

TONKIN GAP PROJECT

584. Ms L.L. BAKER to the Minister for Transport:

I refer to the record investment in job-creating transport infrastructure being delivered by the Cook Labor government across Western Australia.

- (1) Can the minister update the house on the construction of the Tonkin Gap project, including the works to support the Metronet Morley–Ellenbrook line that runs through Bayswater—just mentioning it?
- (2) Can the minister outline to the house what these significant investments means for local jobs, business, commuters and communities?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:

I thank the member for Maylands for that question.

- (1)–(2) The Tonkin Gap project is progressing very well and residents in that area would acknowledge that, but I thank all residents along the entire corridor. It has been a massive project with lot of different traffic management strategies and diversions, but we are nearing the end of that project, which is very exciting for everyone involved.

It will eliminate one of the key bottlenecks across the system along the Tonkin Highway in that area. It will save commuters time, reduce congestion and improve safety. We have done a lot of work so far. A new bridge over the Swan River has been built, along with new noise walls put in. After negotiations with the member for Belmont's local residents, we reached a compromise and now have new perspex noise walls. Some people complain because they cannot look at the river, but it does stop the noise going into the local community, which is good from the member for Maylands' perspective, too.

New bridges have been built over Guildford Road, the Midland line and Railway Parade. The Great Eastern Highway west-bound entry loop onto Tonkin Highway is now in use and works continue on the east-bound ramp. Collector–distributor lanes are set to open south-bound. New signage is about to be installed, and a new principal shared path will be built along that area, too. The project is going very well.

As members know, we are committed to city projects as well as regional projects. We are a party for the whole of Western Australia. Of course, the Nationals have diverted their attention from regional WA to metro WA. I cannot help but look at some of the comments from the Leader of the Opposition about the seats he is targeting. The seat of Nedlands, member, because of the National Party's environmental policies —

Point of Order

Dr D.J. HONEY: I have a point of order —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please! I hope people have had their little bit of fun with that and we can now hear the point of order in silence.

Dr D.J. HONEY: Madam Speaker, I know you are generous, but the answer has drifted well away from anything that was asked of her.

The SPEAKER: Minister, I suspect you are making an analogy here, so I ask you to answer the question asked, and if it is an analogy, you might make it clear.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: It is an analogy—and a very good one, too!

Then, of course, my personal favourite is that the National Party will be targeting the seat of Fremantle because it believes in taking trucks off the road and putting more freight on rail, members. The National Party that sold and privatised the railway lines, shut down the regional rail lines and opposes Westport and Metronet, is now somehow going to appeal to the good folk of Fremantle, member for Fremantle, about how it wants to put more freight on rail. This is the party that is solely responsible for moving freight off rail and onto roads in regional Western Australia. I cannot wait for the National Party to give us the names of more seats that it will be targeting because this will give me enough material to last until at least the end of this year! National Party members opposite want to compare their track record on rail with ours of investing in Metronet, and moving the amount of rail freight into the port of Fremantle from about nine per cent under the coalition government to over 20 per cent. This government has provided a subsidy to support freight and rail. We have projects across Western Australia from the wheatbelt through to midwest to upgrade, with industry, regional rail sidings and tracks to support more grain on rail throughout WA. We have conducted projects such as the feasibility study in relation to Greenbushes. There are many projects. I look forward to hearing about the seats that the Nationals will be targeting. Perhaps the member for Cottesloe should

be watching his back because the “MetroNats” are on their way, and while they are targeting our seats, I am sure that they will also be targeting the member for Cottesloe’s electorate with its record on the environment.