

REID HIGHWAY AND ALEXANDER DRIVE - GRADE SEPARATION

228. Mr R.C. KUCERA to the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure:

I have raised this issue on previous occasions in the house. Has the federal government been prepared to assist the community of Stirling by providing funding towards a grade separation of Reid Highway and Alexander Drive?

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN replied:

I thank the member for the question and acknowledge -

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: I call to order the members for South Perth and Carine.

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: I acknowledge the very good work that the member for Yokine has done. When the 2006 -

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for South Perth to order for the second time.

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: In 2006 when the federal government announced the new \$220 million slush fund, which was described as the fund for strategic regional investment, the member for Yokine quickly got together with the City of Stirling and me, and we agreed to support the City of Stirling in its application for a share of the slush fund. The rules were that the state government was unable to apply, although local government could apply for funding for state government roads if the state government made a financial commitment to it. We very quickly got onto the job. We estimated that the project would cost around \$24 million. To enable the City of Stirling to apply for this money, we pledged \$14 million, which would require the federal government to invest only \$10 million to deal with this very important intersection. As you know, Mr Speaker, Western Australia has an extraordinary task. It comprises one-third of the Australian continent and it contributes 33 per cent of the nation's exports from a tax base of two million people. We are having trouble keeping up with all the vital road projects we need. We asked why we, as Western Australians, should not get our share of the national fund that had been set up. The member for Yokine and the City of Stirling made the application, and the state government was prepared to put \$14 million into the kitty. We thought that the federal member for Stirling might be able to bring the project over the line. However, we were knocked back. I gather that the federal member for Stirling did not support the project. We now note a new tranche of the slush fund. This time it is a \$250 million program, and it is a very interesting program. It was announced only in early May, yet all the applications must be in by the end of June. That gives members some idea of how strategic this program will be. Mark Vaile will put Ros Kelly to shame because today he announced that \$82.75 million - one-third of the slush fund - is going to Queensland. He is travelling around Queensland handing out \$82.7 million - one-third of the total fund! We all know why he is doing that. He has lost New South Wales and Victoria, which will probably get nothing. We know that he is in great trouble in Queensland but the National Party still hopes that, notwithstanding Kevin Rudd, it will be able to make up ground. Queensland is where all their National Party members are from.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: I call the members for Vasse and Dawesville to order.

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: Of the two-thirds of the fund that is left for the rest of the nation, we hope to get money for this very important project that has been submitted by the City of Stirling. We suspect that the federal member for Stirling might be trying to manoeuvre to get funding for another intersection on Reid Highway and Mirrabooka Avenue. Of course, that would be a very silly decision to make. Following the work that we have done on the Leach Highway and Orrong Road intersection, which was the biggest problem intersection, the next intersection in the metropolitan area with the biggest problem is Alexander Drive and Reid Highway. The project that appears to be pushed by the member for Stirling is the Mirrabooka Avenue and Reid Highway intersection, but following the work we have done on this intersection, we know it is rated as the twenty-fourth worst intersection. If we are to make a strategic investment with taxpayers' money, it must be done on a credible basis. We urge the federal member to back the member for Yokine and the City of Stirling by putting money into this very important project on Alexander Drive.