

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 6 August 2019]

p4976c-4985a

Ms Libby Mettam; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Vincent Catania; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Rita Saffioti; Ms Simone McGurk; Mrs Lisa O'Malley; Mr Terry Healy; Mr Peter Tinley

**ROE HIGHWAY STAGES 8 AND 9 — ROAD SAFETY, ROAD CONGESTION
AND FREIGHT MANAGEMENT**

Matter of Public Interest

THE SPEAKER (Mr P.B. Watson) informed the Assembly that he was in receipt within the prescribed time of a letter from the member for Vasse seeking to debate a matter of public interest.

[In compliance with standing orders, at least five members rose in their places.]

MS L. METTAM (Vasse) [3.12 pm]: I move —

That this house condemns the McGowan Labor government for failing to build Roe 8 and Roe 9 and for not addressing road safety, road congestion and freight management issues plaguing the southern suburbs.

The motion that the opposition is presenting today is very important. The McGowan government has turned its back on the people in the south metropolitan region. It has illustrated that it does not care about road congestion, road safety concerns, businesses, residents and commuters in this area. It does not care about the 5 000 plus students who attend the local schools along Leach Highway, including Melville Senior High School, Rossmoyne Senior High School and All Saints' College. The commuter time along this stretch of road in the afternoons is 20 per cent greater than the metropolitan average. Crash rates for trucks along Leach Highway are two to six times higher than the rates along similar metropolitan roads. The government is turning down an opportunity to access \$1.2 billion that is available for this project from the federal coalition government right now. Quite clearly, the McGowan government does not care about the 138 000 people looking for work or looking for more work in this state. The McGowan Labor government has turned its back on this opportunity. It has turned its back on the 70 per cent of people in this region who support Roe 8 and Roe 9, and is instead supporting a majority protest group and bowing to pressure from the Greens.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Ms S. Winton interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Wanneroo, I call you to order for the first time.

Ms L. METTAM: Roe 8 and Roe 9 represent some immediate economic benefits for the community and industry in this area in travel time saved and safety benefits. Those benefits speak for themselves. When a business case was presented to Infrastructure Australia in 2016, this project was recognised for its national significance, beating 93 other projects at that time, increasing productivity, expanding productive capacity —

Mr M.J. Folkard interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Burns Beach, I call you to order for the first time.

Ms L. METTAM: — and building on Australia's global advantage. This project would see the removal of 74 000 vehicles and 7 000 trucks from Leach Highway, Stock Road, Farrington Road, South Street, Beeliar Drive and North Lake Road, bypassing 15 sets of traffic lights on Leach Highway and Stock Road.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Those members on the back bench who have a lot to say will have the opportunity to get up and talk later. Do not knock the person who has the courage to stand up and talk now.

Ms L. METTAM: We know that this project has strong support—a recent independent survey illustrated that 70 per cent of the community in the region supported this project. We know that the federal government supports this project. Not only that; WA Labor's own Transport Workers' Union has also provided some strong advocacy for this project, along with the Pastoralists and Graziers Association. We have also seen statements from the WA Chamber of Commerce and Industry —

Mr T. Healy interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Southern River.

Ms L. METTAM: — the Civil Contractors Federation and the WA Road Transport Association. This project has a lot of support. A range of questions remain unanswered around WA Labor's approach to this important road project. First, what happened when the contract for Roe 8 was cancelled? Roe 8 contracts were cancelled at a cost to the state of at least \$46 million. Funds were moved out of the southern suburbs and redirected into marginal electorates. It was an extraordinary process. For a government that is seemingly slow on delivery and that is yet to lay a track of rail, it certainly found a rapid tender and procurement process for the projects that were announced only months after coming to government on 3 July 2017—a rapid process, in steep contrast to the comments

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made as part of the Langouant review into the reallocation of funds, and completely at odds with its own recommendations around transparency and procurement, which were supported by John Langouant.

The reason that this issue is a matter of public interest and the reason we are bringing this motion to Parliament today is that the government does not have any other viable solution to offer to the people of the southern suburbs. We know that the Premier has stated on record that Roe 8 —

Mr T. Healy interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Southern River, I call you to order for the first time.

Ms L. METTAM: — is a highway to nowhere and a monumental waste of taxpayers' money. He said that it did not make sense to spend billions to build a truck highway to Fremantle port, which he believed would be full in 10 years, yet WA Labor's so-called fresh ideas acknowledges that fresh idea 92 is to maintain Fremantle port as an operational port. Fresh idea 94 is to improve the management of truck movements to and from Fremantle port. According to the Westport Taskforce, Fremantle port still has capacity for at least the next 20 years. How will Labor address congestion and safety in the southern suburbs? In an article that appeared in WAToday in June 2018, the Minister for Transport stated it would be about planning for the outer harbour and it would be about increasing the freight on rail subsidy and upgrading High Street. There have already been issues with this government's capacity to deliver, and to address very obvious challenges for the southern suburbs. In *The West Australian* on 13 July, just recently, the minister's own government department questioned the capacity to increase the rail subsidy and the ability to significantly increase the amount of freight on rail. I quote —

“Increasing the subsidy from \$30 to \$50 per TEU is unlikely to most effectively target the additional spending towards increasing freight on rail.

