

STATE BUDGET 2022–23 — ASSET INVESTMENT PROGRAM

303. Dr D.J. HONEY to the Treasurer:

I have a supplementary question. The budget forecasts little to no changes to the underlying economic forces that are going to impact the government's ability to deliver the capital projects. Is the Treasurer's budget wrong about these forces or wrong about the capital works the government can achieve, because it cannot be both?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

Now the Leader of the Liberal Party is quoting *Star Wars*. He is interested in the force! Some people could make some unkind *Star Wars* references.

We have an ambitious infrastructure program. Some years it is not delivered. The infrastructure program of the last Liberal–National government was not delivered for some years. Sometimes we thought the former government never intended on delivering some of those projects and others were not delivered because at various points in time there was a very strong construction market. That is the reality. These are the problems of success. Just so we understand, we have a very strong construction market. That is a problem of success because there are so many jobs and so many projects and so much activity that the state is doing so well. Again, last night I was at the Australian Hotels Association accommodation awards at Crown Perth and the major issue—the major complaint, if you like—from a lot of the businesspeople there was that the economy was so strong that they were having trouble attracting enough staff. That is a problem, but it is better than the alternative problem, which is that there are not enough jobs for the people out there. Having a strong economy, a big infrastructure program and doing our best to deliver it, even if sometimes we do not succeed totally in getting it all done, is ambitious. That is kind of a good thing. The Leader of the Liberal Party might be looking for things to criticise. If he wants to continue to criticise us for the strength and success the economy, be my guest.