

TRANSPORT — ELECTION PLATFORMS

44. MR N.W. MORTON to the Minister for Transport:

I know firsthand that transport was a major topic of interest during the recent state election campaign that saw the lowest ever primary vote for the Labor Party in 90 years. During the campaign, the minister and the Premier referred to the Liberal Party as having a balanced transport plan. With this in mind, can the minister please explain to the house the key differences in our plan compared with those put forward by the opposition?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL replied:

I thank the member for Forrestfield for the question and welcome him to the house. He is a vast improvement on his predecessor. I also acknowledge, on behalf of the member for Murray–Wellington, students and teachers in the gallery today from Hope Christian College in Roelands. As the member for Forrestfield is aware, we talked about transport a lot during the election campaign. We recognise that people use motor vehicles in WA and people need public transport. We delivered a balanced public transport and road investment program. Some features include a \$315 million extension of the Mitchell Freeway, a commitment to develop the Perth–Darwin highway, which will move some 3 000 to 4 000 heavy vehicles out of the Swan Valley, a rail link to the airport, the transformational Metro Area Express light rail project, \$30 million into cycling infrastructure in Western Australia and \$36 million to ensure that the 928 schools that do not have flashing safety lights out the front will have them over the next four years. It was well planned and properly costed, and it was a balanced outcome.

The opposition had a plan that solely focused on an investment in rail. There were three fundamental flaws in that rail plan. Firstly, the planning was incredibly poor. The instruments it had available were the back of an envelope, a \$15 Sharp calculator and Professor Peter Newman. Its transport plan was not only flawed in design but it was also flawed in objective. It was a transport plan designed to link all the Labor marginal seats in the Perth metropolitan area. Let us look at who got on the train. It left from Balcatta. Where is the Labor member for Balcatta? It went down to Morley. Where is Reece? It went across the river and through Belmont out through the airport to Forrestfield. It is good to see the member for Forrestfield here. There was even a bit thrown in trying to unseat the member for Southern River. He did not get on that train; he was elected as a member of this government. The Labor Party's first failure was planning. Its second failure was that it designed a railway line to the airport that did not go to the airport terminal. That was only a minor flaw. If we got off a 12-hour flight back to Perth, we would have had to wait for a bus, catch a bus, go a kilometre and a half down the road and wait for a train because the train came every 15 minutes during peak time. It was an absolute world-beater. Finally, the Labor Party promised, on this calculator with the shadow Minister for Transport's stubby digits poking away at the numbers, that it would cost \$3.8 billion. Labor Party members said they would die in a ditch on the \$3.8 billion. For some reason the Labor Party submitted the costings to Treasury. I am glad it did. It looked at those costings. What did it come back with? They were costed at \$5.2 billion. That was only \$1.4 billion, or 40 per cent, out!

Two plans were presented to the voting public of Western Australia at the last election. Ours was well planned, balanced and well designed. The Labor plan, which was overwhelmingly rejected by the voters of this state, was not planned and not costed and, thank heavens, not happening.