Ms R. Saffioti interjected.

The SPEAKER: Minister!

Ms L. METTAM: What should be most concerning to members here is the social licence campaign this government is investing in. We know this is of concern to the McGowan government, with revelations that the McGowan government funded the Freight and Logistics Council of WA, which employed a marketing company to come up with a story about freight to sell to the commuters most affected along the freight link.

Mr M.P. Murray interjected.

The SPEAKER: Minister!

Ms L. METTAM: The freight and logistics social licence campaign is being developed in the hope that raising awareness about the importance of freight will mean people will become more accepting of heavy trucks and vehicles along this stretch of road. As part of the research, people in a survey group were asked what they knew about freight and what they felt about it. That is very, very desperate.

Ms R. Saffioti interjected.

The SPEAKER: Minister for Transport, I call you to order for the first time.

Ms L. METTAM: Not surprisingly, one of the top concerns raised by consumers was dangerous truck driver behaviour.

The Westport Taskforce review outlined three options for Fremantle port, the first of which was to increase the capacity of Fremantle harbour to 3.8 million 20-foot equivalent units. There is an option for the Leach heavy vehicle trunk, which would affect 70 properties along the highway. Another option is to increase the capacity of Fremantle harbour to 1.2 million TEU. This includes an option for a planned “do-minimum” road network, which I am sure will be most appealing to the minister. There is also an option to increase Fremantle harbour to 1.2 million TEU with the outer harbour and the “blue water highway”. Instead of building a highway that could cope with what we now see is the demand, the task force has been forced to look at bandaid solutions to upgrade and fix local roads. In particular, there is the Leach heavy vehicle trunk, which will significantly impact residents and businesses in that area.

Other members will also speak on this, but I will highlight the hypocrisy of the McGowan Labor government when it comes to the environment and the issues raised about this project, particularly when we consider the recent announcement about the Ellenbrook rail line and plans to excise land from Whiteman Park. The Greens have disallowed a motion on that in the past and also on the Thornlie–Cockburn route. That proposal would require the clearing of nearly 55 hectares of native vegetation, including 25 hectares of black cockatoo feeding habitat. This is an issue of hypocrisy by this government. It quite clearly indicates that the government is finding every excuse to do nothing and turn its back on the community of the south western metropolitan region. Other members will talk about this, but this is just a snapshot. Roe 8–Roe 9 will create great productivity and benefit for industry, but this is about the safety of the south western metropolitan region. This is why the opposition condemns the

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McGowan government for failing to build Roe 8–Roe 9 and not addressing road safety, congestion and freight management issues plaguing the southern suburbs.

MRS L.M. HARVEY (Scarborough — Leader of the Opposition) [3.24 pm]: I rise to contribute to this debate. The reason that the Liberal opposition remains committed to building Roe 8 is that we know it will solve a significant congestion problem right across south metropolitan area. It will provide an opportunity to free up the clogged transport system. It will effectively remove 7 000 trucks and 74 000 light vehicles that travel along the stretches of road, and will free up the next stage of the freight route that was supposed to provide free-flowing traffic for freight from Muchea to the Fremantle freight link. This has been in planning 50 years as part of the metropolitan region scheme, and the Liberal opposition remains committed to it.

This section of Roe Highway would effectively remove the necessity for trucks to stop at over 14 sets of traffic lights, so they would not have to slow down and start up at those traffic lights. That would then improve freight efficiency for all of those big trucks that operate along that stretch of road. The reason that this is important is that it would reduce exhaust emissions and noise pollution. That would have a significant impact on the lives, health and wellbeing of residents of every single one of those houses that abuts Leach Highway; every single child who attends Melville Senior High School, and to a degree All Saints' College; and every single one of those retail and other workers who work in businesses that abut Leach Highway. I have been contacted by one of my constituents, and we know that this project would remove 450 000 tonnes of CO₂ from our network by 2031. That is why we remain committed to it. Members are probably aware that just recently the World Health Organization confirmed that diesel engine fuel is hazardous to humans and can cause cancer. Millions of people are affected worldwide by the grim health risks from breathing diesel gas fumes. That information was up on a webpage based in California. A young girl, Bessie Smith, contacted the webpage and wrote —

I am 10 years old and live in a house near Leach Highway, so for all of my life, I have been inhaling poisonous fumes ...

Such was the concern of one of the member for Hillarys' constituents that he wrote to the Minister for Health, Roger Cook, and I quote from his letter —

May I draw your attention the attached article —

Which I just referred to —

which, in relation to the enormous heavy traffic on Leach Highway, clearly indicates there is a real danger to the health of those people who live in the vicinity of Leach Highway and must be of grave concern for you that the children breathing these fumes are in real danger of suffering long term health problems.

Your Premier has made it abundantly clear that he does not share your, or the community at large, concern about this very real problem by his absolute refusal to consider the remedy which would be obtained by the extension of Roe Highway and so diverting the heavy traffic away from Leach Highway.

I am sure there would be many thousands of West Australian residents who share my concern and would join me in imploring you to address this issue which is in your portfolio as Minister.

