

Mr Dean Nalder; Ms Libby Mettam; Ms Mia Davies; Mrs Liza Harvey; Ms Rita Saffioti; Ms Sabine Winton; Mr Ben Wyatt

INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

Matter of Public Interest

THE SPEAKER (Mr P.B. Watson) informed the Assembly that he was in receipt within the prescribed time of a letter from the member for Bateman seeking to debate a matter of public interest.

[In compliance with standing orders, at least five members rose in their places.]

MR D.C. NALDER (Bateman) [2.55 pm]: I move —

That this house condemns the McGowan Labor government for failing to deliver major job-creating infrastructure projects after three parliamentary years in government.

Right at the start, I would like to lift the lid on the comments that have been made by the Premier. Today, one might have heard the Premier list a raft of projects that are occurring in Western Australia, and they might mistakenly think, “Far out! The state government is doing lots.” That is where they would be mistaken. I would like to take members through some of the elements that go with that.

In its first budget, this government committed \$1.38 billion to infrastructure spending within the Department of Education over the forward estimates. In the most recent budget, that is down to \$360 million. Then we get an announcement from the government that it is increasing investment in maintenance for schools by \$200 million, but that is actually still \$160 million lower than what was in the budget and forward estimates two years ago. We are seeing the government manipulate the numbers when it comes to infrastructure spend and a transparent and open budget system, because there are other elements that this flows through to.

I draw people’s attention to a paper released by Infrastructure Partnerships Australia titled “Australian Infrastructure Budget Monitor 2019–20”. It is a fascinating read because it highlights that Western Australia is ranked eighth of all Australian states on its infrastructure spend. The paper states that Western Australia’s share of 7.24 per cent of its budget is the lowest in the country and that WA is the only state in Australia with a spend below 10 per cent. If we look at this on another level, the report goes on to state that across the country, the average spend of infrastructure by all state governments and the commonwealth is \$7 347 per capita. In Western Australia, the average spend is the lowest in the country, at roughly half the national average. This government has prided itself on and promoted its infrastructure spend, yet infrastructure spending has reduced year on year, despite billions of unplanned and unbudgeted dollars coming in that have pushed the budget way into surplus. I reiterate that a budget surplus is important—I have no qualms about that—but balancing the state domestic economy is equally important.

Ms S. Winton interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Wanneroo, I call you to order for the second time.

Mr D.C. NALDER: That is what this government has not been doing while it has been out there promoting jobs. I have heard the Premier and the Minister for Transport get up on their feet to say that jobs are being created, infrastructure projects are being invested in and that is creating this many jobs. What is fascinating about this report is that it shares the infrastructure funding since 2006–07—the last 13 years—and what is planned in the next two years is the lowest on record in that 13-year period. We have seen a continual decline of infrastructure funding in Western Australia at a time when we have a struggling domestic economy and the government is spruiking the jobs that it is creating through infrastructure spending, yet it is the lowest on record.

As infrastructure projects wind up, this government is not creating new infrastructure projects to maintain jobs in Western Australia. The government needs to have a good look at this report because it has several billions of dollars in funding. Let us look at the government’s budget at the moment and the funding that is coming in. It has \$4.35 billion extra in the budget just from the GST fix and iron ore royalties over 2015–16, but we already know that the figure was \$500 million above that in the first quarter of this year. The budget is approaching \$5 billion. On top of that, the government has received \$1.4 billion from the sale of Landgate.

This report goes on to state that the government has more money coming in from additional funding sources like the sale of the TAB. In the next minute we will hear that the government has more additional funding; I am sure that it will come up with a few extra sources. Perhaps we will hear that Bell Resources has finally been resolved and several hundred million dollars is coming in from that—I do not know. This government seems to have access to a lot of funding while the domestic economy is hurting, households are hurting and small businesses are hurting. We have record levels of mortgage stress and an increase in the number of written warnings to, and disconnections of, utilities to small businesses—21 per cent over the last 12 months. Members of the government tell us that small businesses are not hurting in Western Australia but I do not know where they are looking. They can spruik the low

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debt level as much as they like but small business owners are telling us that they are in trouble and that they are hurting. This government is not doing enough to support the infrastructure spend in Western Australia.

If we take that another step further—I do not want to go too far into my colleague the shadow Minister for Transport’s area—this report says that there is potentially good news on the horizon. It states —

... with funding beginning to flow for the \$4.1 billion METRONET project, Western Australian infrastructure funding levels may rise in the coming years.

