

PERTH-BUNBURY HIGHWAY - FEDERAL ENVIRONMENTAL APPROVAL

396. Mr M.P. MURRAY to the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure:

Will the minister provide an update of the current process for obtaining federal environmental approval for the construction of the new Perth to Bunbury highway? In particular, are the federal processes delaying the early commencement of this very important project?

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN replied:

I thank the member for the question. I acknowledge the St Joseph's Catholic Primary School students in the gallery. The member for Dawesville would like me to acknowledge the students from Halls Head Primary School who are also here. I am sure they will be particularly interested in the fact that -

Mr M.W. Trenorden interjected.

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: There will not. There may not be a road going through there for some time because Senator Ian Campbell, best known as the Don Quixote of wind farms, is now the highway hold-up man. We were concerned last year when Senator Campbell called in the Perth to Bunbury highway project federal environmental assessment, notwithstanding the fact the highway has been through years and years of state environmental assessment. We thought this could be a bit of a problem. However, we got stuck into it and provided all the documentation that was required. We have now had a new demand placed on us. The federal government does not want to assess just the impact the road will have; the federal government is saying that if the road is constructed, more houses might be built in the Peel area and in Bunbury and more industry will be attracted to Bunbury. The federal government wants us to think about the next five to 10 years and tell the federal government what will be the environmental impacts of housing or industrial land that may occur in Peel or Bunbury over the next five or 10 years. It is an absolutely unbelievable demand.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: I call to order the members for Capel and Murray.

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: The state government has received legal advice that this is well beyond the federal government's power. That type of information has never before been required for a road project in Western Australia. It is an absolute nonsense. The state government already has planning instruments in place, including the Peel region scheme and the greater Bunbury region scheme, which is being completed.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: I call to order the member for Capel.

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: This is a scam by the federal government. The federal government is saying it will not give us \$170 million towards the road -

Mr P.D. Omodei: Have another trouble shooter to help you out, minister.

The SPEAKER: Order, Leader of the Opposition!

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: We have -

Mr P.D. Omodei: You have one in resources and one in the housing industry.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition!

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: This is ridiculous.

The SPEAKER: I call the Leader of the Opposition to order for the first time.

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: I know that the poodles and lapdogs on the other side of the house will not stand up to Senator Campbell. The federal government is threatening to withdraw \$170 million from the state government if construction of the road is not under way by 2006. The federal government is now putting impossible hurdles in our way. Someone on the opposition's side needs to stand up for Western Australia.

The SPEAKER: I call to order the member for Murray.