I can assure Mr Ian Ainsworth that there are thousands of people who share his concerns. The reason that the Liberal Party remains committed to building Roe 8 is that a poll undertaken by PerthNow and *The Sunday Times* of over 9 000 people found that 59.8 per cent of Western Australians support the extension of Roe Highway across Beeliar Regional Park as well as —

Mr T.J. Healy: Do they support a toll road?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: The member can get up and speak; he can get the call.

They also supported further work to extend this road to Fremantle port. Only 10 per cent of those 9 000 people surveyed agreed with the Minister for Transport that it is a waste of money. That is 10 per cent who think it is a waste of money and nearly 60 per cent who want the road. We remain committed to this project. The minister in this place challenged us to take it to an election and that is what we are doing, because we know that the commuters who are stuck in their vehicles in south metro need this project. We know that the trucking industry and the commuters who use Leach Highway need this project, because it will improve road safety. We know that it will improve the health and lives of the communities in the south metro region, as well as that of every single transport driver who uses Leach Highway at the moment and gets stuck at those sets of traffic lights. They have motorists ducking in and out around them, trying to get past them, creating very dangerous situations. We know that it will improve things for the 180 houses, businesses and side roads that abut Leach Highway in the section between North Lake Road and Stock Road. That is why we remain committed to it. We care about the health of the people living in the South Metropolitan Region and we care about children inhaling diesel fumes, and we have a solution. The solution is Roe Highway, and if people elect us, we will build it.

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MR V.A. CATANIA (North West Central) [3.30 pm]: The Nationals WA supports this motion moved by the member for Vasse and the Liberal Party. We want to keep to the facts here to ensure that commonsense and the best use of taxpayers' money prevails so that we can get an outcome that will service the whole of Western Australia, because this includes regional Western Australia as well. Regional Western Australia will, vitally and rightfully, utilise Roe 8 and 9. It is very important to businesses around regional Western Australia.

Let us get the facts right. It will create efficiency gains for freight, much of which comes from regional Western Australia, as I said. It will move heavy haulage vehicles away from more than a dozen sets of traffic lights along Leach Highway and onto the alternative, free-flowing direct route to the Fremantle port. That is number one. Number two: these figures have been quoted before in this place, but I will go through them again, Roe 8 and 9 will remove 7 000 trucks from roads in South Metropolitan Region. The Minister for Transport and the Labor government cannot ignore that. It will allow the port of Fremantle to realise its full potential. As we have said, it still has 20 years of capability. Why is the government not looking at alternatives for future expansion, like regional Western Australia? There is Esperance, Bunbury, Geraldton, the Pilbara and Albany.

The government should look at the alternatives that are sitting there, right in front of its eyes, to ensure that there will be growth and expansion in our ports right across regional Western Australia, and not just in this outer harbour that the government has refused to put through its own infrastructure body to see whether it is a good deal for the taxpayers of Western Australia, the industries that need to utilise Roe 8 and 9, and the punters who have to use Leach Highway. That is the question: why not put the outer harbour in front of the infrastructure body? The government has legislation sitting in the upper house; I cannot see it being dealt with urgently, as with the Beeliar wetlands bill. It is just sitting there in the upper house. It is something that the government said in this place that it would declare as urgent and said that it could not put the outer harbour through the infrastructure body because it had not yet been set up. Well, it has been set up now, so let us do the right thing by the government's own standards in setting up an infrastructure fund to ensure that the taxpayers of Western Australia's vision for all political parties who may get into government keep along the line and do what is right for infrastructure and for the taxpayers of regional Western Australia. Why would the government not put it through there? Why will it not look at the alternatives that are sitting there for the future—like I said, Esperance, Albany, Bunbury, Geraldton and the Pilbara—to ensure that we can grow our regional towns and ensure that we have the ability to get industry close to ports to reduce their costs?

I quote from an email sent to me by the Livestock and Rural Transport Association of Western Australia —

... intuitively there will be significant benefits from the removal of 14 sets of traffic lights. These benefits include shorter travel timeframes and less fuel usage.

That was a comment by the new president of the Livestock and Rural Transport Association, David Fyfe of Fyfe Transport. One of the government's own unions, the Transport Workers' Union of Australia, is advocating for this to occur. Everyone is advocating, and I look forward to working with the Liberal Party to ensure that, when we get into government, we will build this vitally important piece of infrastructure. But let us keep to the facts. Let us ensure we do what is right for the taxpayers, industry and regional Western Australia and put it through the infrastructure fund that the government set up.

DR M.D. NAHAN (Riverton) [3.35 pm]: Roe 8 and 9 has been a long debate in this place, but the Labor Party is in government now, and it has fought and argued against this project for a decade or more. We understand that. But when facts change, good governments change their policies and try to govern for everyone. We are seeing today how the government has pulled out all the stops to expedite the Ellenbrook line; the Minister for Transport brags about it. But I can tell members: people in my area, south metropolitan, are looking at what the government is doing up in Ellenbrook, and what it is doing in the south metropolitan area. It is not governing for them.

The facts have changed.

