

SELECT COMMITTEE INTO THE FREMANTLE EASTERN BYPASS

Amendment to Motion

Resumed from 22 October on the following motion moved by Hon Simon O'Brien -

- (1) That a select committee of five members is appointed, any three of whom constitute a quorum, to inquire and report on the history of that part of the metropolitan region scheme known as the Fremantle eastern bypass and related road infrastructure including -
 - (a) initial inclusion of the bypass in the metropolitan region scheme;
 - (b) subsequent modifications to the metropolitan region scheme in respect of the bypass;
 - (c) the decision making process and advice given to Government by relevant government agencies including agencies responsible for main roads, planning, transport and environment;
 - (d) directions given by Government to agencies with responsibility for decision making; and
 - (e) other matters pertaining to the history and possible future of the Fremantle eastern bypass that the committee may consider useful to bring to the attention of the House.
- (2) The committee have power to send for persons, papers and records and to travel from place to place.
- (3) Standing Orders Nos 322, 323, 330 and 331 apply to the proceedings of the committee and any contrary or inconsistent provision of chapter XXIII is modified accordingly.
- (4) The committee may present interim reports without a requirement for leave and is to report finally not later than 30 November 2002.

to which the following amendment was moved by Hon Norman Moore (Leader of the Opposition) -

That the words "That a select committee of five members is appointed, any three of whom constitute a quorum," be deleted and the following words be substituted -

That the Standing Committee on Public Administration and Finance be required

HON JIM SCOTT (South Metropolitan) [4.07 pm]: I heard the very interesting arguments put forward by Hon Simon O'Brien and Hon Barbara Scott. However, essentially they put forward exactly the same arguments but for a different committee. They could have easily referred the matter directly to that committee, if they wished to do so. I am not sure why they have taken this route, having already debated this issue once. A number of points they raised need to be challenged. For instance, they seem to be concerned that the proposal to delete the eastern bypass from the metropolitan region scheme will somehow cause massive problems for Melville. Yet they do not recognise that the eastern bypass is part of a major highway system running through many suburbs, which is called the western suburbs highway.

Hon Barbara Scott: I said three times that it was a whole of Perth infrastructure issue.

Hon JIM SCOTT: The member carefully wanted to keep this to the bypass. It is not a bypass. The interesting thing is that the Liberal Party, when it was in government, moved to delete the end of the eastern bypass, or the western suburbs highway. A major road would have gone through the middle of the city of Fremantle area, with no real ability for that road to feed the areas that it was once designed to feed. The previous Government had already started that process. The then Premier, Richard Court, said that the Government had no intention of building the bypass in the near future in any event. Therefore, I do not quite know what the Opposition is on about and what the urgency is.

The Opposition is jumping up and down now about sending this issue to the Standing Committee on Public Administration and Finance, and it wanted to send it to another committee previously. I understand that a press release today by the gang of three, or maybe it is just the gang of two, puts forward the Liberal Party's new sustainable transport policy that is all about building more roads - and somehow this will reduce traffic! The interesting thing is that the Opposition is complaining about extra traffic along South Street and saying that somehow it will have almost freeway status. As I have previously said, maps had been taken off the Government's web site and altered so that roads such as Stock Road and South Street had "freeway" written on them.

It is interesting to note that not so long ago when the Liberal Government was in power, it suggested that South Street be categorised upwards and taken out of the control of local government. The City of Fremantle objected to this, but the City of Melville wanted that upgrade. The Liberal Party is concerned about more roads now that

it is in opposition, and it appears that the Melville City Council is part of that opposition. Only a short while ago, the Liberal Party wanted to upgrade that road on which it now wants to keep down the traffic. It wanted to do that so that more cars and trucks could use it. It is very interesting.

Hon Simon O'Brien: That is an absolute nonsense.

Hon JIM SCOTT: It is not an absolute nonsense. I wrote letters to Main Roads on that issue. I remember that happening because I was involved. That was before Hon Simon O'Brien got interested in planning and transport matters. Of course, he was quite happy with what his Government was doing when it was looking at widening the road and increasing the traffic on South Street, but that was before his conversion to sustainable transport via more roads.

Hon Ken Travers: How do you do that?

Hon JIM SCOTT: The member should read the Opposition's press release. I have not got hold of it yet; I have just been told about it.

