

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY — Thursday, 22 November 2018]

p8587a-8592a

Mr Vincent Catania; Mr David Templeman; Ms Mia Davies; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mrs Liza Harvey; Deputy Speaker; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Dean Nalder; Ms Simone McGurk

BEELIAR WETLANDS — INFRASTRUCTURE WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Standing Orders Suspension — Motion

MR V.A. CATANIA (North West Central) [3.07 pm] — without notice: I move —

That so much of standing orders be suspended as is necessary to allow the following motion to be moved forthwith —

That this house calls on the McGowan government to defer its Beelias wetlands bill 2018 until it establishes the independent infrastructure of WA body to assess transport infrastructure necessary to service Fremantle port in the future.

I believe we have agreement from the government and Leader of the House.

Standing Orders Suspension — Amendment to Motion

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Leader of the House) [3.07 pm]: I have spoken to the ministers responsible and they are very keen to smack you out of the park with this one. I move —

To insert after “forthwith” —

, subject to the debate being limited to 10 minutes for government members and 10 minutes for non-government members

Amendment put and passed.

Standing Orders Suspension — Motion, as Amended

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: As this is a motion without notice to suspend standing orders, it will need an absolute majority in order to succeed. If I hear a dissentient voice, I will be required to divide the Assembly.

Question put and passed with an absolute majority.

Motion

MR V.A. CATANIA (North West Central) [3.08 pm]: I move the motion. This motion states —

That this house calls on the McGowan government to defer its Beelias wetlands bill 2018 until it establishes the independent infrastructure of WA body to assess transport infrastructure necessary to service Fremantle port in the future.

Yesterday, during question time, I asked the Premier where this infrastructure body group is. The response I got was quite alarming.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members, we have someone on their feet trying to conduct a debate. Could you please keep your conversations down or clear the room if you are leaving.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: The Labor Party made an election commitment to establish the infrastructure body. The Premier said that it would be established by the end of 2018. We have one week of Parliament remaining and we still have not seen the formation of an infrastructure body to review something that this legislation is about to cancel. It is about to cancel something that is vital to Fremantle port and any other future expansion that may occur in the area around the port of Fremantle.

We are seeing the Premier saying, “Do as I say but not as I do.”

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members, I have asked once. Please stop the conversations, ministers included.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: The response I received to my question yesterday stated —

We received a range of submissions and it is broadly accepted as a very good idea.

That is, having an infrastructure body. He continued —

The process of establishing commences later this year or in the new year, but we are not far away from making a significant announcement about the matter.

I asked a supplementary question. Again, the response was a bit bizarre. The Premier stated —

That is a bizarre analysis of the role of Infrastructure Western Australia.

He thinks it is a bizarre analysis to have the infrastructure body look at the Roe 8 situation, Beelias wetlands, the best way forward for Fremantle port or the outer harbour, something that the government is pushing as it has the capacity of the Fremantle port for the next 25 years. It is bizarre that the Premier would say that. He continued —

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The role of Infrastructure Western Australia would be to provide advice to government on prospective infrastructure projects.

Mr W.R. Marmion: Bizarre.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: It is absolutely bizarre, given that the Premier has formed a group to ensure that infrastructure can get away from politics. He is taking away the scrutiny of the project and not being open, accountable and honest. He wants to get this legislation through. This piece of legislation was not even an election commitment. The Labor Party went to the election saying that it would stop Roe 8, which it has. Now it has a piece of legislation that has no consequences whatsoever. If the government were really open and accountable, it would wait until this infrastructure body was formed. On 25 March 2018 it was reported that WA had announced a plan for a state infrastructure strategy. The Premier said that an independent advisory body, Infrastructure WA, would report on all major projects. He said he wanted to restore confidence in the government's ability to plan for the future, with sensible infrastructure development, and not just rely on pet projects by the Premier of the day. What do we have here? We have the Premier of the day or the minister for infrastructure making sure that the government can push through this bill relating to their pet project, the Beelihar wetlands, before this infrastructure body can have a proper look at it and be open and accountable. The Premier said that he would establish Infrastructure WA, an independent advisory body of senior private and public sector representatives that would report directly to the Premier on all major infrastructure projects. He said that we need to remove decisions on these major projects from the politics of pet projects and restore confidence in the government's ability to plan for the future.

