

PUBLIC TRANSPORT — FINES

121. Mr R.S. LOVE to the Minister for Transport:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. We have plenty of others. I refer to the almost \$400 000 in fines handed out during the Cook Labor government's so-called summer of free public transport.

Several members interjected.

Mr R.S. LOVE: There is your ad!

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please, members! Members, it is important that we hear the question.

Mr R.S. LOVE: I will get there.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please.

Mr R.S. LOVE: The Minister for Transport had put out these posts, and I just highlighted the summer of free love public transport period from 24 December 2023.

Several members interjected.

Mr R.S. LOVE: We will get to it!

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members! Members, I may have to reconsider this being the last question, and I may get the opposition to ask a couple more, if we are going to get this response from the government. There will be no more for the government, though. Leader of the Opposition.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Noting the \$400 000 in fines, and noting the cost-of-living crisis, will the minister apologise to the 3 943 commuters who were slapped with \$100 fines during that period and commit to waiving or refunding those fines?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:

I thank the member for that question. The Nationals WA caring about public transport—I never thought I would see it! We see the fake tears of the Leader of the Opposition. We gave free public transport and over 10 million people in Western Australia used that. There were 10 million boardings on free public transport. As I said on the radio, those who feel particularly aggrieved or who had particular circumstances have a right to appeal. Yesterday, I heard someone ring in to 6PR saying that they had their fine waived because of their particular circumstance. All those millions of people who used their SmartRider or bought a SmartRider for the occasion would not want the wholesale waiving of fines. If we waived those fines, there would be questions about why we do not waive other fines, today or tomorrow. It was a condition to use a SmartRider, and the reason is we want to monitor who uses our public transport system. Unlike the opposition, we invest in public transport, so we need to know who is using our public transport so we can continue to invest in buses, trains and ferries.

Overwhelmingly, it was a success. We saw record numbers of people having access to free public transport. As I said, for those who had particular circumstances and want to appeal to the Public Transport Authority, there is a mechanism. That mechanism existed over that free period and in other times, so they are more than welcome to use it. But we have to safeguard the integrity of our public transport system. A lot of people did the right thing. I know that those people who did the right thing know that they enjoyed five weeks of free public transport.