Hon Simon O'Brien: You are talking about it and you have not even seen it.

Hon JIM SCOTT: I am getting a copy sent through so that I can pass it on to members.

The interesting thing is that, typically, the Liberal Party people want an inquiry into the history of the eastern bypass. They do not want to look to the future and put in place new, futuristic types of planning. They want to go back to 50-year-old plans. They are promoting 50-year-old plans, waving them around and saying that we should look at and stick to them, no matter how bad they are. Under those plans, Roe Highway would have run right up Marine Terrace in Fremantle as far as -

Hon Barbara Scott interjected.

Hon JIM SCOTT: It did.

Hon Ray Halligan: That made a change?

Hon JIM SCOTT: It changed, and that was because I and others jumped up and down, complained and pointed out how stupid it was to put all the way up to Parry Street a six-lane highway that ended in the middle of the city. That was absolutely stupid planning. That 50-year-old planning is not always good; sometimes it is terrible. We should be prepared to think ahead. Times have changed. The South Western Australia Transport Study from the last century indicated that there are three types of solutions: the probable, which is just a continuation of the past; the possible, which is basically anything that people believe is possible; or the preferred. I would like to go for the preferred and not stick to an old, outdated planning model, under which the designer said that the road would be routed through the wetlands, because in those days people did not care about that. Obviously, the Liberal Party still does not care about that. It is quite happy to run that road through the middle of a regional park. It says, "This won't have any effect. We'll put it on stilts or in a tunnel." Sure thing, guys! It is really a lot of nonsense. When the Liberal Party realises that the community has outgrown it and the more-and-more-pollution style of planning that it wants to put in place, based on providing further development areas for its mates, we might get somewhere. The Liberal Party should start to think about livable communities.

This debate has not been a waste of time. It has been good to have this debate, because it has shown how outdated the Liberal Party's concept of planning is. It wants to split communities. I should remind the House that Hon Barbara Scott said something about the eastern bypass being designed in a lovely, sensitive way; it was going to be put in a trench!

Hon Barbara Scott: No, I said Clontarf Hill. Open your ears.

Hon Ken Travers: You said a tunnel - the whole lot of it.

Hon Barbara Scott: No, I did not; I said Clontarf Hill.

The PRESIDENT: Order, members! Other members seem to be taking over the speaker's right to have the attention of the House.

Hon JIM SCOTT: It seems that it was not the eastern bypass that Hon Barbara Scott wanted to put in the trench, but Clontarf Hill. I did not realise that. I thought she was talking about the eastern bypass. In fact, I was around when that debate was taking place. I remember that it was during an election period, and a fellow called Phil - I forget his second name - stood for the Liberal Party at that time.

Hon Barbara Scott: Phil Storey. He was a very good engineer and accountant.

Hon JIM SCOTT: He was a nice chap and I spoke to him. His idea was that we did not have to worry about pollution, because we could cut a big trench through White Gum Valley. That trench would keep in all the pollution, so no pollution or noise would get out. That was the thinking. However, it would have completely

divided the two parts of the city. It would have been a huge divider, and only a number of roads would have crossed it. That meant that kids who wanted to play with their mates on the other side of the divide and old people would have to walk for two kilometres to cross it. That is the type of planning the former Government thought was good. On top of that, the other archaic matter the Opposition wants the committee to look at is a proposal to put a clover leaf intersection at Victoria Street. That would have caused such chaos into Fremantle that the former Government would not have been forgiven for the next 1 000 years if it had gone ahead with that appalling planning proposal.

Hon Barbara Scott interjected.

Hon JIM SCOTT: I can show the member some pictures of it if she comes into my office. I might put them on my web site so that Hon Simon O'Brien can look at them.

Hon Simon O'Brien: Speaking of your web site, you have not updated it recently.

The PRESIDENT: Order, members! This is becoming a joint speech when it should be a singular speech.

Hon JIM SCOTT: Hon Simon O'Brien might have to give me some monthly comments about my web site considering he takes such a close interest in it.