Mr T.J. Healy interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Southern River, I call you to order for the second time.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: The Labor Party went into that election saying categorically that the port of Fremantle would soon reach capacity. It then set up the Westport Taskforce to look at the outer harbour. The Westport Taskforce has made it quite clear to my community that the port of Fremantle has decades of capacity in it—up to 3.8 million 20-foot or equivalent units, relative to the 800 000 it currently serves. The port is not the constraint. That is fact one. Secondly, if the government rips up Roe 8, which it has done, it will have to do other things to facilitate continued traffic, cars and trucks into Fremantle and to the port. The government is in possession of a City of Cockburn study that says that if the government rips up Roe 8, it will have to spend in the vicinity of \$800 million on other accommodating activity, and it has not done so; it has no plan to do so.

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The government has put more containers on rail, but again the Westport Taskforce has made it clear that if rail were able to reach 30 per cent of containers, that is about it, and truck traffic will continue. The government has no solution. It built the Murdoch link because the commonwealth government forced it to, but that does not address the issues. It is building that giant roundabout on High Street, but that is not going to address the issues. It has no plan. The people in my electorate, the electorate of Bateman and, I might add, the City of Cockburn, will soon realise that the government has left them high and dry, in congested and dangerous situations. The TWU has made it quite clear that trucks will continue to go down Leach Highway and continue to threaten the health and lives of the people who use that road and who I represent, but the government does not care. When the data changes, wise people—people who care—change their mind, but the government has not.

The outer harbour is not going to happen for decades. The government has no money, no plan and no infrastructure for it, and it is highly unlikely that it will get environmental clearance to build it. The government's policies are prematurely putting billions of dollars into a very popular rail line into Ellenbrook, but that is something the previous government worked on for eight years. The minister quoted me as saying, when we came into government, that we were committed to Roe 8, and we are. We put money into it, but then we faced the Rudd–Gillard–Rudd government, which would not match any funding for it. We spent \$20 million planning every aspect of that road and talking with the community about every aspect of it. Then we ran the gauntlet of legal challenges by the environmental movement in the High Court, the Federal Court and the Supreme Court. We went through the state and commonwealth environmental protection authority processes. We went through the Infrastructure Australia processes. The argument was that we could not stop at Roe 8, so what about Roe 9? So we planned that also. When the Labor Party came to government, it was there and it was operating, but it decided to rip up the contracts. It said that that was history. It is true, but things have changed now. The facts have changed. The Labor government took the \$1.2 billion from the federal government and reallocated it; it is done. But the commonwealth doubled-down and said, "Here's an additional \$1.2 billion that you can access, and the only requirement is that you make sure that cars and trucks can go from the Murdoch precinct onto Murdoch Drive and through the Canning Highway–Stirling Highway intersection without going through lights." If the Labor government wants to redesign the road, it can. If it wants to build more bridges over the wetlands, it can, but it has refused that money. It refused the \$1.2 billion to build a planned, shovel-ready road that Infrastructure Australia said was the highest rated priority in the country, that is needed and that it has no alternative for. That is pure bloody mindedness. Yes, Labor promised not to build it and it ripped up the contracts. It thought that perhaps it could build the outer harbour and that the port of Fremantle would reach capacity, but all that has crumbled. The port has a lot of capacity. The only constraint is the roads. The roads will be used anyway. The outer harbour is decades away at best. When the government starts planning an outer harbour, the environmental protests and the reality will stop it. I will be down there, because it should not be built, and the government knows it, particularly with the expansion of the defence industry, which has, appropriately, a higher priority in that area. Once the defence industry expands, it will rule out the outer harbour. Nonetheless, that is decades away. The government has no option. It has not invested in the other roads that are being impacted without Roe 8. It has not planned for an alternative. It has the money on offer, but it is refusing it. It is also rejecting the thousands of jobs that would come with accepting and getting on with this shovel-ready project.

Mr T.J. Healy: And a toll road.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: If you want to build a toll road, you can, "Mr Toll"!

MS R. SAFFIOTI (West Swan — Minister for Transport) [3.42 pm]: I will be one of many speakers today. Today the Liberal Party is condemning us for not building something that we said we were not going to build. That is pretty much it, so let us go through this merry dance once again. We took a policy to the election and we are implementing that policy. I want to contrast what the member for Riverton's government did. In 2008, the previous government committed to build Roe 8. In eight and a half years, it could not do it. It blamed everyone else but itself. The reality is that Colin Barnett was not a supporter of the project, and, as a result, the Liberal Party did not support the project in its first term. That is the reality. Members can sit there and now cry fake tears about diesel fumes and whatever, but they had eight and a half years.

Dr M.D. Nahan: Fake tears!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Fake tears. It had eight and a half years, and if it was serious about it, it would have done it.

Members have said that we have pulled out all stops to deliver the Ellenbrook rail line. That is correct; we committed to do it and we are on our way to doing it. The previous government committed to build Roe 8, but it did not. In its first four years, it did not do that. It had eight and a half years. I could understand it not delivering it in four years, because projects take a while, but it had eight and a half years. It had all the money in the world. It racked up billions of dollars of debt. The idea that it did not build Roe 8 because it did not have federal funds is

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just false. It was not a priority. If it was a priority, the previous government would have done it. It was not a priority. It committed funds to Elizabeth Quay. That would have built Roe 8, but it was not the previous government's priority, so it did not do it. I will say it again and again.