This report highlights that Metronet funding has not been fully accounted for within the budget, which is what we have been saying. This government is talking about a budgetary outcome but it has not put the operating expenses for Metronet into the budget. It has not been honest with the community at all about budget outcomes. The Premier has again been spruiking about debt. He tries to allocate a debt that was never in place under the former government. He tries to use that \$40 billion figure, but today he acknowledged that it was \$32 billion. He has acknowledged that he has been fudging the system. We know from the Treasurer’s own words that he uses the *Pre-election Financial Projections Statement*. That statement did not contain the GST fix or the rebounding iron ore prices, yet the government is claiming the credit for those whilst still growing debt. In the last budget this government spruiked that Western Australia is the only state in Australia in which debt is going down, yet how can debt be going down if all the projects promised by the government were not put into the budget? This report highlights that not all Metronet projects are in the budget. This government has not been transparent with the community. We know that the budget numbers are fudged to get a particular outcome and support a particular narrative. We know that this government has not understood the ramifications of its policy decisions. We witnessed that over the last couple of weeks when we saw some kneejerk reactions to an op-ed that I wrote. For heaven’s sake, I put up some recommendations that the state should follow and within a week it had responded to four of them. In fact, the only one that it has not responded to deals with infrastructure spend. We are raising this matter today because the government needs to have a serious look at it. It is making errors in this space and it needs to fix it up. The government’s kneejerk reactions to the policies it brought in included a rebate policy for apartments. We know that this Premier likes to surround himself with “yes” people who tell him how good he is. He is listening to certain people. I can tell members now that industry bodies tell us that they have to be positive around the government because it is so vindictive. If they are not positive, they run the risk of not getting anything in the future. They will go out and say, “That’s great, Premier. That’s great government. Thank you so much for doing that.” Behind the scenes they are going, “Oh, my goodness, this will kill the apartment market. Oh, my goodness, this will devalue existing apartments. Oh, my goodness, we have 2 500 apartments that are under construction or just completed and have not been sold that now cannot be sold unless they are sold at a big discount.” We have people with existing apartments who might want to sell, but they cannot unless they sell at a big discount because of the government’s rebate scheme. What the government had not thought about with this rebate scheme is that there were projects ready to go that all of a sudden would not qualify or would need to sell off more apartments. We are now getting deferment of construction while those developments sell apartments into the marketplace. A deferral is flowing through the system. It has really damaged that construction side. I look forward to another backflip from this government when it deals with that.

This has been one mistake after another whereby the government has not understood the policy consequences of what it has been implementing and what damage it has done to the domestic economy. We are raising that today and talking about what we have seen. This report shows that the infrastructure funding for the general government sector over the next two years is lower than what it was in 2006–07, which makes it the lowest in the 13 years shown in this report. This is at a time when the government is out there spruiking how it is creating jobs.

This Premier did not acknowledge that of the 50 000 jobs, 75 per cent are part-time. The Premier did not acknowledge that of the 50 000 jobs, 59 per cent are in the public service. They are not real jobs that are being created. The government spruiks that it is maintaining a tight wages regime. I give it credit for that. Why has payroll gone up over \$1 billion? It is because the government has employed a lot more people. The government promised to save \$1.1 billion over the forward estimates through its \$300 million redundancy program, by taking out 3 000 employees from the general public sector. Why has the public sector gone up by 3 800? If the government has taken out 3 000 people, it has replaced them with 6 800 people and we have seen a climb in the payroll of over a billion dollars. This government clearly does not have its priorities right. It needs to take a good look at what is happening in the domestic economy and to understand that small businesses out there are really hurting. Their payroll tax is not deep enough. It is less than one per cent of the payroll spend. It is less than seven per cent of the increased payroll tax that the government is forecasting over the next four years. The government is forecasting \$2.5 billion of additional payroll tax over the next four years and will give \$170 million of it back. Does the government reckon that small businesses are coming to me celebrating? I can tell members that they are not.

As I said, we are seeing that utility disconnections in small business and written warnings combined are up 21 per cent in 12 months. Small businesses are out there hurting. We need this government to get its foot off the hose.

It needs to quarantine some of these windfall gains that it has been receiving and ensure that it puts them into good infrastructure in Western Australia that leads to productivity gain. We need to make sure that the government gets its foot off the hose so that Western Australians can get a job and get on with helping the domestic economy.

MS L. METTAM (Vasse) [3.08 pm]: I join the shadow Treasurer in supporting this motion that this house condemns the McGowan Labor government for failing to deliver major job-creating infrastructure projects after three parliamentary years in government. There is a lot of concern out there in the community about this government's failure to deliver, particularly in the transport sector. This concern is being acknowledged not only in the community; it is obviously being felt by the government. After all, why would it invest in promoting a multimillion-dollar spin campaign? We have seen promoted on the Tenders WA website that a campaign will be launched to sell what this government will do in transport. I quote from the Tenders WA site. It states —

The WA Government's Transport Portfolio is about to embark on an unprecedented level of activity ...

We on this side of the house are asking: why, after three years of government, is that activity not already happening? There are no more excuses. This government has received \$13.6 billion from the federal government for key transport projects, including \$2.3 billion for the Metronet project, which is anticipated to create 10 000 jobs. The concern on this side of the house is how the government is delivering on what has been promised. Consultants who have worked on Metronet projects have signed non-disclosure agreements in relation to time lines. We know that the government is sensitive about that and a fortress of secrecy surrounds the Minister for Transport when it comes to the provision of information. On occasion, the Auditor General has ruled on the Minister for Transport's decisions to not provide information. I also point to a Standard and Poor's report, which was released recently, on infrastructure investment. It states —

In addition, Western Australia's budgeted infrastructure program is relatively flat during the next few years, and smaller than it was in the first half of the decade. Expenditure on roads and public transport represents about 40% of the capital budget. This includes the government's signature Metronet rail extension program. In fiscal 2019, Western Australia delivered A\$5 billion of capital spending, about 20% lower than it had planned for in its 2018–2019 budget. Our forecasts for the next few years assume capital underspends of about 10%.