Obviously members opposite have not looked at the proposals for the eastern bypass recently. They have not followed the issue as closely as I have and seen the silly proposals that have been considered over the years. Hon Barbara Scott might recall the proposal to widen the Canning Highway in Fremantle. It was proposed to deviate it to link with the eastern bypass when it was built. The Liberal Government never took that proposal off the books. Hon Barbara Scott went to some public meetings in East Fremantle and said that she was prepared to cross the floor on the issue. When the Fremantle strategy was released and was to be debated in this Parliament, we waited to see whether she would cross the floor.

We found two interesting changes in the Fremantle strategy. The Leader of the Opposition in the other House made an interesting proposal -

Hon Barbara Scott: He is not just the leader in the other House.

Hon JIM SCOTT: He is the leader of the Liberal Party. Whatever his title, the member for Cottesloe proposed to change the boundary of a park in North Fremantle. He managed to have the boundary moved along one more building so that there was a bigger area of parkland. It is probably just a coincidence that it was in front of the house of the then planning minister, Mr Lewis.

Hon Simon O'Brien: You are arguing for a committee to check out these things.

Hon JIM SCOTT: I am not. That has nothing to do with it. Hon Simon O'Brien referred to the bypass; I am referring to the western suburbs highway, not the bypass.

Another interesting change in the Fremantle strategy was a submission to not widen the Canning Highway at that time. The Liberal Government withheld making a decision on that matter and Hon Barbara Scott did not have to cross the floor. Of course, if the previous Government had won the election, it could have widened the highway a couple of years later. At that stage, Hon Barbara Scott was under some pressure and might not have been a member for much longer. The Liberal Government thought of ways to cover up its modus operandi. However, most people saw through that nonsense. This amendment is the same motion for the Bill to go to a different committee. We did not want it to go to the other committee because rather than considering the history of planning proposals, we should be considering the planning proposals for the future. We know that the Liberal Party likes to plan the past, but some of us like to plan the future. I do not support this proposal.

HON MURRAY CRIDDLE (Agricultural) [4.25 pm]: I am very interested -

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order, members! The member is trying to get a word in edgeways.

Hon MURRAY CRIDDLE: I was involved in the process to put the Fremantle eastern bypass in place and to link it with Roe Highway through stage 8, which I thought was a very good plan. I have heard the present Minister for Planning and Infrastructure say that no budgetary or planning processes were in place for the project under the previous Government. However, I have seen the plans and I think they are very good. They clearly outline what we intended to do. Anybody who thinks that we did not have a plan in place has not looked at the detail that was provided. Outside of those plans we had in place - including the extension of the freeway over the Narrows Bridge south and the feed in from the north - no replacement plans seem to have been put in place in Perth for either road or rail. The Government's proposal has been thrown together in about six months and we are being asked to accept it.

Recently, I talked to my federal colleagues about the funding of the Roe Highway and the \$76 million that was to be provided to build the Roe Highway and link it to the Fremantle eastern bypass. The Fremantle eastern bypass is necessary because it will vitally impact on people who produce goods in Western Australia. Due to the malaise of the debate about the suburbs, we seem to have forgotten that there is a port on the coast and it will be necessary to expand our port capacity in not only Fremantle, but also Western Australia. As members know, there is a memorandum of understanding to develop James Point, which seems to have gone by the way.

The movement of containers in the port of Fremantle is expanding at 11 per cent a year. The number of heavy transport vehicles that will be required to travel into that area is likely to double over the next 15 years. Enormous pressure will be placed on the roads and highways that go into Fremantle. The basis of this planning is to make the opportunity available to source that traffic into Fremantle without any disruption - whether it be Fremantle or further south. The Roe Highway feeds directly into the country and feeds the Brookton Highway, Albany Highway, the Great Eastern Highway, Toodyay Road and the Great Northern Highway. All those arteries would feed directly into our port system. The proposals to feed heavy transport back through Leach Highway, South Street or Canning Highway would put enormous pressure on those areas. To finish the freeway system when it gets to stages 6 or 7 would just bring all the heavy transport into that area and filter it out through the suburbs. No-one who lives in the suburbs would want that to happen. The transport system and our transport regulations and rules make it clear that 42-tonne vehicles can travel through any street. Members must know the rules and understand the reasons for making these planning decisions and the necessity to have an easy access to the port. That type of arrangement must be put in place. It is happening in Geraldton and it has happened in Albany.