We are saying that the government should establish the body. It made a commitment that it would be done before 2018. What is it scared of? Why is it trying to rush the bill through Parliament when it said that it would invest in an infrastructure body to look at all infrastructure around Western Australia? The government should defer this piece of legislation and have a proper look at it. That is part of the Labor Party's policy and the commitment it made at the 2017 election.

MS M.J. DAVIES (Central Wheatbelt — Leader of the Nationals WA) [3.14 pm]: I rise to support the motion. I very much support what the member for North West Central said. We think that the government is putting the cart before the horse. We are seeing a pattern emerge with this government—it proposes a raft of very lofty ideals around open and accountable government and says that it will hold itself to a higher level of accountability and provide a rolled-gold level of transparency, but we find that only applies when it is politically convenient. When it is politically convenient, the government is happy to go down that pathway. It is happy to go to an election and put forward to the voters of Western Australia, as the member for North West Central said, that we will have the Infrastructure WA body. The notion was that it would be delivered by the end of this year. A very good article by Paul Murray in *The West Australian* last week highlighted that not much work has been done on that publicly, along with the fact that Westport was created, which is very much linked to what we are talking about around the Beelihar wetlands link, the demise of Roe 8, the future of the Fremantle port and the potential future of the outer harbour and all the transport infrastructure that is connected to that.

These are major decisions for any state government. When we put them in context, we realise that the government made these commitments to the electorate prior to the state election and then merrily went on its way when it was politically convenient and ignored all those bodies that it said have been utterly necessary because it had no confidence in what the previous government had in place. We can only look at this from a highly cynical perspective and say that a good dose of hypocrisy is involved in what this piece of legislation is bringing to the house. We are seeing a pattern. We have spoken about the Langoulant report a number of times in this house. The government commissioned this report with \$1.1 million worth of taxpayer dollars. Mr Langoulant said that we need business cases and this government said, "Yes, we agree." The government waved the report around in this Parliament and then proceeded to carry on without creating business cases. We had a whole raft of evidence around a number of projects that had been brought to cabinet that did not have those business cases. The government is hypocritical. It is not holding itself to its own standards. It is something that is not needed. The bill that the government is asking us to consider could be deferred until appropriate mechanisms are in place for everyone to understand the ramifications.

DR M.D. NAHAN (Riverton — Leader of the Opposition) [3.16 pm]: This government came in promising rolled-gold accountability. It set up the Langoulant inquiry. The report from that inquiry laid out a pattern. The government has violated that on every project it has initiated. It had another inquiry relating to setting up Infrastructure WA. The government is willing to go to Infrastructure Australia but not Infrastructure WA. It is clear that the government needs Roe 8 or the corridor that is associated with it if a large number of containers are to continue to be transported to the port of Fremantle. We will need that unless the government comes up with the alternative of a western port. It spent \$20 million on a study into a western port that it has not released. We have not seen those findings. When it does that, it will have to show the public that it might need the corridor. The government is just pursuing its pet projects. I am confident that there will be no western port and that the

Extract from Hansard

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p8587a-8592a

Mr Vincent Catania; Mr David Templeman; Ms Mia Davies; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mrs Liza Harvey; Deputy Speaker; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Dean Nalder; Ms Simone McGurk

government will go against all precedent and excise the land. We will have increased congestion through to the port of Fremantle, which will remain our major container port for decades to come. The minister will not be there. The people in my electorate in suburbs such as Bateman and Bicton will suffer the consequences of this bloody-minded pursuit of green votes at the last election. The government does not care about accountability. In fact, it is the antithesis of accountability. This is an act of planning bastardry of the worst order. If the government had any guts, it would wait for the report of the inquiry into Westport to come out and send it to Infrastructure WA, or Infrastructure Australia perhaps, but it does not want to do that because it does not care. It is not interested in accountability; it wants to basically meet the commitments it made to the people who undermine the transport system in this state going forward. I fully support this motion. I have no trust in Infrastructure Australia or its competence.