That not only endorses what the shadow Treasurer was saying, but also underlines the fact that this government is not delivering what it promised. A 20 per cent underspend in the important transport portfolio; no wonder this government is investing in a propaganda campaign to try to tell the people of WA that there is activity and something going on in the transport portfolio!

It is hard to spin it. As I stated, the Liberal federal government has significantly invested in transport projects, such as \$2.3 billion in Metronet. We saw the Morley–Ellenbrook line legislation come into Parliament only about a month ago. The federal government invested \$500 million. We have seen three big budgets from this government and still no funding committed for the Morley–Ellenbrook line. We have also seen significant investment in roads. In the lead-up to the election in 2017, we saw a commitment that the then McGowan opposition would commence construction of the Morley–Ellenbrook line in 2019. Again, there is a big gap between what was promised in terms of delivery and what we are going to see from this government. More recently, a front-page Joe Spagnolo article in *The Sunday Times* announced that the tender for construction of that project would not be awarded until 2020, which is a year later.

I talk about the secrecy. I also refer to these so-called fact sheets that have since been removed from the Metronet website that provide a time line for the Metronet targets and refer to the construction of the Morley–Ellenbrook line in late 2021 or 2022. It is clear that whatever the McGowan government says, the truth is that construction is at least a year late. Apparently, the delivery of the Metronet railcar trains, known as the C-series, is due to begin in 2021. That is another broken promise and a failure of the government to deliver in the transport portfolio. In a media statement of August 2019, we saw that the first delivery of railcars will not take place in 2021; we are looking at 2022. That is another failure of the McGowan government in its delivery of transport. No wonder the Standard and Poor's report said that there would be a 20 per cent underinvestment in 2018–19. The Forrestfield–Airport Link project has become a disaster under this government. This project started in 2016. It was proposed to be completed by 2020, as stated in November 2016 and referred to in the media statement.

What have we seen under this government's watch? We have seen a series of disasters, failures in safety issues, setbacks and a great deal of secrecy. The Huawei project, which I understand was worth \$136 million, did not even go through a cabinet process. We heard of the 26-year-old New Zealand man left in a critical condition after being struck by a hose. We heard of tunnel workers suffering the bends. We heard about a great number of safety issues, including contaminated soil, which will lead to this project not being delivered as promised in 2020 but in the second half of 2021. Again, that is another delay, another setback and another broken promise for delivery by this government, as it will not be delivered until after the next election.

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I understand that the Leader of the Opposition will talk about the Roe 8 and Roe 9 projects, but it is worth pointing out that \$1.2 billion worth of federal funding was committed to a project that would create 10 000 jobs. If we add those 10 000 jobs for Roe 8 and Roe 9 to the Metronet project, jobs that are not being delivered by this government—they are being delayed by this government—we are talking about 20 000 jobs for Western Australians that are on hold because this government has put its foot on the hose of this job-creating infrastructure.

The railcars are late. They will not be delivered in 2021, but in 2022. The construction of the Ellenbrook rail is late as well. It will not be completed by 2019 but by 2022. The completion of the Forrestfield project is late as well. We were meant to see the commencement of the Thornlie–Cockburn Link this year but contracts are yet to be awarded. I will leave my comments there. I know that other members wish to speak.

MS M.J. DAVIES (Central Wheatbelt — Leader of the Nationals WA) [3.17 pm]: Very briefly, I rise on behalf of the Nationals WA to support the motion. We heard about “jobs, jobs, jobs” ad nauseam before the last election no matter where we were. When I drove through my electorate on the Great Eastern Highway onto the Roe Highway, I saw a big billboard every time I came back to Perth. The Labor Party said that it would create jobs. I think it had the philosophy that if it said it enough, everyone would believe it. Three years on, I do not think anyone does, and certainly the numbers bear that out. We have seen a mirage, an illusion, and smoke and mirrors. The Premier has a grab bag of projects in his trusty back pocket that he goes to every time he stands up to talk about how brilliantly this government is doing. The fact is that the raft of evidence that has been provided today shows that this is not the case. When we look at regional Western Australia, specifically royalties for regions, we see the same smoke and mirrors and illusion being created in that program. It is only three per cent of the budget but after analysis of where that money is going, we have ascertained that the government is doing the same thing to royalties for regions that it has done to the broader budget. It is underspending. The government does not have a pipeline of projects that allows it to spend the entire \$1 billion a year, so that underspend is short-changing regional Western Australia. That money could be spent on initiating projects and creating jobs in regional Western Australia.

We saw a \$320 million underspend in royalties for regions last financial year. It is not good enough. If we add that to the \$1.6 billion over the forward estimates that the government has cost shifted into royalties for regions, again short-changing regional Western Australians, we see that these are things that governments should be spending money on—things like orange school bus services and Water Corporation subsidies. We have no qualms about that. That is ordinary government spending and it should not be coming from royalties for regions. The government is short-changing regional Western Australians who have good project ideas and good initiatives. They would like to leverage dollars from state, federal and local governments to create those projects that will deliver the jobs that this government continues to tell us it will be delivering but is unable to because of the smoke and mirrors. Let us never forget and go back to the first year that the Labor Party was in government when we saw a whole raft of projects cut. I have a list of those projects, and they never came back into the budget. These projects could have done something to kick the domestic economy on. The government is desperately trying to repair it because of the changes it made with its stingy approach, making sure that it could say it was delivering a budget surplus. We have seen and heard today that that is absolutely not the case. The government is short-changing Western Australians in regional Western Australia. We see that every day, so we are very happy to stand and support this opposition motion. We think that the government needs to be doing more to come good on the promises that it made to the Western Australian electorate at the last election.

