

PERTH FREIGHT LINK — LAND ACQUISITION

411. Ms S.F. McGURK to the Minister for Transport:

I refer to the minister's statement to those concerned about losing their homes due to the Perth Freight Link project and I quote, "I'm still not convinced that that is the best possible route".

- (1) Why is the minister proceeding with this project before he has done the work to ascertain the best possible route?
- (2) Why has the minister sent out 77 letters to property owners making them fear losing their homes and businesses before a final decision on the route has even been made?

Mr D.C. NALDER replied:

- (1)–(2) I am really pleased that this subject keeps getting brought up. This is a great project for Western Australia. If only the opposition would take some time to understand the benefits that this will deliver to Western Australia, members opposite might come to the same conclusion. Let us look at the facts here. One of the things that happened, if we go back to the previous Labor government, is that it sold off the land that had been reserved for some 50 years for the safe passage of freight. The Labor government decided to sell that land off. That is fact number one. Fact number two is that in 2008 the then minister put out a press release to the effect that the Labor government would start exploring how it could expand Leach Highway and High Street to be able to cope with the safe movement of vehicles. We currently have 700 000 containers coming through Fremantle port and that number is expected to grow to 1.3 million to 1.4 million containers. That means a lot more trucks are going to be moving down our roads. The government has little option but to consider and explore, but what option do we have when the former Labor government has sold off the land that had been reserved to move that freight? It is an absolute disgrace!

The funding for roadworks along High Street and Leach Highway had been approved before the freight link project started. It had started as planning under Hon Alannah MacTiernan. We were approached and had discussions with the federal government, which provided funding for us to consider the whole freight link project, and we rolled the works for Leach Highway and High Street into that. As part of that, we split the project into two phases. The first phase is the Roe 8 component to take it through to Stock Road. That is a priority because of the new hospital there and we know that South Street will block up. We know that we have a priority to move on that one quickly. The second phase is from Stock Road down to the port. I have been talking about that project for months. I have asked Main Roads, whilst it is going out and looking at the plan that is in place, to consider alternatives and to ask the proponents to come back with innovative solutions, including tunnelling. Main Roads has gone out and communicated with the properties affected by the current route, as I would expect it to do, because if we cannot make tunnelling under the land that the former Labor government sold off a viable alternative, then we will have to go down the route of Stock Road and Leach Highway. I am hopeful, given the success that we have had on the Forrestfield–Airport Link, that we can tunnel all the way cheaper than the solution members opposite took to the election. I am hopeful that we may be able to deliver a similar outcome for the people of Palmyra. I want to hear the member for Willagee get up and talk about the constituents of Palmyra and explain to them why Labor sold off the land and why this is the only solution it would have had and that the government is trying to fix up the problem that members opposite created.