

TRANSPORT PROJECTS — MID-TIER CONTRACTORS

745. Mrs R.M.J. CLARKE to the Minister for Transport:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's efforts to support local jobs and local businesses through its record investment of \$260 million a month in road and transport projects across Western Australia.

- (1) Will the minister outline to the house how this record investment is supporting local, Australian, mid-tier contractors?
- (2) Will the minister advise the house whether she is aware of any false claims being made about this government's support for these companies?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:

I thank the member for Murray–Wellington for the question.

- (1)–(2) The government is getting on with the job, as the member well knows. Across the state, the government is investing \$260 million a month in transport infrastructure projects in regional and metropolitan WA. This compares with \$150 million a month when the last government was in power. It includes a significant pipeline of work for all contractors, including mid-tier contractors. Yesterday, the Premier and I announced a \$175 million contract for the Albany ring-road. That project will be delivered by Decmil Southern. Other mid-tier companies that have just finished delivering projects include MACA, which helped to deliver the Karratha–Tom Price road and is currently working on the Hay Street bridge. BMD delivered the very successful smart freeway project, the Manning Road on-ramp and the Mitchell Freeway and Kwinana Freeway improvements, and is currently under contract for the Tonkin gap project. It was BMD that the opposition spokesperson for transport said we should sack from the freeway job. Do members remember that? Decmil has just delivered the Reid Highway widening and is also helping to deliver the Bayswater station. Georgiou Group is working on the High Street upgrade, the Roe Highway in Kalamunda and the Karel Avenue duplication and is also part of the consortium for the Tonkin gap project.

A record number of projects are going to different sized companies. I know the industry supports what we are doing because I talk to it all the time, unlike the recent announcements made by the opposition. We are in an economic recovery and what we do not need is an alternative government throwing out ill-thought-out policies that create more uncertainty and impact on investor confidence in Western Australia. The Leader of the Opposition appears to have a policy of opening the Western Australian borders but closing the WA economy.

She wants the borders open but she wants to stop all overseas investment in WA! That is the policy of the Leader of the Opposition. It is causing enormous nervousness in the economy and also among contractors. We know that the opposition will say and do anything. They will lie to the Western Australian public, as they have in —

Withdrawal of Remark

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: I do not believe that the minister can use the language “the opposition can lie”.

Mr T. Healy interjected.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: That is the point of order.

Mr T. Healy interjected.

The SPEAKER: No, it is not a point of order.

Mr T. Healy interjected.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: I would be surprised if you can count.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: I was going to call the member for Southern River to order for the first time, but I will call him to order for the second time. We will not have that sort of behaviour in the chamber.

Member for Dawesville, it is only if it is against a person and not a group.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Yesterday, the opposition claimed that a WA company was locked out of a Metronet contract. That is not true. That company refused to bid because it did not want to comply with modern safety standards for trains. That is what happened. I know the opposition likes to selectively quote Australian Owned Contractors. Let me update the house on what it is saying about Liberal Party policies. Australian Owned Contractors has not, and will

not, endorse or support the WA opposition's local jobs guarantee policy. Even worse, members, it said that this policy would likely deny project opportunities to some of its members over the others, which is a bad policy outcome. Even Australian Owned Contractors does not support the opposition's policy. Just imagine other companies such as Laing O'Rourke, Multiplex and Clough—the Liberal Party's policy is to ban companies like Clough and Multiplex from bidding on WA government projects. Member for Bateman, do you support that policy? Do you support banning Clough and Multiplex from bidding for WA government contracts?

The SPEAKER: Through the Chair, minister.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I take that as a no, because I do not think the shadow Treasurer was consulted on what is one of the most devastating impacts on WA investor confidence in this state.

The Premier alluded to it yesterday, and, as I said, a lot of leaders like aspiring to leaders of the past. The Premier has outlined how much the influences of Bob Hawke and Paul Keating have had on his leadership style. But what has surprised us is where the Leader of the Opposition is drawing her inspiration from. The WA Liberal Party models itself on the policies of Fidel Castro from the 1960s—a closed economy! The next policy from the Leader of the Opposition will be that Scarborough will be turned into the next Havana! We will be driving Cortinas from the 1990s under the leadership of the Leader of the Opposition—an absolute disgrace. The organisation the Leader of the Opposition purports to support does not even support her policies.