MRS L.M. HARVEY (Scarborough — Leader of the Opposition) [3.20 pm]: I, too, rise to speak to this matter of public interest that the opposition has raised. For some time we have been calling for the government to bring forward infrastructure projects. What we continue to get from the government are promises and more promises about projects that it is going to deliver, but delivering projects seems to be a bit of a problem for this government. The member for Bateman highlighted the “Australian Infrastructure Budget Monitor 2019–20” report, which was pretty damning on this state government. It states —

Western Australia increased its infrastructure funding over the forward estimates by \$1.1 billion compared to the previous budget. However, it remains in last position in our Budget Monitor analysis for the third time in a row and is the only state with an infrastructure funding commitment below 10 per cent of total expenditure.

What it goes on to say is telling, because this is exactly what the opposition has been saying for quite some time —

But with funding beginning to flow for the \$4.1 billion METRONET project, Western Australian infrastructure funding levels may rise in the coming years.

People in our community have been led by the nose, taking the word of this government, living on a hope and a prayer that it will start the infrastructure projects that were promised at the last election. Not one inch of rail has been laid of Metronet, the key infrastructure project of the government. What we and Western Australian companies are hoping, along with the infrastructure monitoring group, is that at some point in the future we might see this

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\$4.1 billion worth of commonwealth Metronet funding expended in Western Australia, we might see some projects started, and we might see some contracts awarded to commence these roadworks. I will go through a list of projects the government has failed to deliver on: the Albany ring-road, with no contract awarded; the Bunbury Outer Ring Road, with no construction contract awarded —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members, you will have your chance to have a say!

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: The government has failed to deliver on the Mandurah train station car park, with no construction contract awarded; Midland train station has no business case; Karnup train station has no business case; Claremont station has no construction contract awarded; and the Denny Avenue, Caledonian Avenue, Oats Street and Wharf Street level crossing removals have no contracts awarded. Since November last year, 21 500 full-time jobs have been lost in Western Australia. We know with the Roe 8–Roe 9 project alone, with the contingent liability sitting in the federal budget, 10 000 direct and indirect jobs are going begging because this government refuses to commence a congestion-busting road that has been on the books for over 50 years. The people in the south metropolitan area need it and Main Roads acknowledges that it will be required, with an outer harbour or without an outer harbour. Roe 8–Roe 9 is needed. It is a construction and infrastructure project that the government refuses to even contemplate. When we are out in the community, the construction sector comes to us saying that the government’s inability to commence substantial infrastructure projects has now hurt our industry to the point at which we do not have tradies in Western Australia. When contracts are awarded, there is no-one in Western Australia with the requisite skills to actually deliver on them. What is that going to do? The delays in bringing these projects forward mean that by the time the contracts are awarded and the companies start looking for workers, they end up having to pay goodness knows how much for labour because all the workers are employed in projects on the east coast, where proactive state governments have been going hell for leather to bring their infrastructure projects online. They are getting those jobs started and kicking their economies along.

We have had seven quarters of domestic recession, and companies are going belly up every day of the week. There are small business owners in the construction sector who are going to Foodbank to put food on the table. That is the situation we find ourselves in, because this government cannot get its act together, cannot get a business case up, cannot award a contract, and cannot get these infrastructure projects started. The reason that the opposition has raised this matter of public interest is crystal clear.

MS R. SAFFIOTI (West Swan — Minister for Transport) [3.25 pm]: To quote the former member for Bunbury, “Dear, oh dear, oh dear”. What sort of economic argument was that from the opposition? I grant the shadow Treasurer tried to put some economic thought into what he was saying, but the member for Vasse and the Leader of the Opposition again showed that they should not stand up and talk economics in this place.

Let us go through some of the crazy stuff that has been said today on this motion. I do not know what planet members opposite are living on—maybe Planet Roe 8—because anyone driving around the suburbs and around regional Western Australia will see roadworks everywhere. When I catch up with people who have not seen me for a long time, do members know what they say? They say, “Jeez, there’s a lot of roadworks happening out there, Rita”. That is what they say. There are roadworks everywhere. The member for Vasse stood up and made misleading claims again; we just cannot trust anything she says.

Mr P. Papalia interjected.

The SPEAKER: Minister for Tourism, you are not on your feet! The Minister for Transport is on her feet.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Under the previous government there was a shark on every corner. Now the member for Vasse stands and says, “You promised this and you’re doing something else”. Well, we are not. I have stood here about 10 times to explain the Ellenbrook rail line contracts, and then explained them a further dozen times. If the member does not understand them, it is not the government’s problem. If she does not want to do any research and read some basic facts, that is not our problem. I say to the member for Vasse: do some research and actually get it right. Come and argue the facts—I am willing to argue the facts—but do not come in here and quote a few newspaper articles and some unnamed consultants. Who were they? The member says that I am full of secrecy; who told her that there was not enough work out there? I am telling her that that is not what the construction industry is telling me. People in the construction industry have said that they have never experienced anything like this pipeline of work. All they do is give us credit, at lunches and at dinners. The Leader of the Opposition was not at the dinner where they had “Surfing the Wave of Construction” on an overhead.

