S. LOVE: Mr Speaker, I refer to your ruling a moment ago to the minister to get back to the topic. She has strayed back onto discussing a member of the National Party again, contrary to your order.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: The minister will get back to the topic.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: On this side, we are focusing on delivering in regional WA key infrastructure, key roads and road safety improvements.