

ROAD FREIGHT, COLLIE COAL, TRUCKING TO CHANDALA NEAR MUCHEA

2167. Hon Jim Scott to the Parliamentary Secretary representing the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure

- (1) Is the Minister aware of a proposal to truck over 100 000 tonnes of coal from Collie to the TiWest refinery at Chandala near Muchea?
- (2) Would this proposal mean that an extra 100 truck movements daily through Collie and areas to the north?
- (3) How does this proposal fit in with the State Government's attempts to transfer road freight to rail?

Hon KEN TRAVERS replied:

1. Since 1989, around 150,000 tonnes per annum of bulk product has been taken by rail to Kwinana Port from Muchea. The same rail service transported 123,000 tonnes per annum of coal from Collie to Muchea.

TiWest was able to take advantage of back-hauling opportunities, for both road and rail freight. In the rail operation, the opportunity for back haulage arose because the train hauling coal from Collie returns to Kwinana Port carrying mineral sands from Muchea. It then travels empty to Collie to start the cycle again.

TiWest has decided to relocate its export of mineral sands activity from Kwinana port to Bunbury port. This change required the renegotiation of transport contracts for the company.

The five-year contract was for the transport of around 100,000 tonnes per annum of coal. The relative cost structures for road and rail freight means that road freight is typically more competitive than rail for low tonnages and short haul distances, as is the case here. As a result, road transport won the contract. As a consequence the rail service will cease operations around September, with road transport taking over the transport of coal and mineral sands.

2. I am advised that this proposal equates to an additional 17 truck movements per day.
3. We are disappointed with the outcome on this matter. However, the Government's policy of increasing the amount of freight carried by rail is working. For example, the carriage of containers through Fremantle Port by rail had grown by 164 per cent over the past year. Rail now accounts for about five per cent of the land-based container movements to and from the port, compared with less than three per cent 18 months ago.

In addition, rail has won back a significant share of the fertiliser freight task between Perth and Bunbury in a move which will take 2000 heavy vehicle movements off the South Western Highway each year.

This was a major breakthrough as it sees fertiliser moving back on to rail after almost 10 years of road transport.