Members opposite come in here and try to claim that nothing is happening, but all they have to do is drive around and see it.

Ms J.J. Shaw: Maybe that’s the problem. Maybe they don’t.

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Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Maybe they do not. I do not know where they are driving.

Let us go through the projects. We obviously need an information campaign, because members opposite are not absorbing the information. Maybe we do need an information and communication campaign, because even though opposition members drive the streets, they obviously are not absorbing all the infrastructure that is out there. There has been record expenditure on roads and rail. The opposition glosses over everything we are doing and says that we have not done Oats Street. No, we have not, because we cannot do everything on day one, and we never promised to do everything on day one.

The member for Vasse referred to the Forrestfield–Airport Link. During the 2013 election campaign, when did the member for Vasse say that the then Liberal government was going to finish that project? She does not even know. She refers to FAL; when did the previous government commit to finishing that project?

Ms L. Mettam interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: No, it did not. The member for Vasse says 2020; no, it did not. Members opposite come in here with no recollection of what they did, because they do not do research. They come in here and say that the project is delayed, but the previous government delayed it for two years. It made the election promise in 2013, after four years in government, but did not commence the project. We started it.

Ms L. Mettam interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I was there when the tunnel boring machines were started; I remember it well. There is also a plaque with my name on it. In 2013, the previous government promised it, after four years in office. Members opposite are shaking their heads, because they hate the facts. In four years, the previous government did no planning. It made a commitment at the 2013 election and did not start it in the next four years. Now, we are building it. It is a challenging project, but I am glad that we are building it. It will be a great project. We have redesigned some of the stations, and it is a fantastic project. Members opposite come in here as if they did anything. We have gone through the history of the first three years of the previous government. We cannot recall a single project started in the first three years under the transport ministers in the previous government. I will go through all the projects that we have started. Members opposite do not deal with facts.

I think there is a good economic argument to be had. We are doing things such as the maintenance expenditure boost, because we want to make sure that tradies have jobs. We know that maintenance expenditure in our schools and hospitals is a way to get people jobs quickly. There is about \$300 million in those two packages, out there now, getting jobs for tradespeople in the suburbs. If the federal government did a little bit more—for example, increased the Newstart allowance—that would also be good for the state economy. We understand the challenges, and we are there meeting those challenges. That is a good thing, and we can do it because we manage the finances well. Unlike the previous government, which basically spent everything it had and everything it thought it was going to have, we do not do that. As a result, our finances are in better shape than what we inherited. We can make those decisions for economic stimulus, such as the maintenance spending, and that is what we are doing.

I respect the arguments of the shadow Treasurer in this place. I think he tries to create some sort of narrative, but he cannot stand up and just lament the fact that the finances are better. He just cannot do that. It is just like complaining that the present government has surpluses and debt lower than it would have been had the previous government remained in office. Members cannot argue that the finances have not improved. Make an argument, but base it on facts; that is what the opposition is not doing. To be honest, I think the shadow Treasurer should acknowledge the work done by this government to get the finances into a good state. The Premier and the Treasurer, in particular, have been very steady on this, and concentrating on it day by day. Sometimes we say that they are a little bit too tough.

Mr W.J. Johnston: That's what a spending minister would say.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Yes, that is what a spending minister would say, but if that was not the case, we would not be a good government. The finances are in better shape. We understand the economic challenges, and that is why we have done things such as the boost in education and health spending. I wanted to address that financial narrative first up.

The member for Vasse says she has been speaking to consultants, but they should not have any time to speak, because they are doing all the work for our projects. More consultants than ever before are being employed designing our projects and putting them through the business case process. Then there is this idea that all the tradespeople have left. They were leaving under the watch of the Leader of the Opposition, because the previous government had no pipeline of work. We have created a pipeline of work. Again, members opposite can sit there and deny the truth. The member for Vasse is good at that. She just shoots from the hip and has no understanding of the facts. She can say whatever she likes, but out there are roadworks on every corner, and construction companies are excited that they have so many projects that are either currently being constructed or going through the tender process. There is so much work coming and in the system at the moment. Let us go through some of those projects,

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because there are a lot of them. I will start in the member for Jandakot's area. There is the Armadale Road duplication, a project that the former government could not do in eight and a half years. There has been massive growth in Piara Waters and Harrisdale. The Armadale growth corridor is significant.

Mr P. Papalia: Byford feeds into it.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Yes, Byford, but in particular the connection between Cockburn and Armadale—the member for Armadale understands—has seen unbelievable growth. The former government could not get that project off the ground. We committed to bring it forward, and do you know what? We did it. It is happening now. Have any members seen it? The member for Jandakot has seen it. The member for Roe and the member for Armadale have seen it. That work is happening now. I am not sure whether some members opposite have seen it. Perhaps we need the information program to spell out that project.

Construction of the Armadale Road to North Lake Road bridge, which is a massive project, is commencing very soon, and, again, it was never committed to by the previous government. Upgrades to Karel Avenue have started. This is just in the member for Jandakot's area. I will go through the entire state very soon. In the member for Jandakot's electorate, there is the near completion of the Armadale Road duplication, the Armadale Road to North Lake Road bridge is about to commence construction, and the Karel Avenue upgrades are underway. Has anyone ever seen such progress in two and a half years of a new government? That is just in Jandakot!