Provision exists for a 400-metre access corridor into Bunbury, and Esperance has the same problem. The Government has to deal with this so that heavy transport does not mix with ordinary vehicular traffic in town centres.

I mentioned speaking to my federal colleagues on funding. I was instrumental in getting \$76 million put aside for the Roe Highway as a road of national importance. Something like \$24.75 million was paid in 2001-02 for the commencement of stages 5 and 6 and \$10 million was to be paid this year. If that freeway will not be extended to meet the Fremantle eastern bypass, it will no longer be a road of national importance because it is not taking heavy transport into the Fremantle area. If the minister wants to lose that funding, she can go ahead with the idea of removing the reserve on Roe Highway.

That reserve is also a railway reserve which provides an opportunity for a railway to run into Fremantle. I hope the Minister for Agriculture understands that. The Minister for Planning and Infrastructure is talking of taking our rail capacity from three per cent - I think it is actually six per cent - up to about 30 per cent over time. That is about nine double-stacked trains - 600 metres long - through Fremantle. That will have a huge impact on Fremantle. The minister knows that the rail line goes right along the beachfront. I heard Hon Jim Scott talking about roads along Marine Parade. There will be six trains at least and possibly nine trains a day travelling along the beachfront. The minister should understand what this will do to transport into the Fremantle area.

The Fremantle port will reach its full capacity in 2015. There is no way that the volume of freight required to be transported can go by rail; it will go on the road, so we need heavy transport as well. From the point of view of the economics of agriculture, every time agricultural product is double handled it costs money. I mentioned the feed into the highways into the Fremantle port, and I have heard the minister say she will have a hub port at Kewdale. It is the same story in Geraldton with the southern transport corridor, where trains will be shunted in order to break them up. However, every time a train is shunted and product unloaded it adds 47c a tonne to handling costs. If agricultural products are unloaded at Meru, it will cost 72c a tonne more. In Geraldton, the double handling relates to the linkage from the ocean to the southern transport corridor. Every time a product is handled, there will be a cost. The Government has to manage this, and consider the agricultural point of view.

From the point of view of the suburbs, the Government will pour heavy transport into those areas. If people want to go on South Street, Leach Highway into Stock Road and back into Fremantle, which must be one of the options, the Government will have to have grade separation. That is a very expensive item and can cost up to \$10 million each. I understand that one option is to go from Stock Road onto Leach Highway. This will interfere with the operations of D'Orsogna Ltd, which is a business that employs around 160 people. The Government must think about the impact of that proposal on the employment of those 160 people. What will happen to those people? Whether the proposal is to use South Street or Leach Highway, there will need to be a greater carrying capacity in those areas.

I say to those people who have been making some noises about closing down the corridor and moving amendments to the metropolitan region scheme that will see the reservation removed, they are not thinking of a long-term transport strategy for the ports, which is one of the things that will affect agriculture into the future. Agriculture needs that access. We must have another opportunity further south at James Point. I ask the

Government to have a good look at the options for stage 8, which are in doubt. We hear so much about the environmental impacts, and I know that Hope Road and powerlines go across that general area, but there is already some impact on that area from road construction. There are all sorts of way of overcoming that issue.

There has been talk about funding. When I was involved as Minister for Transport, \$86 million was the figure that we talked about to fund stage 8 of the Fremantle eastern bypass. That would have completed what would have been an excellent road of national importance. I say again that the federal minister is looking very seriously at whether to continue to fund this road. The Labor Government's decision will impact on its being a road of national importance. I am sure government members can understand that without my having to go over that once again. If the road does not go through to Fremantle and goes through various other suburbs, there will be a problem.

The other issue I wanted to touch on is the business of a high wide-load network around the city. The coalition Government included \$14 million in its budget for a high wide-load network across the metropolitan area. About \$1 million was spent near Cockburn to put some roads in place. That was a very good initiative that assisted some people at the time. An amount of \$13 million has not been designated for a particular area, which is the point of the Roe Highway. The measurement of a high wide-load access through the city is nine metres wide by nine metres high. That will save industry an enormous amount of money and will allow industry to develop in and around the city. We need to understand that it is an imposition if major freeways like this do not go ahead.