Members opposite have now come into this place and expressed fake concern about this issue. They keep saying that it will take trucks off the roads. No, it will not; it will just send them to another road. What is the logic behind it? Comments were made about diesel fumes. Do members care about the people of Noranda with the Tonkin Highway project? Do they care about people across the suburbs? No; they are just obsessed with the people in the seat of Riverton. That is fair enough; that is their priority. However, we are concerned about the entire metropolitan area and the way that we move freight. Members opposite have mocked freight on rail. Freight on rail addresses all the issues they have raised, including diesel fumes and congestion. They mocked the fact that we have got into government and have increased the percentage of freight on rail from 15 per cent to 23 per cent. If they were concerned about road safety and about diesel fumes, why did they not do it? They were not concerned about it and now that they are in opposition, they are basically thrashing around on it. They had eight and a half years to either build Roe 8 or get freight on rail, but they did not do it.

Members talked about the south metro area. I will list a couple of projects we have underway. Of course, the member for Southern River mentioned the Thornlie–Cockburn rail link. There are particular road projects in the south metro area. Member for South Perth, the Kwinana Freeway south-bound on-ramp at Manning Road will be underway soon. As we said, we have cleared the land and it will be underway soon. The Kwinana Freeway smart freeway project will reduce congestion, travel time and diesel emissions—whatever you want to call it—in that entire area. There is the Murdoch Drive connection, the widening of the Kwinana Freeway northbound, the Armadale Road duplication and the Armadale–North Lake bridge. I have seen some of the commentary about the City of Cockburn wanting Roe 8. Again, I am not sure what parallel universe members are living in, but I know what the city wants. It wants better Armadale Road connections, the Armadale–North Lake bridge and the freeway to flow better—projects that the previous government ignored. It wants smart freeways to reduce travel times into the city and a new rail connection from Cockburn to Thornlie. That is what the city wants. That is why the people in that area elected the relevant members of Parliament to this place.

Members opposite keep talking about this project that will dump thousands of trucks into the member for Bicton's seat and the East Fremantle area but still not reach the port. You guys obviously kept the business case for this project, because you keep referring to it and quoting from it—you probably breached the State Records Act. Let us go through it. Give us the information. Give us the amount of the toll. Give us the amount of revenue that was going to be generated. Show us how it was going to work.

Mr T.J. Healy: Show us the money!

The SPEAKER: I will show you three calls if you keep interjecting!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The member for Bateman outlined that the toll would apply to 94 kilometres of road from Muchea to Fremantle. The member for Scarborough said that the Muchea–Fremantle link was always in the Stephenson plan. Again, that is wrong. They were proposing a toll for 84 kilometres of road. Give us all the information. How much per kilometre were they going to take back? What was the total revenue that was going to be generated? Give us that information. Members on that side of the house are hiding something about toll roads.

Mr D.T. Redman: We're in opposition; you're in government.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Yes.

Mr D.T. Redman: You're the one who is accountable to the people. Get on with it.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: We are. We are delivering our election commitment.

Mr D.T. Redman interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: We are getting on with it.

The SPEAKER: Members! The minister is on her feet. Let us hear what she has to say.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I am trying to look at all the issues raised. The member for Vasse used to say that Bussell Highway was the number one project. She has dropped Bussell Highway. She does not talk about it anymore. It is all about Roe Highway. Does the member for Vasse know what her government was going to put at Whiteman Park—a cemetery and a sporting complex!

Mr D.T. Redman: What does that have to do with this motion?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The Member for Vasse raised this issue, so I am going through it. The member for Vasse is opposed to the Wanneroo–Joondalup interchange. She wants us to stop that work right now. How about the diesel fumes that are affecting the local community? How about the jobs that would be cut?

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Ms L. Mettam interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Vasse! You have had your chance.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The member for Vasse wants us to cancel that project. Now she is worried about diesel fumes. Where does she want to go on this issue? What has happened to Bussell Highway? The member for Vasse said that was the biggest safety issue in Western Australia. The member has now completely dropped that project.

I turn now to the comments about south metro. We are spending hundreds of millions of dollars in south metro. Anyone who has driven along the freeway recently would know that we could not do more work on the freeway if we tried. There are works everywhere in south metro—road widening, new bridges, and new on-ramps and off-ramps. The fact that members opposite say that we are not doing anything in south metro shows that they do not ever drive in areas beyond their electorate; if they did, they would not say that.

Let us go through the history. In 2008, the former government made an election commitment. However, between 2008 and 2013, nothing happened. There was \$500 million in the budget for public transport, and Tony Abbott said that was not his knitting. The Nalder–Barnett show then started. The member for Bateman was trying to create a project in an economically rational way—which he thought was good policy—and the then Premier, Colin Barnett, hated it. For two years, it was not a legal battle, but an internal cabinet battle, that made the former government not deliver that project. The then Premier did not have confidence in the member for Bateman's project. They were all over the place. They then created a project that did not get to the port. They created all this fuss about reducing fumes and congestion, and they stopped the project on the other side of the river.

Mr D.C. Nalder interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: What was it going to be? Was it going to be another bridge? Was it going to be a tunnel? We made it pretty clear what we thought about that project. We put forward a plan. The member for Vasse outlined the plan. She said we are going to put more freight onto rail, and, yes, we are. She said we are going to develop further intermodals, and, yes, we are. The member for Vasse said we are going to develop High Street to reduce congestion and improve safety, and, yes, we are. The member for Vasse said we are going to plan for an outer harbour, and, yes, we are. The member for Vasse basically outlined our plan, and that is what we are doing.

