

BUNBURY PORT — GRAIN — ROAD TRANSPORT

416. Mr M.P. MURRAY to the Minister for Transport:

I refer to the minister's approval of permits for 500 000 tonnes of grain to be exported from Bunbury port commencing in 2014.

- (1) What consultation did the minister undertake with the Shires of Collie and West Arthur about the logistics of road transport through these shires?
- (2) What assessments were undertaken by Main Roads WA before the approval of these permits was signed off?
- (3) Which roads or highways does the minister envisage the bulk of grain transport trucks will use to access Bunbury port?
- (4) What road improvements will be required and completed by 2014 to ensure the safe passage of grain trucks from the great southern and lower wheatbelt to Bunbury port, particularly to the Arthur River–Collie road?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL replied:

- (1)–(4) If the member had any idea about how heavy vehicle transport works in the state, he would understand that I do not issue permits. So the technical answer to his question is: I have not issued a permit to anybody and nor will I, because it is not a ministerial responsibility.

Mr M.P. Murray: You talked about it in a press release in Bunbury.

The SPEAKER: Member for Collie–Preston!

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Where does it say the word “permit”?

Mr M.P. Murray: You go and read that press release, which was yours.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I am afraid the member does not understand how heavy vehicle transport works. However, I will deal with the issue. Before I deal with the issue of road upgrades, another thing I will point out by way of background is that the single-largest road upgrade, which will facilitate this trade through the port of Bunbury, is the \$25 million-plus upgrade of the road to the member's home town of Collie, which the member never mentioned once in this place in the eight years when Labor was last in government. There is actually more than \$25 million for that upgrade now because we are spending more at the bottom of Roelands hill. At least \$25 million is going into the Collie Coalfields highway to upgrade that piece of road. The issue at point is the grain being exported from Bunbury. The private company involved is yet to confirm an investment decision to utilise the port of Bunbury to export grain, but the tonnage will start at around half a million tonnes per annum. Members of the Bunbury Port Authority visited me and raised the issue and I had long discussions with them about this. I told them that we should, and will, consider that proposal, providing that the proponents use the Bunbury port access road. That is another piece of road infrastructure delivered by this government leading into the port of Bunbury.

Mr M.P. Murray: And paid for by the federal government.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: It was paid for by the federal government and the state government. Every time the member opens his mouth, the sign on his forehead that says “ignorant” lights up. It was paid for in part by the federal government and in part by the state government. Again, the member for Collie–Preston is completely wrong in fact.

Getting back to the basis of the conversation, it was, firstly, to use the Bunbury port access road and, secondly, to observe the informal protocols that exist on the use of the Collie Coalfields highway to minimise any conflict between heavy vehicles and the hundreds, if not thousands, of people who go up and down Roelands hill every day from suburbs like Australind, Eaton and the like. We are putting in place protocols that observe that. I am confident that we can do it safely and I am confident also that the port can play the role that ports in Western Australia are designed to play, which is to facilitate trade.

The other commitment I can give to the road users in that area is that because of this government's decision, with the very strong support from the member for Hillarys, money from speed and red-light cameras will be hypothecated for road safety improvements. A lot of the \$40 million raised this year, and more going forward, will go into road safety, including regional road safety. We now have funding available to address issues when they arise. If there are issues on the roads east of Collie, we will certainly work with the local government to deal with those issues because we have the capacity to do that. No permits have been issued by me but I am very happy to encourage the port of Bunbury to facilitate trade because that is why we have ports.