I wanted to make those few points because I do not think that the current discussion is drawing out some of the real impacts on Western Australia. I understand the narrow considerations of people who live on the roads around South Street, Leach Highway and Canning Highway and I shudder to think of the impact that the widening of those roads will have on those people; those thoroughfares will all need to be widened. I have seen some indications that roads will be closed to allow some roads to be built. That raises some real issues.

I refer to the motion moved by Hon Simon O'Brien and the amendment moved by Hon Norman Moore. We need to tease out some of these issues. The impression I got from some of the local committees is that the review was very narrow and they might have been sent on a mission with the final outcome in mind. It concerns me greatly that the Government is not considering the impact this proposal will have on the State as a whole. The Government should be considering that. We need some sort of a review to tease out some of these broader issues as well as the local issues. I will be very interested to hear Hon Graham Giffard's point of view on this.

I reiterate that this is broader than the few local issues that were referred to by Hon Jim Scott and some of the other local members in that region as excuses for closing the reservation. There are absolute imperatives in the federal funding and the future of the reservations in Hon Jim Scott's electorate. It would be very dangerous for Western Australia and for the people in those local areas for the Government to close those reservations.

HON GRAHAM GIFFARD (North Metropolitan - Parliamentary Secretary) [4.39 pm]: I will start today by answering some of the assertions made yesterday and previously by Hon Simon O'Brien when he spoke in this debate. I listened carefully to what he said with a view to assessing whether anything he suggested to the House would lend support to his assertions about the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, the member for Fremantle, Hon Jim McGinty, and the role of the Government in the deletion of the Fremantle eastern bypass.

Hon Simon O'Brien referred in detail to a document that I believe was forwarded to the minister's office. That document related to the metropolitan region scheme process for the deletion of the Fremantle eastern bypass. In referring to that document, Hon Simon O'Brien in tandem referred to Hon Jim Scott's web site and the comments contained on that web site. Hon Jim Scott's web site referred to the Transport Action Coalition web site and what he described as TRAC's inside knowledge of what the Government was doing with the Fremantle eastern bypass. His comment was along the line that the original authors of the MRS deletion continued to be in favour of the Fremantle eastern bypass and included in the MRS submission what Hon Simon O'Brien characterised as pro-bypass comments.

Hon Simon O'Brien: They were the actual words on the web site.

Hon GRAHAM GIFFARD: That is right. I am probably being over careful in trying not to attribute quotes. Hon Simon O'Brien is correct that the reference on the web site states that a neutral document is now being prepared. On the face of those comments, I did not have alarm bells ringing in my head like Hon Simon O'Brien had. I am not sure which bells were going off in his head. However, the reference to the proposal for a neutral document and the preparation of an MRS amendment that essentially reflected government policy is not problematic. The letter the minister referred to, which was contained in attachment 1 to the documents Hon Simon O'Brien had - source unnamed - referred to the minister's desire to proceed with the MRS amendment process in accordance with government policy; that is, the deletion of the Fremantle eastern bypass.

As I said, alarm bells do not ring in my head when a minister asks for an MRS amendment to fulfil a government policy that has been held by the Government consistently since 1990. Whoever were the original authors of the MRS deletion - I do not know whether they are the same authors who prepared this MRS amendment - the fact is that the minister sought something that she was entitled to seek. If members have a view contrary to government policy, they are entitled to their view. The Government is entitled to ask for a document that reflects government policy and not members' personal opinions.

Hon Simon O'Brien: What about a document that presents a professional opinion; that is, not necessarily the personal opinion of someone involved in the controversy but merely a change of opinion on the advice given by the engineers and so on?

Hon GRAHAM GIFFARD: If someone who does not want the Fremantle eastern bypass is asked to prepare an MRS amendment for the Government to reflect government policy, which is to delete the bypass, that person would not prepare an MRS amendment arguing that the Fremantle eastern bypass should not be deleted. I understand the member's point: there is a thin line between the personal opinions of people and their professional advice. However, the policy is set and it is clear. The policy of the Labor Party - which is now the Government - favours the deletion of the Fremantle eastern bypass. I believe the Government was entitled to ask for a document from impartial public servants that was not detrimental to its policy.

Hon Barbara Scott: We are not contesting that but we debated this issue with the education Bill.

Hon GRAHAM GIFFARD: Many members have referred to the education Bill. I do not know what happened with the education Bill.