As I have said, members opposite might be willing to let Ben Morton pull their strings. He might be the puppet-master of the opposition. However, I can tell members opposite that he is not the puppet-master of this government.

I turn now to the \$1.2 billion. Let me make this clear. The federal government has put forward \$1.2 billion for a project that it knows we are not going to deliver. That is pure politics. If the federal government wants to work with us to deliver real projects, like the regional run-off-road crashes program, let us do it now. Last year, 100 of the 160 road deaths in Western Australia were on regional roads. Many of those deaths were caused by single vehicles running off the road. We have put that program to the federal government. We can invest that money now. That project is shovel-ready. All the permits and all the clearing is in place. This would help all of regional Western Australia.

Ms M.J. Davies interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: If we do not use that \$1.2 billion, would the Leader of the National Party support that money going to regional Western Australia? The National Party should stand up for regional WA. It should stop its focus on city projects. There is \$1.2 billion sitting there. Members opposite know we are not going to deliver it. We know that it is a political stunt. They want to leave the money there, and they do not want to invest in regional WA. The regional run-off-road crashes project is supported by the RAC. In the areas in which the regional run-off program has been implemented, there has been a 50 per cent or 60 per cent reduction in deaths and serious injuries. These are real outcomes. The National Party should support regional WA and lock in behind this program.

Ms M.J. Davies interjected.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the National Party!

Several members interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I suppose the member supported the sponsorship of Western Force, then.

The National Party should support the fact that \$1.2 billion is sitting there—although it is not really, because it is a contingent liability. However, if we want to play that game, \$1.2 billion is sitting there. We can spend that money now in regional WA and save lives. The National Party should support that, because it is the right thing to do. If the National Party wants to commit to the state Liberal Party at the next election, fine. However, if the money is there now, let us spend it on the regional run-off program, which the RAC supports. The National Party should stop backing city projects and support the regional run-off program.

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 6 August 2019]

p4976c-4985a

Ms Libby Mettam; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Vincent Catania; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Rita Saffioti; Ms Simone McGurk; Mrs Lisa O'Malley; Mr Terry Healy; Mr Peter Tinley

Members opposite want us to break a key election commitment. That is because they could not deliver on their commitment. It would be like me coming into government as Minister for Transport and doing nothing for eight years on the Ellenbrook rail line, and members opposite then being elected and saying they will build the rail line. It is just ridiculous. Members opposite made that commitment, but they did nothing for eight and a half years. They could have delivered that if they had made it a priority.

I am interested in making sure that we get trucks off our roads. Our move to put freight on rail is a big step in that direction. Our development of intermodals is a continued step in that direction. When it comes to reducing congestion and saving lives on our roads, I am concerned about the whole of Western Australia. The opposition does not care about the northern suburbs. It does not care about the roads south of Riverton. It does not care about the eastern suburbs. It does not care about regional WA. All it cares about is this project.

Mr B.S. Wyatt: And Ben Morton.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Yes, and Ben Morton. All the opposition cares about is the backroom operator who is pulling the strings of the Liberal Party. The opposition does not care about the rest of Western Australia. It is scary that the opposition does not understand our road programs, which are saving lives in WA, and it does not understand our rail projects. The freeway widening, the new ramps and interchanges, and the Bunbury outer ring-road and Albany ring-road would not have been planned, funded and delivered if the previous government had been in power.

The opposition has an obsession with this project. However, it is an obsession that it could never deliver. If I were a member of the opposition, I would be frustrated, too, that I had spent eight years in government and had done nothing to deliver my pet project and obsession. I would be upset, too, if I were an opposition member. However, they should not blame us for their absolute incompetence.

MS S.F. MCGURK (Fremantle — Minister for Child Protection) [3.58 pm]: I want to pick up on a point that the Minister for Transport made very clearly. The opposition had eight and a half years to do something about Roe 8 and the Perth Freight Link, and it did very little. That is demonstrated by the fact that in the May 2015 state budget, which preceded the announcement by the federal government that it had put funding into the federal budget for the so-called Perth Freight Link, there was absolutely no funding for Roe 8. Members opposite should remember that. The former government was elected in 2008, and, in the 2015 state budget, there was absolutely nothing for Roe 8 or the Perth Freight Link. This all happened despite the opposition continuing to talk about how Infrastructure Australia said that the Perth Freight Link was one of its priority projects. Let us examine that a little more closely.

In August 2015, Infrastructure Australia criticised the freight link project. Infrastructure Australia's assessment of the Perth Freight Link in May had just been released. It looked at the link back in May and had started to become very critical of it. In 2015, Infrastructure Australia said, "We believe this is a flawed project"—sorry, I was not quoting Infrastructure Australia then; I was quoting Rita Saffioti. We do think that it was a flawed project but Infrastructure Australia said then that it was concerned and that a number of key WA planning documents made no mention of Roe 8 or the Perth Freight Link. The previous government had been in office since 2008 and this happened in 2015. Neither the "State Planning Strategy 2050", "Directions 2031 and beyond: metropolitan planning beyond the horizon", the "Western Australian Regional Freight Transport Network Plan", the "Draft Perth Freight Transport Network Plan", the draft state port strategy plan nor the Fremantle Port's "Inner Harbour Port Development Plan" mentioned Roe 8 or the Perth Freight Link. Not only did the previous government not get on and build this project in eight and a half years, but in its first six years of government it did nothing. It did not even reference the link in any of its key planning documents.

