

TREASURY AND TRANSPORT PORTFOLIOS

707. Mr R.S. LOVE to the Treasurer:

I refer to the Auditor General's *2023 Transparency report: Major projects*, which examined 20 major capital projects and found that costs had blown out by almost \$2 billion, representing a 22.5 per cent cost increase, and an average time delay of 21 months to complete.

- (1) Given that the three biggest budget blowouts examined are in the Treasurer's other portfolio of transport and have a combined value of \$1.5 billion on loan, how can the Treasurer defend her management of both the transport and treasury portfolios?
 - (2) Is it appropriate that the Treasurer remains in both positions, noting the erosion of accountability —
- Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please!

Mr R.S. LOVE: I repeat —

- (2) Is it appropriate that the Treasurer remains in both positions, noting the erosion of accountability evidenced by the Treasurer having to write a letter to herself to excuse delays in annual reporting by the Department of Transport?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:

- (1)–(2) Well, well, well. Is the Leader of the Opposition the shadow Minister for Transport? Who is? He talked about accountability and roles, but who is the shadow Minister for Transport? Is it the Leader of the Opposition? Is it the member for Cottesloe? Who is it? Is it a member of the upper house?

Dr D.J. Honey: Answer the question.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Is the member for Cottesloe the opposition spokesperson on transport?

Mr R.S. Love: The question is: who is providing oversight of you as transport minister with your cost blowouts when you are Treasurer? Never mind what is happening on this side.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: In relation to letters from a minister to the Treasurer, that has happened throughout our history. There have always been Treasurers who have held other portfolios. I do not remember the opposition asking this question of former Treasurer Ben Wyatt when he did the same thing. I do not remember the Leader of the Opposition asking him about this issue.

Mr W.J. Johnston: It's because you're a woman.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Do you reckon, member for Cannington? I do not remember him asking that of former Treasurer Ben Wyatt, who was also the Minister for Energy. Let us face it: energy ministers spend a bit of money, too, as the Minister for Energy knows. I do not remember the Leader of the Opposition asking that of the former Minister for Energy. Why is it different now with me? Why would he ask me that? Why would he say that I cannot have a couple of roles? Why would he do that? I do not know why. That former Treasurer also had the energy portfolio. Why would the Leader of the Opposition ask me that question and not ask other former Treasurers who held other portfolios and who had to do the same thing? Ministers sometimes have to report to the Treasurer. Why did the Leader of the Opposition not ask that of Hon Ben Wyatt? I do not know why he did not do that. Maybe I can allude to it, but I do not know. Obviously, there is an idea that I cannot have more than one portfolio.

In relation to the Auditor General's report on our projects, we report on the cost and estimated time of delivery of our projects. I have made no secret of the fact that it has been a challenging time to deliver projects across the world. We have had the COVID pandemic, the Ukraine–Russia conflict and supply chain disruptions. We have had labour shortages. Why? Because of the impacts of COVID. There have been delivery challenges in buying cars, putting up pergolas and building houses; I made that very, very clear. When we compare Western Australia with other states, we are doing exceptionally well.

I turn to the Fitzroy River Bridge and the comments that have been made by the Liberal and National Parties over the past six months, which have criticised the workers out there. When they criticise me, they criticise the workers out there. Do members opposite not think they understand that?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The companies have come up to me and said what a disgrace it is to have an opposition that criticises the workers, who were out there working through COVID times, during Easter periods and over Christmas breaks. They have been working 24 hours a day to deliver our projects in the most challenging environment ever.

I am proud of the progress we are making. When I go around, all I hear from people is: “How much work are you guys delivering?” We are proud to be employing thousands of people.

Honestly, I love it when I see the Leader of the Liberal Party smile because, of course, who is the Leader of the Liberal Party? We seem to have another one in this picture—“Dr David Honey, Liberal leader, member for Cottesloe”.

Several members interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I mean, talk about accountability! The opposition has only a few members but it does not even know what names or positions they hold. There are only two Liberal members; sort it out! Who is the Leader of the Liberal Party? Who is the shadow Minister for Transport? I do not know. We could count their members pretty much on one hand but we still do not who are the shadow ministers for transport and planning or who is the Leader of the Liberal Party. Honestly!

Look at the projects around the state, such as Bunbury Outer Ring Road and Albany ring-road. We have projects everywhere. These are projects that the Nationals never delivered. They turned their backs on regional WA and they continue to turn their backs on regional WA. The feedback I get is about people’s pride in Western Australia. We have over 10 000 workers on the Metronet project. Members can speak to companies about how we are working with them to deliver through this tough time. I am proud of the work that we are doing. I am proud of the workers out there. I know you guys do not like roads, rail or housing—they do not like much apart from criticising—but we are proud Western Australians who are delivering for Western Australia.