Hon Norman Moore: It got done over by your lot.

Hon GRAHAM GIFFARD: Hon Norman Moore said it was done over. I wonder why members continue talking about the education Bill. I speculate that it is because this issue is about revenge politics, not about a desire to have the matter referred to a committee. I speculate that this is about payback because members feel aggrieved about the education Bill.

Hon Norman Moore: Not at all.

Hon GRAHAM GIFFARD: I am just speculating that it might be a motive for why members continually talk about the education Bill.

Hon Simon O'Brien: I utterly refute that and I reassure you on that point.

Hon Norman Moore: I raised that matter yesterday because that is the first thing that popped into my mind about the previous Opposition delaying legislation in this House.

Hon GRAHAM GIFFARD: They have all jumped on board since.

Hon Simon O'Brien: I certainly haven't.

Hon Norman Moore: There could have been another dozen things.

Hon Barbara Scott: The evidence is clear that the coalition Government had a policy on the education Bill and policy issues were not debated in committee. A range of other issues were debated at length.

Hon GRAHAM GIFFARD: Members obviously continue to feel very sensitive about the education Bill.

Hon Barbara Scott: It has nothing to do with payback.

Hon GRAHAM GIFFARD: We do not need to debate that again, because members will get upset, and I do not want to be the cause of upsetting members about the education Bill.

Hon Norman Moore: I am happy to explain it to you some time when you have a spare hour.

Hon Simon O'Brien: Do you believe that the documents I tabled are genuine?

Hon GRAHAM GIFFARD: I do not propose to say they are not genuine, but I have not asked that they be read line by line to verify their authenticity. According to the Transport Action Coalition web site, they are being amended. I have not seen the result.

Hon Simon O'Brien: It would be interesting to see the documents.

Hon GRAHAM GIFFARD: When they come out, Hon Simon O'Brien will compare them and see the changes for himself.

Hon Simon O'Brien: Will you table them in here?

Hon GRAHAM GIFFARD: I think they must be tabled in here.

Hon Norman Moore: If they do not have to be tabled in here, will you table them as a matter of course?

Hon GRAHAM GIFFARD: It is not for me to commit the minister to table documents.

Hon Norman Moore: That is the trouble with parliamentary secretaries; we cannot get any commitments from them.

Hon GRAHAM GIFFARD: Hon Norman knows that I cannot do that.

Hon Norman Moore: I know you can't. It's not a problem of your making; it's a problem of the system.

Hon Barbara Scott interjected.

Hon GRAHAM GIFFARD: That is right.

Hon Norman Moore: How about finding out from the minister when they can be tabled?

Hon GRAHAM GIFFARD: It is not a burning issue for me at the moment, but if members insist, I may well ask her.

Hon Simon O'Brien interjected.

Hon GRAHAM GIFFARD: Hon Simon O'Brien has a mate who hands him documents.

Hon Norman Moore: They fell off a big truck that has been dropping off documents for the past 50 years!

Hon GRAHAM GIFFARD: People have been naughty for the past 50 years; therefore Hon Simon O'Brien can come in here with his hot documents and table them. Good on him.

Hon Simon O'Brien: I do not deal in stolen goods.

Hon GRAHAM GIFFARD: All he needs to do is tell me where they came from and then I can verify whether they were stolen.

Hon Simon O'Brien: I did not receive them directly from a departmental officer.

Hon GRAHAM GIFFARD: Does the courier have a code name? Hon Simon O'Brien referred to an eight-page broad sheet that the mayor and the council produced. He referred to the section headed "Key Facts" and read out a statement that said -

Utilising the existing road network, rather than building new roads, will significantly lessen the impact on local communities.

As has been illustrated by qualified advice, that is rubbish.

I do not agree with Hon Simon O'Brien. It is the City of Fremantle's prerogative to express that view and it has good grounds for expressing it. The alternative is not only to not utilise the existing road but also to build another big road. It is entirely reasonable for the Fremantle City Council to say that the building of another big road will impact more adversely on local communities than will the utilisation of the present road network.

Hon Simon O'Brien: It contradicts the advice given by the State's professional officers through the documents I tabled, which clearly said that if the Fremantle eastern bypass is not built, the Stock Road alternative will take only about half the traffic and the rest will find its way elsewhere.