MS R. SAFFIOTI (West Swan — Minister for Transport) [3.19 pm]: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for that diatribe. Let us go through the issues. The Leader of the Opposition stood up and said that the government is not interested in accountability; we are just interested in meeting our election commitments.

Dr M.D. Nahan interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: We made clear commitments —

Dr M.D. Nahan interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I did not interject on the other side, not once.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition —

Dr M.D. Nahan interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, if you want to stay in the chamber, I would appreciate it and the house would appreciate it if you let the minister start her response.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The Leader of the Opposition stood up and swore in the Parliament a number of times. We did not interject once, so I do not expect interjections now. He stood up and said we were not interested in accountability, but they do not want us to deliver our election commitments. That is what he said. Members opposite have told mistruths about this. The member for Scarborough went on radio and said our decision was to sell the land, and that is absolutely wrong.

Mr V.A. Catania interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for North West Central!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: She went out and said that we were selling the land.

Mrs L.M. Harvey: I did not say that; don't mislead Parliament.

Point of Order

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: The minister is misleading Parliament in making those comments.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members, you are quite right. I need a standing order, member, please, if you are going to call a point of order.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: How about the code of conduct that states —

Members must apply high standards of behaviour and consciously avoid personal abuse and denigration of Parliamentary colleagues.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, member. There is no point of order but I ask that we are very clear about what is the correct and honest response.

Debate Resumed

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The Leader of the Opposition stood up pointing and saying “They, they”, using words in this place that were unparliamentary, and the member for Scarborough is talking about standards. What is the member for North West Central's proposition today?

Mr V.A. Catania interjected.

Point of Order

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: No.

Debate Resumed

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Sorry, minister, you did ask a question and left it hanging. If it was a rhetorical question —

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY — Thursday, 22 November 2018]

p8587a-8592a

Mr Vincent Catania; Mr David Templeman; Ms Mia Davies; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mrs Liza Harvey; Deputy Speaker; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Dean Nalder; Ms Simone McGurk

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I would have finished if members opposite had not interrupted.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Good, go ahead.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The Leader of the Opposition said that we should not do anything until Infrastructure WA is created. That is what they are saying today. We should not go ahead and build the Tom Price–Karratha road; we should not develop the Port Hedland marina; we should not build any project in WA until Infrastructure WA is created. That is what they are putting forward. Did we ever say that we would not deliver any projects until Infrastructure WA was created? Their view is that no project across WA —

Mr V.A. Catania interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for North West Central, I think the minister has made it clear she is not taking interjections. I am sorry. I will call you to order for the third time. She is not taking interjections, can we just hear her out, please.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: No Port Hedland marina, no regional project, no project in WA until Infrastructure WA is created. That is the theory of members opposite; that is the proposal they are putting forward today. Does anyone realistically think that we should stop all projects in WA? Does anyone realistically think that? That is what they are putting forward. They are putting forward the view that because Infrastructure WA has not been created, we are not allowed to make any decisions on infrastructure. I think that is a ridiculous assumption, so everyone in WA needs to understand.

Several members interjected.

Dr M.D. Nahan interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, I call you to order for the first time.

Point of Order

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: The intimidation of a female on her feet —

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members!

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: The intimidation of the female minister on her feet is not parliamentary and I ask you to stop the men on the other side of the chamber continuously interjecting on this female minister.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: What standing order is the member for Cannington referring to?

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member, that is enough from both sides.

Debate Resumed

Mr P.C. Tinley interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members, including ministers.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The proposal members are putting forward is that until Infrastructure WA is created, everything stops. They are saying to everyone on this side: do not deliver election commitments; do not do anything; do not planning for projects—nothing—because Infrastructure WA is not created. What a stupid proposal put forward by the other side. What a stupid proposal from a group of people who led us into a recession and wrecked the state's finances. It is coming from a group of people who, basically, lost the confidence of people around the state, who saw the economy go off a cliff with the worst finances in the country, but they come in here trying to lecture us about what we are doing with infrastructure.

