



TRANSCRIPT

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ROB BROADFIELD

Well more news... we seem to be talking a lot about infrastructure and building and Perth moving forward and all that sort of stuff, which is only good news really when you think about it.

The latest cab off the rank, a story this morning by my colleague Kent Acott at *The West Australian*... he... his exclusive story this morning... about the possibility of us getting a transport link... a rail link from the city to the airport... I mean, we're only 20 years behind most other civilised cities aren't we in that regard, but anyway we'll get there.

And while the Barnett Government has confirmed that the railway plans are on the drawing board, there's no commitment, no funding proposals, no timeframe... this commitment to putting aside easements or... aggregating the land to allow it to happen... but no sort of real... concrete decision making yet on when it will happen. There is a... an open-ended 2021-2031 timeframe to put in place, which could mean we wait up to... nearly two decades for it to happen if we look at the end of that spectrum.

So a long time coming, but it looks like we may be getting what we so desperately need, some good infrastructure and a great rail service to our airport... as they do have in Brisbane and of course at Sydney airports where the rail connects direct to the city from the airports, both international and domestic terminals and they're actually first-class services in both those cities. So it'll be a long time coming here, but well worth it.

Opposition transport spokesman Ken Travers joins me now. Ken is this a good idea?

KEN TRAVERS

Oh look it's a good idea, but what we need to be seeing from the Barnett Government is what they're actually going to be doing to ease congestion in the next two or three years... we've... got... getting lots of maps from them, about this so-called 'Bigger Picture' in 20 years' time, but what we're not getting is anything that deals with the real picture that is out there on our streets and roads today, and that is massive congestion.

They still haven't even ordered enough rail cars to meet demand on the existing rail network.

ROB BROADFIELD

It... although... you know... their Transport Minister says that they have ordered some new cars... what did they say? They've ordered 50 new ones.

KEN TRAVERS

They've ordered them... but... they've ordered some, but they haven't ordered enough. The reason we have overcrowding on our trains today is because in 2008, 2009 and 2010 the PTA was telling them, you need to order more trains and they refused to do it. What we're facing... they... eventually put in an order, but what we've already got is further growth since that order was put in, that we need to be ordering more... so what we face is... basically for the next six years, overcrowding on our trains and until we order more trains that overcrowding will just continue long into the future.

ROB BROADFIELD

Alright, trains aren't of course the only panacea here, I mean it's very easy to say... to blame all the ills on lack of rail. We'll get to... back to the airport thing in a second, but... but there of course... you know, there's widening of roads... you've got to have a combination of a lot of things; better road infrastructure... and so on, and of course any responsible government wants to push more people on to public transport, because that's the most workable solution... long term, but it's more than just rail isn't it?

KEN TRAVERS

Oh look absolutely we've got to be investing in the road network, and one of the interesting things there is, you and I make a contribution to our roads through our motor vehicle licences. That's gone up over the last... four years... the Commonwealth money that's coming into the State for road upgrades has gone up, but the State Government contribution... the State appropriation for roads has been at an all-time low over the last two years.

So... that... people will see roads getting built in Perth, but they're Commonwealth... predominantly Commonwealth funded. If the State Government was actually putting the same investment into... roads... that was being put in four years ago we would be seeing a lot more roads.

One of the other things we could be doing today is putting in a bus rapid transit system to the airport, something that the Barnett Government promised at the last election and like most of their promises on public transport they have broken it... there's not a... a single bus to the International Terminal and they've cut the number of buses going to the Domestic Terminal, I mean... that's the real picture that Mr Barnett is missing at the moment...

ROB BROADFIELD

...Yeah... but to be fair to the Barnett Government though, I mean there was that... little hiatus called the GFC, which made funding for these sort of large infrastructure projects very uncertain and put it back a couple of years... any plans back a couple of years.

KEN TRAVERS

Oh look... and... but they've since been able to find \$550million for the Perth waterfront development that's going to increase congestion... that was not part of their election commitments, in fact they promised to get rid of the waterfront development... [laughs]... they've found \$1.5million to run a blatantly political... camp... advertising campaign. You could put a rapid transit bus service on to the airport, as they promised, with that \$1.5million that they're spending on the advertising campaign...

ROB BROADFIELD

\$1.5million for a rapid transit system!

KEN TRAVERS

For the operating costs... yeah... to the airport and back... that would cover it...

ROB BROADFIELD

You've got to build it first though...

KEN TRAVERS

...Well no... we're talking about a bus based one.

ROB BROADFIELD

Yeah...

KEN TRAVERS

...So... I mean, that's the real picture... and Mr Barnett just has his priorities wrong, because he's focussed on the wrong priorities; he needs to be focussed on fixing the problems that are out there on the roads today.

ROB BROADFIELD

Okay, so let's get back to the original issue and that is of course this proposed rail link to... down Tonkin Highway, along the Midland... railway... and then spearing off down Tonkin Highway... going underground for bits of it, connecting to the airport... International Terminal underground and the Domestic Terminal and then... perhaps then a spur further out to the eastern suburbs. I mean... no-one's going to say that's a bad idea?

KEN TRAVERS

Oh, no-one's going to say it's a bad idea and in fact that route has now been floating around for... three-and-a-half years. The design work that was supposed to have been going on that was... funding was provided by the Federal Government actually four years ago now for the study... I was hoping for a bit more detail today, such as where are the stations going to be... it's still vague about whether the line will actually continue into... that Forrestfield area to service the foothills, that's something that I think is absolutely crucial... will there be a station... will the only stations for this line be in airport land, and so if that's the case, what will be the cost of parking at those stations...

I think those are the sort of questions that people would be wanting answered today and all we got was... another map that I think is part of this Government's sort of... spin campaign to try and hide the fact that for four years they've done nothing for public transport and now they're trying to convince people that they actually understand it... because we're six months away from an election.