Mr D.C. Nalder: Try the Perth and Peel transport plan. Stop misleading Parliament.

The SPEAKER: Member for Bateman!

Ms S.F. MCGURK: I am talking about what Infrastructure Australia said in 2015. It criticised the state government for that reason. In fact, when Infrastructure Australia went back and did some more work on this project, it also showed that the freight link was selected from a short list of four options that had been culled from 12 options, and that the outer harbour was never considered as an option. Infrastructure Australia was never given the option to consider the outer harbour and compare the possibilities of running the Perth Freight Link, which it considered a priority project, to the outer harbour.

Let us go forward to March 2017 during which time the then government had just short of two years to do this work. WAtoday reported that —

... discrepancies between Roe 8's environmental report and its business case have raised concerns that the project is a rush job based on massaged figures that could hang WA taxpayers out to dry.

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Email and documents exchanges between Main Roads WA and the federal Department of Infrastructure, made publicly available through Freedom of Information laws, cast doubt over the design and economic viability of the road.

They also make it clear that “if toll revenues are insufficient to meet availability payments, the Western Australian government is responsible for meeting the shortfall”.

The point of all this is that the planning related to this project was haphazard from the very beginning. Despite all the claims that have been made by the other side, which are best illustrated for instance by the Leader of the Opposition crying crocodile tears about diesel fumes as a result of Perth Freight Link not going ahead and the claim about the number of trucks that might be taken off local roads due to the Perth Freight Link design, the reality is that most people understood that this project was incredibly badly planned, if it was planned at all. The criticism of the Roe 8 component of the plan was that it was always a so-called road to nowhere; there was nowhere to go.

Mr D.C. Nalder interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Bateman!

Ms S.F. McGURK: The Perth Freight Link came along in 2015. It went down Stock Road and took out the community of Moody Glen. That was criticised because houses and businesses that had not been on the road reserve were going to be obliterated under that project.

Mr D.C. Nalder interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Bateman! I call you to order for the first time.

Ms S.F. McGURK: The then Minister for Transport, Dean Nalder, the member for Bateman, said, “Let’s do a tunnel.” Let us think about that tunnel. It would have started at a Southern Cross Care aged-care facility on the corner of Stock Road and Winterfold Road and gone under houses and a primary school in Hilton and White Gum Valley. In fact, the member for Bateman said in a debate in this place in June just gone —

Mr D.C. Nalder interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Bateman! You had the chance to talk before.

Ms S.F. McGURK: — that one of the reasons the tunnel had been considered financially viable was that houses did not have to be resumed. It is laughable! The plan then needed to have bridge built and to reach Tydeman Road. It would have been at least a \$4 billion project to get the road to the port.

There are many things I could talk about in relation to this project, not least of which is the number of trucks that will be driven onto our roads because the Perth Freight Link is to build a completely truck-based and road-based solution into the inner harbour. It makes no sense. The Leader of the Opposition talked about a poll in which she said 9 000 people rejected Roe 8. It was pointed out to me that that poll occurred in 2016. Since then another poll happened in March 2017 and the voters of Western Australia were very clear about their desired outcome.

MRS L.M. O’MALLEY (Bicton) [4.05 pm]: The selective concern of the members opposite is astounding. It certainly does not extend to the people of East Fremantle. Roe 8 leads to Roe 9, and Roe 9 remains a threat to the people, homes and businesses of Palmyra and East Fremantle. The Perth Freight Link was rejected at the 2017 election. The people of East Fremantle will never accept a freight freeway through their community. The opposition leader talks of the dangers of diesel particulates to human health.

Mr D.C. Nalder interjected

The SPEAKER: Member for Bateman!

Mrs L.M. O’MALLEY: What the opposition leader failed to mention is that they are a constant in the environment. Removing traffic lights will not change that fact. Diesel particulates are a constant in the environment. Look it up! The facts and the evidence are there. The Leader of the Opposition and members opposite should inform themselves. Diesel particulates are a constant in the environment. So-called free-flowing freeways will not change that fact. I do agree with the opposition that those particulates are incredibly dangerous. They are a class 1 carcinogen as identified by the World Health Organization. More freight on trucks on roads will not change that at all. Building the Perth Freight Link will not change anything. It just moves the danger from one part of my electorate to another. The opposition leader and members opposite are asking me to choose, in a sense, one part of my electorate over another. It is like identifying which one is my favourite child—which one I am prepared to sacrifice. I am not prepared to choose. I will never choose. The Perth Freight Link is not the solution now and it never will be.

