

PERTH PARKING MANAGEMENT ACT — REFORM

39. Ms L. METTAM to the Minister for Transport:

I have a supplementary question. With the government's claim that we are the best performing economic state in the nation, why does it need to tax City of Perth businesses and motorists to fund infrastructure such as a public pool that should be funded from the billions of surplus?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: I am waiting for people to be quiet, then I would like to give the Leader of the Liberal Party some advice. I have said quite a number of times now that a supplementary question should be a short, sharp question. That fact that you preface it with a statement is what provokes all the interjections, because you make that statement and then you get to your why. In future, cut off those first few words and just ask the question why. If you choose not to conform with the format for the question, I will be directing the minister not to answer your supplementaries.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:

I am very keen to answer this one! This has proved why the former Liberal–National government nearly bankrupted the state. Let us go through these key points. Firstly, the former Liberal–National government increased the Perth parking levy by over 70 per cent. We have increased it by 6.7 per cent over six years. That is number one. Secondly, who funds the pool in Vasse? Are state taxpayers funding the pool in Vasse? No, the ratepayers of that community are. Is the member really saying that she wants her ratepayers to subsidise a pool in the CBD? Is that what she is saying? Do the Nationals WA really believe that is fair to the taxpayers in Geraldton and Northam, who fund their own pools and who seem to do okay? I have seen the Northam pool, it is a beautiful pool; it has beautiful slides and good heating. It is actually a very good pool. Anyway, those people are funding their own assets. The Leader of the Liberal Party is telling me that she wants her residents, her ratepayers, to fund a pool in the CBD. That is what she is saying.

We are strong economic managers; that is what we are. We continue to make decisions that protect taxpayers and make sure that we can deliver services. I think it is fundamentally important that the City of Perth has new amenity to attract people to live in it. It is not rocket science. The more people we get in the City of Perth, the more activity there will be every day of the year and the safer the streets will be. There will be an improved residential rate base. Nearly one-third of the revenue of the City of Perth is car park revenue. That is not sustainable. We need more people to live in that city.

The problem is that over many, many years we have not done enough to get people to live in the City of Perth. We have not. I am offering a concerted effort, whether it is a new primary school, community facilities or improved transport in and out. We need to continue to work on that. The member is saying that the City of Perth should not fund its own services. The member is saying that is okay for the ratepayers of Northam to fund its pool, but she believes the ratepayers of Northam should be funding the CBD pool. That is not right. Let us face it: we need to do better to deliver services in the city to get more people living in it. I am talking about families, young people and older people.

These are the tough challenges. I know the intellectual depth is not there for the member to understand that. To quote Paul Keating, "all tip and no iceberg", member for Vasse! Do not come in here, dial a quote, not actually absorb the challenge in front of us and dial a quote again and again. Whatever the issue is, they ring her up and say, "Can you come out and give a quote?" She says, "I will; that's fine." She never actually understands the challenges. I am very prepared and passionate about this, because I want my kids to have a City of Perth that they can go into and there is activity and vibrancy, not just for two months of the year, but every day of the year. We need more people living in that city and we will do what we can to support new community facilities for the ratepayers, encourage more housing and have new services like pools, because we all have an obligation not to pass the buck, but work together to make the City of Perth a place where all our children can feel safe and want to be in for generations to come.