ROB BROADFIELD

Now where these trains exist... these airport specific trains exist in other jurisdictions. I've mentioned Brisbane, Sydney, but even the Heathrow Express... the Tube... line that runs out to Heathrow... they have limited stations for good reason, they want to people to get into the city expressly from an airport... so they tend not to stop at a lot of stations, they have an airport station... maybe one other, but then the next stop's the city?

KEN TRAVERS

Oh look... and I don't disagree with you. One of the great successes of the Mandurah line that Labor built during the last term of government, is the fact that you can get into the city very quickly... compared to the Liberal's proposal for the Kenwick deviation... what we've seen is people have... you know... marched to that railway line in... in droves.

So I understand the need for limiting the number of stations, but what I would have thought that... after four years of study we would have actually got a map that showed us where the stations were and explained to us, for instance whether or not people would be pay... having to pay the cost of parking at the airport or whether they would be paying the cost of parking... that currently pay at Perth's railway stations...

ROB BROADFIELD

Alright, Mr Travers. Let's put you on the spot. I know you're good at bagging the Barnett Government, that's your job. If the Labor Government was in power this time next year what's your commitment to this railway to... to the airport?

KEN TRAVERS

We want to see it built as soon as possible...

ROB BROADFIELD

Yeah, put a num... can you put a number on that?

KEN TRAVERS

The question... well, if you can tell me what's going to be in the mid-year review come December, if you can tell me whether the Barnett Government's going to make their five per cent efficiency dividends over the next four years or whether we need to find that five per cent when we first get into Government then I can give you an answer to those questions. The problem that we've got is the State's finances have been got into a complete disarray under this Government. We're hoping to untangle it once we get the mid-year review.

ROB BROADFIELD

So, that's... that's a no answer then, Mr Travers, is it?

KEN TRAVERS

Well, if you... no, you can't ans...

ROB BROADFIELD

I reckon you can do better than that.

KEN TRAVERS

Well, can you tell... can you tell me what the state of the finances are going to be when we get elected in March next year?

ROB BROADFIELD

I've got no idea.

KEN TRAVERS

That's the problem I face. I would love to be able to tell your listeners what our plans for public transport are, because I think we need to be spending more money... you know, yesterday one of the issues that came up was the question about the stadium at Burswood. One of the advantages of moving a stadium back to Subiaco is you can save half a billion dollars, that's half a billion dollars that you can put into better public transport across the suburbs of Perth that've been neglected under Mr Barnett. So...

ROB BROADFIELD

Okay, let's suppose the finances...

KEN TRAVERS

... that's Ellenbrook...

ROB BROADFIELD

Yep.

KEN TRAVERS

I'll... I can tell you now, Ellenbrook will be our priority ahead of the airport but what I'd like to see in the long term...

ROB BROADFIELD

But... but Mr Travers the airport...

KEN TRAVERS

... is a circle route that includes both of those [inaudible].

ROB BROADFIELD

... the airport's a bloody embarrassment, fair dinkum. I mean, I understand there's a need out in other suburbs too, but the airport is really an embarrassment.

KEN TRAVERS

Oh completely, and that's why we can't afford to be wasting money, we need to be prioritising the limited money a State Government has on the projects that need to be built. Now, at the last election Mr Barnett promised that he would build a railway line to the airport, he's broken that promise. What we need to see is investment in public transport because the sooner we build the next big rail line the sooner we can get onto the following rail line after that.

But if you keep spending five... for instance, you can do a waterfront development without \$550 million. That's... again, would go a long way to fixing the rail problems. You would be able to build... between the stadium at Subiaco and the waterfront you could probably just about afford an airport line and an Ellenbrook railway line.

ROB BROADFIELD

Alright, so let's just finally, if... I have to ask you this question again. If the State's finances are in good shape and the McGowan Government gets in at the next election, give us a commitment, in time frame, to building that... that... that railway to the airport.

KEN TRAVERS

Look, if the State finances would allow us... and they're in the position for us to be able to build a rail line, what I would love to see is a rail line that actually runs along Tonkin Highway from Forrestfield to Ellenbrook and I would get on with that. If the money is there in the budget to do that then I would be proposing that we would get on with it straight away and build it in the next term of Government... to open it as soon as the engineers can get it built... and the constructors can get it built for us. But...

ROB BROADFIELD

So that'd be within four years then?

KEN TRAVERS

Yeah, if the money is there... but I think the problem we've got is that Mr Barnett will have spent it and wasted it on a whole range of other projects by the time we get there...

ROB BROADFIELD

I think you just gave yourself a 'get out of jail card' then.

KEN TRAVERS

Well, the difficulty is that we've got to deal with the circumstances we're confronted with. What I'm not going to do is a Mr Barnett where I promise something before the election and fail to deliver... you know, there's 30 years of history in Western Australia of the Liberal Party making promises about rail and failing to deliver. Labor has a history of making promises about rail and delivering them. That's what I intend to do as I want to have the best possible rail options that we can afford, because we know that it comes back to WA Labor having... is the party that builds our rail systems.

ROB BROADFIELD

Alright, good on you Mr Travers...

KEN TRAVERS

But we've got to get our priorities right to do that.

ROB BROADFIELD

Good on you. Thanks for joining us.

KEN TRAVERS

Thanks, bye bye.

ROB BROADFIELD

Ken Travers, Opposition transport spokesman and I think you heard it first here - Labor will build that railway within four years, if the State's finances are in good nick. Let's hope they are. If... at the next election, there's a McGowan Government, if it... if... that's sort of piling 'ifs on ifs', but as Mr Travers said, if they get in and it's looking good then they'll build that... they'll commit to that railway out to the airport within four years. Great news.

Ends...

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