What do we have? We have infrastructure certainty. We have companies that are actively out there. There is more confidence —

Mr D.C. Nalder interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Again, Deputy Speaker, I did not interject once on them.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I will say it again: please, the minister has asked for no interjections. I understand that in this house it is very difficult to keep completely quiet, but both sides of the house are being asked not to speak or interject.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Thank you. I did not interject once despite some of the accusations made and they will not let me make a sentence. Let us go through this. They want us to stop everything. In relation to the proposal put forward by the National Party, we redirected funds from Perth Freight Link to regional projects. Members opposite have

Extract from Hansard

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p8587a-8592a

Mr Vincent Catania; Mr David Templeman; Ms Mia Davies; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mrs Liza Harvey; Deputy Speaker; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Dean Nalder; Ms Simone McGurk

come in today and argued for more spending in Perth than in regional WA. That is what they are arguing. They have come in and said that we should have built Roe 8 and should not have spent money on regional projects like the \$55 million —

Point of Order

Mr P. PAPALIA: I rise to draw attention to standing order 96. “Interruptions not allowed — exceptions” and note that it states —

A member may only interrupt another member to call attention to a point of order or privilege, or absence of a quorum. Upon a question of order or privilege being raised, the member with the call will sit down.

The member for Bateman, in a cowardly fashion, has consistently interrupted —

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: It is not a speech, member.

Mr P. PAPALIA: — and interjected on the member on her feet and has not been called. I ask that you draw attention to the member for Bateman’s responsibility under standing order 96 to remain quiet while the minister has the call.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, member.

Withdrawal of Remark

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The member for Bateman also referred to the minister as “junior” and I ask that he withdraw.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I am sorry, what are you saying the member said?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: He referred to the member as “junior”.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: He did not have the call. I think he was interjecting, but it is not appropriate to use acronyms or words like that, so I ask you to withdraw, if you did use that word.

Mr D.C. NALDER: I withdraw.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Very well done. Thank you, member for Bateman.

Debate Resumed

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The National Party, who all live within the CBD CAT bus route, or maybe are spread a little bit more into the western suburbs now, have come in here and argued for less spending in regional WA and more spending in the metropolitan area. That is what they have argued today. They argued against projects like the widening and reconstruction of Amelup Curves; against \$2.5 million for the northern Cranbrook road; against \$2 million for the South West Highway widening; against \$2.1 million for the Boyanup–Capel Road.

Point of Order

Mr P. PAPALIA: Standing order 95 states —

Members will not converse noisily or otherwise disturb the proceedings.

I am a little hard of hearing, thanks to exposure to explosions and, as a consequence, the member for Bateman conversing noisily with the member for Nedlands is disturbing my ability to hear the debate. I ask you to call to their attention their obligations under standing order 95.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you very much. Hansard, you need to capture the debate. That is the basis on which I ask people to be quiet.

Debate Resumed

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: They have argued against Brand Highway passing lanes worth \$5 million; against Great Northern Highway widening, \$1.5 million; against Indian Ocean Drive passing lanes worth \$7 million; against the Goldfields Highway widening, \$6.1 million; against the Coolgardie–Esperance Highway passing lanes, \$5 million; against the York–Merredin road reconstruction, \$4.9 million.

Point of Order

Mr V.A. CATANIA: The minister is not actually talking to the motion. We are speaking about the Beelihar wetlands bill, not about infrastructure around Western Australia.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have a clear recollection of you raising infrastructure throughout your presentation. I think we need to tolerate the minister’s response and encourage her to complete it.

Debate Resumed

Extract from Hansard

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p8587a-8592a

Mr Vincent Catania; Mr David Templeman; Ms Mia Davies; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mrs Liza Harvey; Deputy Speaker; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr Dean Nalder; Ms Simone McGurk

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The member for North West Central said we are not discussing infrastructure in a motion that has the word “infrastructure”.

