

TRANSPORT - HEAVY HAULAGE VEHICLES - TRANSPORT OF IRON ORE IN THE MID WEST

3364. Hon Murray Criddle to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure

Given the Minister's decision to enforce licenses for heavy haulage to transport iron ore in the Midwest region -

- (1) Was any consideration given to the forward planning required by trucking companies to manage future contracts with the mining industry, when the Minister decided to implement the license system?
- (2) If so, is the Minister aware that a local trucking company has expended considerable money upgrading its fleet, to meet the requirements of a current contract to transport iron ore, and will there be some form of compensation offered?
- (3) Is the Minister aware that the decision to give these licenses has given instability to the trucking industry, and in particular transport companies trying to attract operators with only a short term security?
- (4) What financial commitment has the Planning Minister made to rail upgrades to ensure this happens?
- (5) Who will be directly responsible for issuing licenses in the future?
- (6) Under what section of the *Transport Coordination Act* did you implement these requirements?

Hon ADELE FARINA replied:

- (1) Yes
- (2) It is for this reason that we have allowed interim arrangements to be put in place.
In implementing the provisions of the Transport Coordination Act, consideration was given to the forward planning requirements of both the mining and transport operators. However, as a former Transport Minister the Honourable Member would appreciate that the only trucks allowed unrestricted access to the road network are those that are termed as-of-right-vehicles.
The vehicles proposed for transporting iron ore in the Mid West are Restricted Access Vehicles and as such, it is the responsibility of the transport operator to liaise with Main Roads as to the vehicle combination types and permitted routes.
- (3) Operators can not just 'assume' that access will be provided, particularly when the task involves hauling millions of tonnes of ore, for an extended period, through an area where rail is potentially a viable alternative.
It is the task of Government to manage the road network in a responsible fashion, meeting not just the needs of industry but also those of the broader community. Transporting this ore by road, over the longer term, imposes an unacceptable burden on the taxpayer in terms of maintenance costs, and increases the safety risk for other road users. In view of the existing rail infrastructure in the Mid West it is appropriate for that mode of transport to be encouraged and seriously considered by the proponents.
In applying the provisions of the Transport Coordination Act in the Mid West, the Government is giving a clear message to industry that it will encourage the use of rail transport over road transport, wherever rail is a feasible alternative.
- (4) It is the responsibility of the mining company to negotiate a transport arrangement that accommodates reasonable community expectations. Other iron ore exports in the mid-west and across WA have made arrangements to move their product by rail
- (5) The Minister for Planning and Infrastructure has discretion under the Transport Co-ordination Act to issue licences if it is deemed to be in the best interests of the State.
- (6) The Minister issued an Order under Section 19 of the Act. A licence has been issued to Patience Transport under Section 33 (1) of the Act.