

BROOKTON HIGHWAY, CORRIGIN-HYDEN SECTION

521. Hon MURRAY CRIDDLE to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure:

In preparing the 2001-02 state budget, the Labor Government slashed \$4 million that had been identified in the Main Roads Western Australia programs in each of the years 2002-03, 2003-04, 2004-05 and 2005-06 for major upgrade works of the Corrigin-Hyden section of the Brookton Highway. In regard to that much-needed work, I ask -

- (1) Can the minister advise the actual and proposed annual allocations under the Labor Government for this section of road in each of the corresponding years?
- (2) Can the minister confirm that within a few months of the 2001-02 budget, which erased these program allocations, the minister personally approved the contract to build the cyclepath in inner Perth costing \$3 million for just three kilometres of path?
- (3) Can the minister understand why many people in rural Western Australia may be a little puzzled about how this Government sets its funding priorities?

Hon GRAHAM GIFFARD replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question. The minister advises as follows -

- (1) Under the previous Government, spending on roads reached unsustainable levels. This Government believes that the current level of funding allocated to roads will enable adequate servicing of the existing network asset while providing for an acceptable level of improvement and expansion works to meet emerging needs. The Government recognises that road infrastructure in rural areas needs attention and, for this reason, in 2002-03, \$311.9 million has been allocated to the rural region compared with \$292.6 million for metropolitan projects.

It is interesting to note that, of the state funds allocated in 2000-01, the proportion of the road budget that applies to rural areas was about 50.8 per cent. It is estimated that in 2002-03 this figure will be approximately 51.6 per cent and in the three-year period covered by the forward estimates the percentage is estimated to increase to around 63.4 per cent. That is a clear demonstration of Labor's commitment to rural areas.

With regard to the Corrigin-Hyden section of Brookton Highway, there has been some reprioritising of funds to make best use of the available funding. Main Roads has conducted community workshops in Kondinin to identify the areas of greatest need and as a result of this process \$2.5 million will be spent in 2002-03 and a further \$1 million has been allocated for 2004-05.

- (2) The Minister for Planning and Infrastructure has approved a number of contracts for the construction of cycleways. However, unlike the outcome of actions by the previous Minister for Transport, many of these are being constructed in rural areas. In four years the previous Government spent \$2.8 million on country cycling facilities. However, in only 18 months, this Government has spent \$5.3 million and in four years it will spend \$11.9 million in regional areas. In fact, in four years under the previous minister Main Roads spent a total of \$852 000 on cycleways in the country while it was spending \$28 million on cycleways in the city. By comparison, in four years under this Government, \$7.1 million will be spent in the bush and \$17.6 million in the city. In addition, country pathways under Labor will receive \$4 million - double the amount spent by the previous Government.
- (3) Refer to (1) and (2). People in rural Western Australia are in no doubt about government funding priorities. Despite limited funding, this Government is delivering tangible benefits.