Also in the area of the southern suburbs is Kwinana Freeway. There has been no substantial spending on the freeway for decades, frankly. The biggest expenditure ever on the freeway system is happening now, members. Everyone who drives on the freeway can see it. As I said, the feedback that I get from everybody, including people who do not vote Labor, is "Jeez, Rita—I can't believe how many works are on the freeway!" There are roadworks everywhere. The people of the southern suburbs are seeing a wider freeway from Russell Road to Roe Highway, which has been the biggest congestion spot across the network for many years. The widening of that freeway and better connections are underway. I will make further announcements on that very soon, which may interest the member for Jandakot.

Mr Y. Mubarakai: Give me more!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: There is always more! This member for Jandakot is a good member for Jandakot, unlike the previous member, which is why we are able to deliver roadworks everywhere. I apologise for the disruption on the roads, but that is what happens when a government has to catch up on infrastructure. The northbound widening of Kwinana Freeway from Russell Road to Roe Highway is underway. Has any member not seen the Kwinana Freeway northbound works? They are there and visible. The Murdoch Drive connection is again something that we negotiated. It is well advanced and will be completed soon. Have no members opposite seen the works for the smart freeway project? I have and, again, it is a project that we started. Let us think about it. In two and a half years, they are just a few of the projects that we have started. The smart freeways project was always on the books for previous ministers, who would have liked to have started it, because it is about better utilising existing infrastructure and it ticks all the boxes when it comes —

Mr D.C. Nalder: You used to give me a hard time about my one per cent.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: This is more than one per cent. I would say this is a bigger percentage. I will tell the member how much later. There will be a substantial increase, because in a sense we will be adding an extra lane. It is probably 30 per cent or 25 per cent.

The smart freeway project is happening now. If only my good friend the member for South Perth was here because the Manning Road on-ramp is happening, too. Let us think about the Manning Road on-ramp. We are considering whether to call it the "Johnny McGrath" on-ramp, if he makes the move to the other side —

The SPEAKER: Make it the off-ramp.

Ms S.E. Winton: Make it the Kirkup off-ramp.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Maybe, as he is circling South Perth, member for Wanneroo. That on-ramp will be good because prospective members will get to circle the seat of South Perth a bit more.

The Manning Road on-ramp project has been talked about for as long as I have been alive. What will the Manning Road on-ramp do? It will take a lot of pressure off Manning Road because people will not be turning right and right again to come back onto the freeway. Canning Highway will benefit significantly, too, because fewer people will be entering from the east of Canning Highway to go south.

Mr D.C. Nalder: The loop.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: It will stop people doing the loop, reduce congestion from people coming from the east and of course people coming from the west will not encounter all those people doing the loop. It will be across the entire

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network. The member for Cannington is not here; however, Leach Highway will also benefit because a lot of people use the Leach Highway on-ramp to go south. That project is underway. I was there with the federal member for Swan, Steve Irons, and the member for South Perth. The member for South Perth took the poster of the project provided by Main Roads as a commemoration of the Labor government delivering a project he has wanted for decades. I think the picture is sitting in his office. If anyone drives down Canning Highway, they can stop by the member for South Perth's office and see the picture of the project we are delivering that the former government failed to deliver over decades. That is the Canning Road on-ramp.

The widening of Mitchell Freeway from Cedric Street to Vincent Street is, again, another great project, member for Balcatta. The project has been called for; it is a major hotspot across the network. Member for Balcatta, is it happening now? Can you see it? Did we sign the contract? Did it happen under this government?

Mr D.R. Michael: It's a big bridge.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Of course, we cannot forget that beautiful bridge.

Mr B.S. Wyatt: It's an extraordinary bridge.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: It is an extraordinary bridge. Again, did that happen under this government? The answer is yes. Did we sign the contract? Yes. Are those people being employed under a Labor government? Yes.

More recently, with the members for Balcatta and Kingsley, I announced the widening of Mitchell Freeway northbound from Hutton Street to Cedric Street. It is another great project that was entered into contract and delivered under this government. The NorthLink project started under the previous government —

Mr B.S. Wyatt: You said it's a great project.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I acknowledge that it is a great project and that it has had bipartisan support from federal and state Liberal and Labor Parties. I do not think one can get from Toodyay to Scarborough in 25 minutes, but apart from that, it is a very, very good project.

Mr R.S. Love: It might be from Muchea.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: That is not what you said, member.

The Reid Highway dual carriageway project is in the eastern corridor. We have signed the contract on that project and it is being delivered right now. The duplication between Altone Road and West Swan Road is a major project we were very keen to get underway. We signed the contract and got underway the Roe Highway–Kalamunda Road intersection upgrade project, and works are happening now at that major congestion point.

I am just now getting to the member for Wanneroo. This has been such a great tour through the suburbs of Perth and we are now up in Wanneroo! What is happening in Wanneroo, members? A lot is happening in Wanneroo. What do people see when they go to Wanneroo? They see the duplication that is already finished. Again, it is something that was promised for 20 years but not delivered. We delivered that project within two years. The building of two interchanges is underway now. It will improve connections throughout the entire area. The former government opposed one of those projects. It said that it would stop the project. That is what the former government said, but we have gone ahead with the project to reduce congestion and improve safety in the whole area. The High Street project will be underway very soon. I forgot to mention the new Lord Street project. It is another project that we have already delivered in our first 2.5 years.