Hon GRAHAM GIFFARD: I do not think there is unanimous agreement about that. Consideration is being given to what should be done after stage 7 of Roe Highway has been completed and what appropriate measures can be taken to deal with increased traffic and freight movement in and out of Fremantle. A range of considerations are being examined that might address those issues.

Hon Simon O'Brien: If the jury is still out on that, it supports the view that you should not have taken precipitous action to delete the road network.

Hon GRAHAM GIFFARD: It is not a matter of the jury being out; it is a matter of finding a solution other than just to build another big road.

Hon Simon O'Brien: You refused to consider the eastern bypass as a potential option in any way, shape or form. That is not a realistic way of searching for solutions.

Hon GRAHAM GIFFARD: The Government has held the view for 12 years that it is not a realistic solution for that community.

Hon Simon O'Brien: You are just stubborn.

Hon GRAHAM GIFFARD: The Government has held that view. It is not enough to say that other people's opinions are rubbish because members opposite do not agree with them. The perspective the Fremantle City Council has on the bypass is entirely reasonable. It has mounted a strong case, particularly from its perspective.

Hon Barbara Scott interjected.

Hon GRAHAM GIFFARD: Its view is that to build another big road would impact more negatively on the local community than would better utilisation of the present road network. Hon Simon O'Brien then referred to -

Hon Simon O'Brien: High Street.

Hon GRAHAM GIFFARD: Yes. He rejected the claim in the publication that it was not planned to convert High and South Streets to a six-lane highway. He said that it was rubbish. That is not rubbish. As far as I am aware, a decision has not been made to build a six-lane highway. I am advised that the upgrading of those roads to a freeway was discussed and considered during the freight network review and rejected. I understand that there are no plans for turning High Street into the six-lane road with which residents have been threatened.

I reject Hon Simon O'Brien's rejection of the Fremantle council view that a six-lane road is not planned.

Hon Simon O'Brien: I reject your rejection of my rejection!

Hon GRAHAM GIFFARD: Somehow I thought he might. Hon Simon O'Brien also is stubborn.

Hon Simon O'Brien: I am dogged; you are stubborn.

Hon GRAHAM GIFFARD: He went on to say that in view of the close liaison his investigative work had uncovered, which I assume was based on information he found on Hon Jim Scott's web site -

Hon Simon O'Brien: No; it was the letter signed by the minister.

Hon GRAHAM GIFFARD: I am sorry, so it was. Hon Simon O'Brien referred to a close liaison between the City of Fremantle and the Gallop Government and that the minister required certain things. He said -

It must be asked whether the Government caused -

Unless Hon Simon O'Brien is an unreasonable conspiracy theorist, I do not know why he cannot acknowledge that the Government's desire to consult closely with the Fremantle council and to cooperate in statements is anything other than an example of the Government working closely with local government. I do not have a problem with Hon Alannah MacTiernan saying that she considers it desirable to issue joint press statements or explanatory pamphlets on which she and the mayor could make introductory comments. That is a sensible way to approach the matter. We do not need to construct a conspiracy theory around the minister's desire to have a cooperative relationship with the Fremantle City Council, which could have motivated the Fremantle council to allocate the funds to produce a pamphlet. That is a conspiracy theory that does not have any legs. It is one of those wild conspiracy assertions made when two people have been seen working together.

Hon Simon O'Brien: That is not a wild assertion. The fact is that if the proposal to build the Fremantle eastern bypass is scrapped, the only option that could handle the tripling in road freight that would occur - only 30 per cent of which, by your best estimate, if you get anywhere, will go on rail, which is more than double that carted on roads - is along High Street. That traffic will have to use High Street. The Government is misleading the community when it circulates documents that deny that. All your advice indicates that. I would like some of those advisers to come before a committee and tell us.

Hon GRAHAM GIFFARD: The document of which Hon Simon O'Brien has been critical refers to converting High and South Streets to six-lane highways. To the best of my knowledge, that is not planned.

Hon Simon O'Brien: It is not planned, but it might happen anyway.

Hon GRAHAM GIFFARD: Hon Simon O'Brien might win an election and want to build a six-lane highway. I do not have a conspiracy theory on that.

Debate interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.

[Continued on page 2232.]