

CAPITAL WORKS

276. Dr D.J. HONEY to the Premier:

I refer to the government's persistent failure to deliver on its annual infrastructure plan even before the COVID era, culminating in a \$1.5 billion underspend in the financial period 2020–21.

- (1) Since the government has only ever been able to spend \$5 billion in previous years on capital projects, why did the Premier commit to an \$8 billion plan for the current financial year, an amount which the Premier must have known could not be achieved?
- (2) Why does the government continue to commit to further capital projects that the Premier knows cannot possibly be delivered in the promised time frame?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

- (1)–(2) The construction and building market in Western Australia is very heated. That is the reality. That is because it is successful, so house building and construction and the infrastructure build, both private and public, are very, very strong. Obviously, it puts delays into the system for everyone. Whether someone is building a house or a commercial venture, whatever it might be, it takes time to build. That has been the experience now for many years. I think it may have even been the case under the past government that the asset investment program was not fully expended each year. That does not mean that we do not invest in infrastructure, and we will continue to invest in infrastructure. Setting the state up for the future and, in particular, acquiring commonwealth money to assist us in doing that is an important part of what we do, so we will continue to do it. I think we announced late last year that we had to smooth some projects, which, basically, means extending them over a longer time to take some pressure out of the construction market, but that is just the natural reality of a very, very strong economy.