

INFRASTRUCTURE REPORT CARD, ENGINEERS AUSTRALIA

471. Mr A.P. O'GORMAN to the Premier:

I refer to the Western Australian infrastructure report card released today by Engineers Australia. Will the Premier outline the state government's response to the report?

Dr G.I. GALLOP replied:

I welcome the report that was issued today from Engineers Australia. As members know, it has conducted a series of audits of infrastructure around Australia over recent years. Those audits make a good contribution to the debate in Australia on infrastructure. First of all, the report shows that Western Australia is in better shape than the rest of the nation. It is an excellent validation of the work this government is putting in. Secondly, the report acknowledges the commitment of extra funding that the state government is putting into infrastructure. Thirdly, and very importantly, the report contains a strong endorsement of the southern suburbs rail project and recognises how important that rail project is for the future of the city that we live in and love. The Minister for Planning and Infrastructure is not in the chamber today, but I am sure that she would be interested to read that.

The government is responding to these needs and has committed a record \$15.8 billion over the next four years to improve infrastructure. The amount includes a record \$4.7 billion to be spent on projects this year, and includes: \$715 million for water infrastructure; \$600 million to improve the quality, reliability and safety of electricity supply; \$400 million for the southern suburbs rail project; and \$300 million for roads around the state. The government will use its strong position to invest in infrastructure.

The government acknowledges that the report identifies some areas in which more work needs to be done. The government will certainly do that. One of those areas is the rail system and the freight system associated with rail, which, of course, was privatised under the previous government! The report reaches another conclusion that is very important.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, members! I call to order the members for Warren-Blackwood and Darling Range.

Dr G.I. GALLOP: The effort that we are putting into infrastructure in this state is far ahead of the commitment that was given by the coalition government when it was in power. That is indicated in this report. One of the key recommendations was that Western Australia's allocation from federal government initiatives such as AusLink should be improved. The Royal Automobile Club and Engineers Australia support the government in its efforts to obtain more money from the commonwealth to be spent on infrastructure in Western Australia. There is only one group in Western Australia that does not support the government in its efforts to get more money from Canberra, and that is the Western Australian Liberal Party! Time and again, the Western Australian Liberal Party lines up with the federal Liberal government against the interests of the people of Western Australia.

I welcome the report; it shows the strength of what we are doing in Western Australia. It indicates areas in which we need improvement, and the government will follow up on those. It endorses the government's campaign to get the commonwealth to give Western Australia a fair go.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call to order the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Warren-Blackwood.