The National Party argued against \$2 million for the North West Coastal Highway widening. It argued against \$4 million for passing lanes on Great Northern Highway. It argued against \$2.15 million for a passing lane on North West Coastal Highway. That is what it has done today. Today, National Party members have shown their true colours—they do not care about regional Western Australia. They care about where they live, which is in the metropolitan area, and they have argued against spending on regional roads. That is what National Party members have done today. They have argued for economic vandalism, which we understand is their forte, in the fact that they want us to stop all infrastructure spending. They have argued for Roe 8 and against the redistribution of those funds to key projects throughout regional Western Australia. That is what they have argued today. It basically shows that the National Party does not represent true regional Western Australia. Many National Party members have never worked the land. They would not know a farm if they fell over one. They have no understanding of regional Western Australia and how important it is to spend road funding in regional WA. That is why we made it a focus and a priority to spend road funding in regional WA.

MS S.F. MCGURK (Fremantle — Minister for Child Protection) [3.31 pm]: I would like to speak to this incredible motion in which members of the National Party are calling on the government to defer the Metropolitan Region Scheme (Beeliar Wetlands) Bill 2018 until there is an independent assessment of the infrastructure necessary to service Fremantle port in the future. Of course, we have a very transparent process, which was outlined before the election. It is to set up the Westport strategy, which would have a close look at what our freight and infrastructure needs would be for the twenty-first century, looking at not only Fremantle port—a 120-year-old port—and the transport routes in and out that port, but also the opportunities for the rest of the century that perhaps could be based in the outer harbour or perhaps looking at Bunbury. The freight and logistics opportunities are there for the modern transport opportunities that will arise out of the Westport strategy and that project’s remit.

That process has been transparent. It has involved an independent chair and a series of government agencies that will work together across a range of different issues. There are all sorts of opinions about that project. There are opinions about the implications for Fremantle and the working port, particularly the freight coming in and going out of Fremantle. There are opinions about what a second port might look like in Cockburn and the implications for the sound. There are opinions about the freight and logistics opportunities and what the impact on road and rail might be. What we want is an expert opinion about all those opportunities, which is happening under Westport. It is chaired by an independent expert—a highly regarded woman who has experience in freight and logistics on a national scale. This is in contrast with the National Party, which was part of a government that, if it had had its way, would have sunk \$2 billion of public money into the Perth Freight Link. That included a tunnel that went underneath the suburbs of Hilton and White Gum Valley. It was a ridiculous proposition.

Division

Question put and a division taken, the Deputy Speaker (Ms L.L. Baker) casting her vote with the noes, with the following result —

Ayes (15)

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

Mrs A.K. Hayden
Dr D.J. Honey
Mr P. Katsambanis
Mr A. Krsticevic

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

Mr D.T. Redman
Mr P.J. Rundle
Ms L. Mettam (*Teller*)

Noes (33)

Ms L.L. Baker
Dr A.D. Buti
Mr J.N. Carey
Mrs R.M.J. Clarke
Mr R.H. Cook
Mr M.J. Folkard
Ms J.M. Freeman
Ms E. Hamilton
Mr M. Hughes

Mr W.J. Johnston
Mr D.J. Kelly
Mr F.M. Logan
Ms S.F. McGurk
Mr S.A. Millman
Mr Y. Mubarakai
Mr M.P. Murray
Mrs L.M. O’Malley
Mr P. Papalia

Mr S.J. Price
Mr D.T. Punch
Mr J.R. Quigley
Ms M.M. Quirk
Mrs M.H. Roberts
Ms R. Saffioti
Ms A. Sanderson
Ms J.J. Shaw
Mrs J.M.C. Stojkovski

Mr C.J. Tallentire
Mr P.C. Tinley
Mr R.R. Whitby
Ms S.E. Winton
Mr B.S. Wyatt
Mr D.R. Michael (*Teller*)

Pairs

Mr S.K. L’Estrange

Mr M. McGowan

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p8587a-8592a

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Mr R.S. Love
Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup

Mr D.A. Templeman
Mr K.J.J. Michel

Question thus negatived.