

RAIL FREIGHT

228. Mrs L.M. O'MALLEY to the Minister for Transport:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to increase the share of freight on rail and easing pressure on truck movements. Can the minister outline to the house how the government is delivering on this commitment without having to build a flawed, multibillion road that does not reach the port?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:

I thank the member for that question. People may recall that we took a pretty strong policy to the election, which was to start planning for the new outer-harbour port and to undertake a number of actions over the shorter term to relieve pressure on our roads. A number of things are underway. The support of new intermodal transport is very much underway. There will be upgrades to the High Street area and, of course, those concept plans have been released for our proposal to reduce congestion and improve efficiency on that road on the way to the port. Of course, the other key factor was that we were going to increase the subsidy for freight on rail because we believe that as part of a comprehensive and coordinated package, we need to look at all elements to make sure we deliver great outcomes for WA. We are also taking the same approach in regional WA because we believe that we have to have a coordinated plan to achieve our objectives. That was our commitment. Since that subsidy has been in place, we have seen an increase of freight on rail. The percentage before it was in place was under 15 per cent. In just three months, that has moved to over 17 per cent freight on rail.

Several members interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: After three months of that subsidy being in place —

Dr M.D. Nahan: How much does it cost?

The SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, you will possibly be going home early.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Compared with \$1.8 billion, it is pretty affordable. The opposition, which never did business cases for a \$ 1.8 billion stadium, comes into this place and wants to talk about the cost benefit of our expenditure.

Dr M.D. Nahan interjected.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: This is smart spending; it is about a coordinated approach to delivering results. Thousands of truck movements are off our roads, making sure that when we say something at the election, we deliver.

Several members interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: In three months there has been a massive increase.

Mr D.C. Nalder: A two per cent increase.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Is it a two per cent increase?

Mr D.C. Nalder interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: No wonder the opposition failed with the finances so much; it cannot even work out percentages. Seriously, we have seen again and again an opposition living in the past.

Dr M.D. Nahan: Utter chaos.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Chaos? Look at the opposition. If we want to see a definition of chaos, it is the opposition. Go to the dictionary one day and look at the definition of "chaos". It will say, "See current state opposition." It is an opposition stuck in the past. As I said, if we want to relive the 2017 election again and again, we will. It is a plan that is working, that has community support and that we are committed to.