

TRANSPORT ACROSS THE NULLARBOR

787. Hon NIGEL HALLETT to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure:

Some notice of this question has been given. Will the minister please detail any plans or strategies that will address the transport problems for workers, residents and emergency staff along the Nullarbor now that the Greyhound Australia service, previously McCaffertys, between Perth and Adelaide has stopped?

Hon ADELE FARINA replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question. Approximately 200 people live and work along the 700 kilometre stretch of the Eyre Highway between Norseman and Eucla. Greyhound Australia provided only a once-a-week coach service. Greyhound passenger numbers from July 2005 to September 2005 averaged eight passengers per service between Perth and Adelaide. This level of service is not economical. The once-a-week service provided by Greyhound would have had minimal effect on assisting emergencies along the Norseman-Eucla stretch of the Eyre Highway. The very low passenger numbers using the bus indicated that few local workers and residents in the area were dependent on the service. Transwa provides three coach services per week between Norseman and Perth. This provides coverage for the main population centres along the Great Eastern Highway, west of Norseman. It is unfortunate that Greyhound has ceased its interstate operation; however, the service has become uneconomical mainly due to the lower cost of air travel.