

REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

787. Mr D.T. PUNCH to the Premier:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to keep WA safe and strong through its significant investment in supporting communities across regional Western Australia.

- (1) Can the Premier update the house on how the state government is supporting vital infrastructure projects in regional WA, including the Bunbury waterfront redevelopment?
- (2) Can the Premier outline to the house how this investment is supporting local jobs and local business?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

- (1)–(2) I am so pleased that the budget has delivered so heavily for regional Western Australia for infrastructure programs all over the state. In the course of the last fortnight, I have been to Geraldton, Kalgoorlie on the weekend, and Port Hedland, Broome, Derby and Kununurra, and I look forward to continuing to visit regional WA. I must say, member for Nedlands, I had a very strong reception in Kalgoorlie. People are very happy with the arrangements this government has put in place to protect the health of Western Australians. We have put in place the largest ever investment in regional infrastructure—\$7.5 billion-plus across the next four years. The overwhelming majority of that comes from the consolidated account and other revenue sources. This is on top of other infrastructure that is appropriately termed statewide infrastructure, much of which is in regional WA.

The budget will fully fund our recovery plan and will deliver around 200 job-creating projects across regional WA. That includes Bunbury waterfront stage 3. I was down there on Friday with the member for Bunbury inspecting the work. This is a project that will start shortly, and that has been talked about forever, and will significantly improve and make the Bunbury waterfront one of the premier waterfronts of anywhere in Australia once this project is finished.

The SPEAKER: Just behind Albany!

Mr M. McGOWAN: There are a lot of waterfronts around Western Australia but Bunbury will be first amongst equals! There are other projects all over regional WA. There is \$100 million for the regional road safety program—an idea of the transport minister taken up by the federal government as a consequence. We will invest \$125 million to upgrade TAFEs all over regional WA—Geraldton, Kalgoorlie, Albany, Muresk; you name it. There is \$231 million for regional primary and secondary schools all over Western Australia. Tourism infrastructure all over the state will be upgraded, as will police stations.

It is clear that this government can be trusted to invest in regional WA. We now see, in some recent commentary, the Liberals and Nationals at war over regional WA.

Mr D.C. Nalder interjected.

Mr M. McGOWAN: There has been lots of recent commentary, shadow Treasurer. One of the comments was this. The Liberals' finance spokesperson, Hon Dr Steve Thomas, told ABC regional radio on Monday that billions of dollars were wasted under the last government under royalties for regions. I quote —

... there's a couple of billion dollars that probably could've been better spent and I'm simply saying that better rules would actually reduce that wastage.

He was referring to the time of the last government. Yesterday the Leader of the Nationals came into the chamber and viciously attacked Hon Dr Steve Thomas when she said —

Hon Dr Steve Thomas forgets that his Liberal Party colleagues sat at the cabinet table and approved every dollar that was spent through royalties for regions while we were in government. ... I truly hope that the position proffered by Hon Dr Steve Thomas does not reflect the broader Liberal Party view of royalties for regions.

Is Hon Dr Steve Thomas correct, members of the Liberal Party? No answer. They are not backing Steve Thomas, or are they? It is interesting.

A government member interjected.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I do not know who they are backing. They are a bit confused on many issues. A few months out from a state election, the Liberals and Nationals are at war again. RUN ON How can they possibly be trusted in government? How can this mob possibly be trusted in government when they cannot even agree on the most basic of things a few months out from a state election?