

## **GRAIN RAIL NETWORK**

### *Statement*

**HON MIA DAVIES (Agricultural)** [5.30 pm]: I rise tonight to speak further on the debate held during non-government business this morning on the grain rail network. Before I go any further, I would like to say that I thought Hon Ken Travers missed a number of opportunities earlier today to put the Labor Party's policy on grain rail on the record during the debate. Later when we were on the steps of Parliament House and he was receiving the petitions from Bill Cowan, I thought there were a number of opportunities for him to categorically promise that a future Labor government would invest \$100 million in the tier 3 rail network and give the Wheatbelt people who were there some peace of mind. But he did not.

**Hon Ken Travers:** But the debate is about you honouring your promises from the last election. I'm not so worried about the next one.

**Hon MIA DAVIES:** No; I will get to what we have done, because our record is much better than the Labor Party's. The member did not do that because the Labor Party has absolutely no interest in the grain rail network. I know that the good people of the Wheatbelt will not be drawn into the feigned interest that has been on display in this place today, because they are too good for that. I know that they will place no store in the honourable member's rhetoric, because there is not one iota of evidence of a track record to speak of that demonstrates that the Labor Party will deliver for these communities. I know that they do put store in the parties that have delivered for regional communities. The Nationals in government have delivered and will continue to do so. The good people of the Wheatbelt will see right through Hon Ken Travers and his posturing on this issue.

**Hon Simon O'Brien:** At least they are transparent about something!

**The PRESIDENT:** Order! Let the member make her own speech. She is doing very well.

**Hon MIA DAVIES:** Thank you, Mr President.

The honourable member's motion today made it very clear to me that his real concern is for those people in the metropolitan area. I draw members' attention to the part of the motion that stated, "We believe this is a bad decision and it will result in thousands of additional trucks on Perth roads." Aside from being fundamentally wrong when he mentioned that 700 kilometres of rail has been closed—the rail lines have not been closed—what we have seen today is the first glimpse of where the member's real intentions lie in this issue. The motion today revealed what we have always known: the Labor Party has no concern for anything beyond the boundaries of Perth. If Labor members ever find themselves on this side of the house, we can all rest assured that regional WA will return to being the afterthought that it was during the Carpenter and Gallop years. Hon Ken Travers failed to mention the investment that the Liberal–National government has made since coming to government in 2008. He failed to mention that the government has made the biggest investment in grain rail and road infrastructure in the past 20 years. The last upgrade to the grain rail network was made in the 1990s when the Liberal Party and the National Party were in government. There is no high moral ground for the Labor Party to peer down at us from. It did nothing between 2001 and 2008. It paid no thought to regional WA, it paid no thought to the communities that were crying out for investment, and it paid no thought to the agricultural industry or its needs. The previous Labor government did not put forward a \$187.9 million funding package, which was matched by federal government funding of \$135 million, to re-sleeper the lines and upgrade rail sidings and roads in the Wheatbelt. We have done that. Hon Ken Travers conveniently overlooked the fact that this government has put more money into the grain rail network than any other government in the past 20 years.

**Hon Ken Travers:** So, how much have you put into rail as a state government?

**Hon MIA DAVIES:** I only have 10 minutes to speak; Hon Ken Travers had 45 minutes or so this morning. I was very disappointed not to be able to put my case this morning.

**Hon Ken Travers:** You are making figures up like your leader did in the other place.

**Hon MIA DAVIES:** We have the opposition feigning interest in the Wheatbelt, but in reality it is completely focused on the metropolitan area. I feel for the opposition's regional members such as Hon Matt Benson-Lidholm, because it must be incredibly difficult to make a point in the party room as a regional member of a party that is singularly focused on metropolitan Perth. What hope does a member representing the Agricultural Region have of progressing his issues when the Labor Party is singularly focused on metropolitan votes? I suggest that when a member works on an issue, one of the things they would do to seek to raise the profile of the issue is to put out a few media statements, and Hon Ken Travers did not miss the opportunity to do so today with the media on the steps of Parliament House. As we all know, media statements provide a written record for the member to point to and say, "I cared about your issue and here is what I have done." Hon Ken Travers, as shadow Minister for Transport, has issued, by my count, 59 media statements this year; he is very conscientious. But to me the content of these statements is an indication of a future Labor government that has no intention of

investing in regional infrastructure, let alone grain rail infrastructure. Of the 59 media statements that he has issued, only nine of them deal with regional transport issues or matters. The Labor Party has absolutely no credibility, or record to stand on, when it comes to investing in regional transport infrastructure. I can point to the Perth–Mandurah rail line, which is the legacy of the previous Labor government, and good on it; it is a great service. I am sure Hon Max Trenorden, Hon Philip Gardiner and I would like to see another train out to the bustling town of Northam and to the Avon Valley; we would very much like to see that. Running the railway down the middle of the freeway in plain sight of all those hundreds of thousands of voters in marginal voter land was a very effective campaign tool. This singular focus on metropolitan Perth was the hallmark of the previous Labor government and if Hon Ken Travers's key areas in the transport portfolio are anything to go by, I suggest that the future Labor government will not be too different.

This government's track record is vastly different. I reiterate that we have already made the biggest investment in grain rail infrastructure in 20 years. I acknowledge that sections of the community would like to see further investment, specifically in those lines that are identified and categorised by Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd as tier 3. Therefore, I return to the point I opened with—that if I was a member of those communities advocating additional investment, it is my contention that I would much rather have members sitting on the government side of the house, with a track record of delivering for regional communities, working on my behalf, because we are focused on getting the best outcome possible for regional communities. We are not using these communities to score cheap political points or to drive an agenda in the Perth metropolitan area.

Several members interjected.

**Hon MIA DAVIES:** The Labor Party is not remotely concerned about Wheatbelt roads or rail.

Several members interjected.

**The PRESIDENT:** Order, members!

**Hon MIA DAVIES:** As someone who spends a great deal of time driving on country roads, I am always conscious of road safety. I share the road with tourists, road trains, grain trucks and everything in between. My family shares the roads with those tourists, road trains and grain trucks and everything in between. It is not an academic exercise for me, Hon Max Trenorden, Hon Philip Gardiner, Hon Wendy Duncan, Hon Col Holt or any of our other regional members. This concerns our families, our friends, our colleagues and our communities, and this government has done something towards mitigating some of the damage that has been left to fester out there under the Labor government of 2001 to 2008, which had no interest in rail infrastructure while it had the opportunity to do something about it. We continue to work on getting a better outcome for the agricultural sector and the communities that will be impacted by the changes to the way CBH and individual operators choose to deliver their grain to port. The Labor Party has no high moral ground on this issue and contrary to the motion that was put this morning, no rail lines have been closed for this harvest. Growers have the option of delivering to bins on rail this harvest. Members on the government side of the house will work with industry to ensure the long-term viability of the agricultural sector. The opposition was on shaky ground when it suggested that we do not consider the economic, social and environmental impacts of any project that we undertake in regional WA. In government, the Nationals have a singular focus on just that. Our track record says that we work to address the issues impacting regional communities. Our track record says that we put regional communities front and centre in our decision-making process. And our track record says that we do not fear to stand up for what is right. The opposition's track record says that it cares only about Perth. This motion says that and the Labor Party's record in government says that, too.