If members go through regional Western Australia, they will see project upon project. The Great Eastern Highway dualling project, which was an election commitment, is underway. It will provide drivers entering Kalgoorlie with a safe road. We have upgraded Indian Ocean Drive, and will continue to undertake those upgrades. We have delivered the Maggie's Jump Up, Wyndham spur, Chester Pass Road and Amelup curves projects. The Onslow Road upgrade is underway. Again, we are delivering the Broome Cape Leveque Road project that we inherited. We are delivering a lot of projects on South Coast Highway as a result of our election commitments.

The SPEAKER: Hear, hear!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The Karratha–Tom Price road is underway. We will see some activity very soon on the Albany ring-road. We started from scratch, so we basically had to go through the entire process, get the funding, get the planning, and get the environmental approvals. Bunbury Outer Ring Road is another project and another priority. We got the funding and got the design, and we are now going through the approvals.

We are doing road upgrades throughout regional WA. I heard the member for Central Wheatbelt talk about how she was upset when she drove along Great Eastern Highway and saw some Labor government signs promoting jobs. Maybe she should have been a bit more upset about the condition in which she left Great Eastern Highway in the first

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place. We are out there, fixing Great Eastern Highway, because that member, too worried about the Labor Party advertising, did not care about the condition in which Great Eastern Highway was left under the previous government.

Members can come into this place and argue about a lot of things. But they cannot argue that we are not building things. Wherever we go throughout regional WA —

Mrs R.M.J. Clarke: Pinjarra heavy haulage!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Yes. That started with nothing—no plans; nothing. We committed \$250 000 in the first six months, got the design and got the funding, and we will now be able to —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members, please! I am enjoying what the minister is saying.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Members opposite can say these things. But I know who is out there, doing all the hard work, and dealing with the community reference groups. It is members like the member for Wanneroo. The state Labor government is out there, on the ground, getting environmental approvals, engaging with local communities on all issues—the style of overpasses and interchanges, noise walls, you name it. We are involved in every part of that project. People know that. People know that they have a government that is willing to create jobs and spend on infrastructure throughout Western Australia.

Of course, I am not going to pre-empt what will be happening with Metronet over the next few months, but a lot is happening with Metronet.

Several members interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: A lot is happening. Yes, we will communicate to the public the record spending. We will communicate to the public the jobs we are creating. We will communicate the fact that there will be disruption, because so many works are underway. We will be making more announcements over the next few months. Just wait and see. Jobs are our number one priority. We are out there, with the construction industry, which has never seen a better government to deliver infrastructure in Western Australia.

MS S.E. WINTON (Wanneroo) [3.47 pm]: I enjoyed very much listening to our Minister for Transport as she explained the massive and unprecedented infrastructure spend that is happening throughout the state. That is nowhere more so than in the northern suburbs of our great state. It is a shame that the current shadow Minister for Transport was not here to listen so that she could get a lot of the things that she has been saying in this place corrected. Opposition members are clearly not driving around the northern suburbs and noticing the infrastructure that is being built at this very moment. I am very happy to speak on this matter of public interest. However, of course, I am very tempted to move an amendment, because the motion should say that this house applauds the McGowan Labor government for delivering major job-creating infrastructure projects in less than three years of being in government.

I think opposition members have forgotten the last election. I certainly remember the last election very well, and all my northern suburbs colleagues also remember it very well. It was an absolute massacre of Liberal-held seats in the northern suburbs. That was due to the fact that for over eight years, the Liberal government delivered nothing by way of infrastructure in the northern suburbs.

Several members interjected.

Ms S.E. WINTON: Members opposite can laugh all they like. But the members who were booted out of this place are not laughing. They are regretting the fact that they took the people of the northern suburbs and the lack of infrastructure spending in the northern suburbs for granted, and they paid with their careers. Opposition members might sit in here, cushy in their chairs, but I can tell members that those former members are not laughing.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members! You had a chance to talk on it; you did not.

Ms S.E. WINTON: We made a significant election commitment to invest in the northern suburbs. Before the election we said what we would be doing and we are, by golly gee, doing it. We said we would divert funds from Roe 8 into the northern suburbs and we have done it. We have delivered the \$31 million dualling of Wanneroo Road. I drive on it every single day. It is done; it is delivered; it is there. It is not propaganda. Come and join me one time. It is a really safe piece of road that the Wanneroo area has long wanted. Right now, we are building the \$65 million Wanneroo Road–Ocean Reef Road overpass. It exists. The community is being consulted on it, and construction is going really well. The \$50 million Wanneroo Road–Joondalup Drive overpass is being constructed right now. Shadow transport minister, come out, have a look and see what is going on. The important thing about these projects for the northern suburbs, as the minister said, is that they are making our network safer, they are creating

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much-needed jobs and they are also futureproofing the northern suburbs. We want to do it once, and right the first time, so we have a great transport network in the northern suburbs for the next 30 to 50 years.

