

COALFIELDS HIGHWAY

832. Mr M.P. Murray to the Minister for Transport:

On 15 February 2011, in reference to unspent funds from a \$25 million 2008 election commitment to fund upgrades to the Coalfields Highway between Wellington Dam National Park and Allanson, known as stage 3 – the Minister said in Parliament that the work is currently happening to finalise the road layout, road route and associated environmental approvals. Following the finalisation of that, we have to work through a process to obtain areas of state forest and national park, and I ask:

- (a) given that it is more than two years since work was being done to finalise road design and land acquisition, why have we not seen legislation before this Assembly to allow for the State Government to obtain these areas of state forest and national park;
- (b) why is it that on 7 August 2012 the Minister again advised that formal process for revocation of this land is about to commence, yet no legislation has been put forward; and
- (c) as Main Roads Western Australia has completed design works, and funds were allocated from the 2011–12 Budget to revoke land from the Brambly National Park in Margaret River for upgrades to the Bussell Highway, why has the Assembly not seen legislation to approve this revocation yet?

Mr T.R. Buswell replied:

It is noted that the Member who was present during the term of the previous Labor Government is unaware of the procedures involved to obtain environmental approval for the excision of State Forests and National Parks, this perhaps explains why the previous Labor Government did not spend a single dollar upgrading the Coalfields Highway. In stark contrast this Liberal–National Government is working through the proper approvals process to deliver on both the 2008 and 2013 election commitments that will see an unprecedented \$53m invested in the upgrading of the Coalfields Highway.

Main Roads WA advises:

- (a) A number of approvals are required before the required National Park excision for the Coalfields Highway can be presented to Parliament.
- (b) The National Park excision approvals for Coalfields Highway have taken longer than Main Roads anticipated because the proposal was not supported by several environmental stakeholders.
- (c) A number of approvals are required before the required State Forest and National Park excisions for Bussell Highway can be presented to Parliament. It is important to understand that the formal processes to excise land from State Forests and National Parks are different and they are presented to Parliament separately.