

PERTH PARKING MANAGEMENT ACT — REFORM

**18. Mr R.S. LOVE to the Minister for Transport:**

I refer to the announcement yesterday about the proposed changes to the Perth Parking Management Act and the Perth parking levy.

- (1) Noting that \$200 million is sitting idle in the Perth parking levy account, and that the current tax is close to \$1 200, will the state government freeze the current rate of the Perth parking levy to provide immediate cost-of-living relief to customers and families visiting the CBD?
- (2) Who was consulted ahead of yesterday's announcement, and did this include the City of Perth?

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:**

I thank the member for that question.

- (1)–(2) I am interested to see that the National Party is very focused on the Perth CBD. Obviously, its strategy of going to densely populated areas is now focused on the CBD. I will make a couple of comments. Under this government, the Perth parking levy has increased by 6.7 per cent over six years. Each year, it has been either frozen or indexed with the CPI. Under the former government, the numbers varied. Some people have calculated that the levy increased by over 1 000 per cent. We calculated that over the last five years, the former government increased it by over 80 per cent. We have kept the levy increases to either CPI or below. Let us say that it has been seven per cent over six years.

The second point is that the City of Perth actually increased its parking fees this year by up to 25 per cent. That was not us. It was not the state government; it was the City of Perth.

In relation to the issues that have been raised, I will make four key points. The first issue is that I have had many people saying that we should have differential rates. We have the core of the CBD, but the Perth parking area stretches over to more than the core CBD. Some say that there should be differential rates because some on the outer core do not get the same public transport benefits as those in the core CBD. However, that is not possible to do under the current legislation.

The second point is that COVID came and small businesses and other businesses wanted relief from the levy because, basically, no-one was going into the city anyway, so they asked for it to be waived, but there was no mechanism under the legislation to allow that. I had to do that through administrative purposes, so these scope of changes include giving the minister the ability to waive the levy. I think that is a good thing.

The Causeway Bridge is an example of the third point. Everyone would argue that the Causeway Bridge will be one of the best bits of infrastructure we deliver for accessibility and travelling into the city. Under the existing regime, if the infrastructure or services fall outside that area, they cannot be funded. Therefore, we could fund half of the bridge. Under the current legislation, we could fund the part of the bridge that ends in the middle of the Swan River. As a result, it makes a lot of sense to have more flexibility with interconnecting councils.

The fourth point is about the scope. I will give this example. Perth Concert Hall has significant damage. For years upon years, revenue was collected from the Perth Concert Hall car park not by the state, but by the City of Perth. It was in charge of managing Perth Concert Hall. As part of the Perth City Deal, we took over the management of Perth Concert Hall, and we are looking at how we can rebuild it. We are propping up the car park at the moment because there was no investment in that very significant cultural asset. What does that cultural asset do? It provides a venue for artists and creates activity and vibrancy. Currently, the car park is being propped up because there had been no investment year upon year. Yes, we want to look at the scope and make sure that we have the capacity to fund these types of cultural and other assets that benefit the community. I think that is a positive thing.

I have heard some of the claims that have been made. I am glad that the Nationals WA believes we should be spending more money in the city at the expense of the country. I will make this point: there are a lot of funds with money in them, but do members know what? The whole concept of this government is that we do not spend every bit of revenue that comes in because if we did, we would be in deficit.

**Mr W.J. Johnston:** That is right; by definition.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** By definition. What I announced yesterday was a policy change. I said that we would be drafting legislation and that I wanted to consult with key stakeholders, but all these people have gone over the top and are saying that because of the change today we can fund the expansion of public transport in Gosnells. They are some of the claims that are being made that the Leader of the Opposition is hitching his little cart to. If that is what he wants to do, that is fine. But do members know what? I will tell the people of Kalbarri and Geraldton that the

National Party believes we should be spending more in the CBD at the expense of the regions, because that is what the Leader of the Opposition is saying.