There is a whole heap more happening in the northern suburbs of course. The dualling of Marmion Avenue is happening under a McGowan Labor government. The Metronet rail line to Yanchep is happening under a McGowan Labor government. Of course, most recently, the Minister for Transport has announced that we are extending the Mitchell Freeway further to Romeo Road—under a McGowan Labor government. That is a fact. What people have said about the shadow transport minister previously is right. She just grabs these tiny bits and pieces, flitters here and there, and the best she can contribute to us announcing the Mitchell Freeway extension to Romeo Road is to say that we should cut halfway through the national park and create a road off Lukin Drive. She is clueless. She is trying to create a headline, but she has no idea what is going on in the northern suburbs. I am absolutely delighted with the investment that this Mark McGowan Labor government has made in the northern suburbs. Before the election we said what we would do and, by jolly, we are now doing it. I remember the member for Vasse said earlier that the Minister of Transport should take her foot off the hose. I can tell members that not only has she taken her foot off the hose, she has something bigger than a hose in the northern suburbs and she is spurting concrete everywhere, and I thank her for it.

MR B.S. WYATT (Victoria Park — Treasurer) [3.52 pm]: I make just a couple of points to conclude this debate. I want to pick up from where the member for Wanneroo left off. She is quite correct. Every time I turn on the TV, Minister Saffioti is standing next to a road somewhere with a shovel in her hand. It has been quite an extraordinary period of time. I agree with what the Minister for Transport said in her critique of the economic argument raised. The member for Bateman, to his credit, tries to construct an argument around data. I am not sure what the contributions of the member for Vasse and the Leader of the Opposition were, but I want to confirm one thing. The crux of the argument raised by the opposition was about the report by Infrastructure Partnerships Australia. The opposition got that report and said to look at how little the government is spending on infrastructure. I want to draw the Parliament's attention to a key thing that the opposition often misses—in particular, I note, the member for Vasse—and that is a thing called a footnote. I am going to read the footnote about the basis of the entire report. The chart on infrastructure shows total general government sector infrastructure spending by jurisdiction—general government. General government infrastructure spending over four years is just under \$9 billion, but it is interesting that the opposition would deliberately exclude from its argument the other \$13 billion that we are spending through the entire total public sector. The shadow transport minister said that the Minister of Transport should get her foot off the hose, but in her argument she decided to miss every red cent being spent through Metronet. Why is that? It is because money for Metronet is not being spent through the general government sector. That is a fundamental problem that the opposition has had with understanding, firstly, the finances and, secondly, the economy. If it wants to talk in here about asset investment by the government, why not talk about the \$23 billion we are actually spending across the forward estimates as opposed to the \$8.8 billion we are spending through the general government sector? Why is that? I actually do not think the Leader of the Opposition or the member for Vasse understand that. I know the shadow Treasurer understands that, but I do not think the Leader of the Opposition has the slightest idea about the difference between total public sector and general government sector. It is not unusual. It has historically been the case that the vast majority of asset investment is spent through the total public sector component; that is, the Public Transport Authority, the ports, and the hundreds of millions of dollars we are spending through energy utilities. The opposition chose to ignore all that asset spend.

The member for Vasse has been exposed this week. She cannot just get a report or document, pick something out, get that wrong and then go out and do a *Chicken Little*, “The whole world is falling down!” That is simply an unacceptable way to construct the debate. If the opposition wants a debate, it should bring it on. As the Minister for Transport said, I think the member for Bateman is certainly trying to construct the argument; unfortunately, he is undermined by the fact there are not many people on his side who understand how the state budget works.

Division

Question put and a division taken with the following result —

Ayes (17)

Mr I.C. Blayney
Ms M.J. Davies
Mrs L.M. Harvey
Dr D.J. Honey
Mr P.A. Katsambanis

Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup
Mr A. Krsticevic
Mrs S.K. L'Estrange
Mr R.S. Love
Mr W.R. Marmion

Ms L. Mettam
Dr M.D. Nahan
Mr D.C. Nalder
Mr K.M. O'Donnell
Mr D.T. Redman

Mr P.J. Rundle
Mrs A.K. Hayden (*Teller*)

Extract from *Hansard*
[ASSEMBLY — Wednesday, 13 November 2019]
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Mr Dean Nalder; Ms Libby Mettam; Ms Mia Davies; Mrs Liza Harvey; Ms Rita Saffioti; Ms Sabine Winton; Mr Ben Wyatt

Noes (32)

Dr A.D. Buti	Mr W.J. Johnston	Mrs L.M. O'Malley	Ms J.J. Shaw
Mrs R.M.J. Clarke	Mr D.J. Kelly	Mr P. Papalia	Mrs J.M.C. Stojkovski
Mr R.H. Cook	Mr F.M. Logan	Mr S.J. Price	Mr C.J. Tallentire
Mr M.J. Folkard	Mr M. McGowan	Mr D.T. Punch	Mr D.A. Templeman
Ms J.M. Freeman	Ms S.F. McGurk	Ms M.M. Quirk	Mr P.C. Tinley
Ms E.L. Hamilton	Mr S.A. Millman	Ms C.M. Rowe	Ms S.E. Winton
Mr T.J. Healy	Mr Y. Mubarakai	Ms R. Saffioti	Mr B.S. Wyatt
Mr M. Hughes	Mr M.P. Murray	Ms A. Sanderson	Mr D.R. Michael (<i>Teller</i>)

Pairs

Mr J.E. McGrath	Mrs M.H. Roberts
Mr V.A. Catania	Ms L.L. Baker

Question thus negatived.

The SPEAKER: There is a pregnant pause as we wait for the clock to tick. It is a lovely day in Albany today.

Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup: Every day when Mr Speaker is not there is lovely!

The SPEAKER: You are very close to a point of order!