

2005-06 BUDGET, TOURISM COMMITMENTS FOR THE SOUTH WEST

252. Mr P.D. OMODEI to the Minister for Peel and the South West:

I refer the minister to the budget breakfast that he conducted in Bunbury last Friday, at which I am told he found it difficult to answer questions about the vital south west projects and had to rely on Treasury officials for his answers. Given the success of the award-winning Tree Top Walk at Walpole, which was planned and built by the previous coalition government, and that it is now more than four years since the Gallop government gave a commitment to develop a tourism icon in the Donnelly Valley, will the minister advise -

- (1) Where in the budget is the estimated \$3.2 million allocation to develop the Donnelly slide?
- (2) When will this commitment of five years ago, or at least four years ago, be finally completed?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

- (1)-(2) I thank the member for Warren-Blackwood for the question about the breakfast in Bunbury last Friday morning. Mr Speaker, it is interesting to note that he should ask it, because he was not there!

Several members interjected.

Mr M. McGOWAN: The member is relying upon the advice of the member for Leschenault about what took place. Members opposite are in a lot of trouble when they rely on the member for Leschenault for anything; they should understand that very simple fact. As we discovered yesterday, the member for Leschenault believes that delivering on election commitments is a cynical exercise.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, members!

Mr M. McGOWAN: I was able to detail yesterday the tens of millions of dollars in funding in the budget for delivery in Bunbury and the south west region of election commitments made by this government.

I will say something further about the members for Leschenault and Warren-Blackwood. On Saturday a thankyou function was held for all the volunteers in the region who did all the great work in repairing the damage caused by the recent storm, fixing the lines and making people's houses safe. The member for Leschenault was not there. It was a couple of kilometres from where he lives. The member for Warren-Blackwood was not there either, although more than 100 volunteers from his constituency and that of the member for Leschenault were there. The members did not show. That is the calibre of the member who has asked this question.

The member for Warren-Blackwood has asked the first question I have been aware of on this matter. He is referring to a proposal put forward by the Shire of Nannup and the Shire of Manjimup for a tourism icon in that region. It follows on from the sky jetty, a proposal that was backed by this government, but was subsequently pulled - that is the best way to put it - by the shires in question and the commonwealth government. The state government committed to that proposal on the basis of a proper examination of the matter. Now those shires have come up with an alternative proposal involving a forest-based tourism attraction, in the form of a slide through the trees. Visitors would climb to the top of this tourism attraction, slide down a slide, from which the trees can be seen, reach the bottom and then, apparently, go back to the top and slide down again. In conjunction with Tourism Western Australia and the South West Development Commission, the government is examining this proposal. It is not a good practice to put up millions of dollars in funds before doing a feasibility study.

Mr E.S. Ripper interjected.

Mr M. McGOWAN: There are a number of exceptions. According to the Liberal Party, it is not good practice when millions are being spent, but it is okay when billions are being spent. This project is going through feasibility studies, on the basis of advice, including advice from Tasmania. The only place where a project such as this exists at the moment is called Dismal Swamp, in Tasmania, and we would have to buy the intellectual property to obtain the rights to build such a proposal. We have not done that yet. This is another example, from the member for Warren-Blackwood, of putting the cart before the horse.