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MR T.J. HEALY (Southern River) [4.07 pm]: I rise to speak to this motion and oppose this ridiculous matter of public interest. As the Minister for Transport just said, at the election we promised not to build this road. The opposition is now sad that we are keeping our promise. I will remind members of something: Roe 8 and Roe 9 are toll roads. The key thing that members of my community and the majority of members who were elected as part of a Labor government knew was that the previous government was building a toll road in our electorate. The member for Riverton in his speech before the break mentioned that \$350 million would be raised from this toll road. The previous government wanted to build it and it was going to affect my family and my electorate. It was not going to be a road through Cottesloe, Scarborough or Churchlands. If members opposite really want to talk about toll roads and freight charges, would they consider putting a toll road along Stirling Highway through Cottesloe and Scarborough? No, they would not. They do not suggest a toll road in those areas. This is the thin edge of the wedge. The minister mentioned 84 kilometres of potential toll roads; she was a bit sketchy about some of the details. It would have been the first toll road in Western Australia.

Members should also be aware that Roe 8 did not get to the port. Roe 9 did not get to the port. There was no plan for Roe 10. Was it a tunnel? Was it a bridge? What was it in this fictional land? It was the road to nowhere. If it was going to take two or three years to construct Roe 8 and another four or five years for Roe 9, we are talking about 15 years in which nothing was actually going to connect to this fictional victory plan that would solve all the world's problems. It was not going to take trucks off the road.

As has been wisely suggested by this government, the \$1.2 billion of federal money should be spent on regional road safety. I understand that the opposition has only two regional members of Parliament left, being Dawesville, if Dawesville is regional, and Vasse, but it is important that members opposite recognise that the regions are important. It is important that we spend the money and do that.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members! I am a regional member, too.

Mr T.J. HEALY: I will finish my comments by simply saying that this is a toll road. I will also finish with the wise words of Little John from the 1993 film *Robin Hood: Men in Tights*, who said —

Sorry, but a toll is a toll, ... and if we don't get no tolls, then we don't eat no rolls. I made that up.

That sums up the Liberal Party policy on this toll road!

MR P.C. TINLEY (Willagee — Minister for Housing) [4.10 pm]: One thing is very, very clear here: this debate about Roe 8 has entered that twilight zone called a fact-free debate. Members opposite can come into this place or go outside it and say whatever they like about Roe 8. They can say whatever they like about the thousands of truck movements that will or will not go on or come off Leach Highway, and about the capacity of the state to do whatever it can do. Members opposite can say, as they have all said, that the port will not reach capacity for 50 years, which they say is 1.2 million 20-foot equivalent units or 800 000 TEU; it does not matter. The Leader of the Opposition said that mothers carrying their children down Leach Highway will be killed outright. Members opposite also say that this road is going to create 10 000 jobs. There will be 10 000 jobs in one road! The Leader of the Opposition then said that it will be 3 000 jobs, and the member for Bateman said it will be 2 000 jobs. It is not an auction, people! There will be either evidence-based approaches to this issue or there will not. The approach of members opposite clearly is not. What is really clear here is that the intellectual capacity of the Liberal Party is not in this chamber. What is really clear is that Ben Morton and Mathias Cormann have their hands up the back of the opposition's jumper and are telling members opposite what they need to say. They are saying whatever comes off the cuff. We welcome members opposite to a true debate, with the evidence, if they choose to actually make a contribution to the future of Western Australia. Come up with an original thought. Come up with an idea that was not baked in the back of a taxicab down to an event in the city. Members opposite should pick up their game. We will welcome them to the debate at any point they would like to join.

Division

Question put and a division taken with the following result —

Ayes (18)

Mr I.C. Blayney
Mr V.A. Catania
Ms M.J. Davies
Mrs L.M. Harvey
Dr D.J. Honey

Mr P.A. Katsambanis
Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup
Mr A. Krsticevic
Mr S.K. L'Estrange
Mr R.S. Love

Mr W.R. Marmion
Mr J.E. McGrath
Ms L. Mettam
Dr M.D. Nahan
Mr D.C. Nalder

Mr D.T. Redman
Mr P.J. Rundle
Mrs A.K. Hayden (*Teller*)

Extract from *Hansard*
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Noes (37)

Ms L.L. Baker	Mr W.J. Johnston	Mr S.J. Price	Mr C.J. Tallentire
Dr A.D. Buti	Mr D.J. Kelly	Mr D.T. Punch	Mr D.A. Templeman
Mr J.N. Carey	Mr M. McGowan	Mr J.R. Quigley	Mr P.C. Tinley
Mrs R.M.J. Clarke	Ms S.F. McGurk	Ms M.M. Quirk	Mr R.R. Whitby
Ms J. Farrer	Mr K.J.J. Michel	Mrs M.H. Roberts	Ms S.E. Winton
Mr M.J. Folkard	Mr S.A. Millman	Ms C.M. Rowe	Mr B.S. Wyatt
Ms J.M. Freeman	Mr Y. Mubarakai	Ms R. Saffioti	Mr D.R. Michael (<i>Teller</i>)
Ms E.L. Hamilton	Mr M.P. Murray	Ms A. Sanderson	
Mr T.J. Healy	Mrs L.M. O'Malley	Ms J.J. Shaw	
Mr M. Hughes	Mr P. Papalia	Mrs J.M.C. Stojkovski	

Pair

Mr K. O'Donnell

Mr F.M. Logan

Question thus negatived.