

STATE BUDGET 2022–23 — ASSET INVESTMENT PROGRAM

302. Dr D.J. HONEY to the Treasurer:

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. As always, I am very grateful.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: We will just wait for quiet before we start.

Dr D.J. HONEY: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I refer to the unachievable capital works budget for 2022–23, which without precedent, is set at \$8.88 billion, despite the government's failure to deliver this year's significantly smaller schedule of works by \$1 billion.

- (1) Why does this budget completely ignore reality, and is it the Treasurer's intention to deliberately mislead the community?
- (2) Which of the Treasurer's budgeted promises does he expect not to be delivered by the end of 2022–23?

The SPEAKER: The member will need to rephrase that question because you cannot say the phrase "deliberately mislead".

Dr D.J. HONEY: Thank you very much. I am grateful for your guidance.

- (1) Why does this budget completely ignore reality, and is it the Treasurer's intention to mislead the community?
- (2) Which of the Treasurer's budgeted promises does he expect not to be delivered by the end of 2022–23?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

- (1)–(2) We do not make any apologies for having a very strong asset investment program. The asset investment program is the capital works program across the state. From memory, it is \$33.9 billion across the next four years. There will be significant investment in rail, road, water, schools, hospitals and all sorts of infrastructure all over the state. That is the program and that is the plan. It is an ambitious program. What is wrong with being ambitious? To again quote Paul Keating, "You are a leveller and a straighter." The Leader of the Liberal Party is not interested in ambition. We are ambitious. We have huge aspirations for the state. We want to lift the state up. We do not want the Leader of the Liberal Party's mean and niggly approach to life. We want to lift the state. We do not have any truck with the Leader of the Liberal Party's dim and dark view of human nature and of doing positive things for the state. We just want to have a very strong asset investment program that employs many thousands of Western Australians out there and sets up the state's infrastructure for the future and solves problems across the community.

If there are projects that the Leader of the Liberal Party thinks should not be in there, he should tell us what they are, because we would be very interested to know. We know that he does not support our plans to stop logging our beautiful forests. That is not exactly an infrastructure issue, but we know that. We know he has one policy, which is to start logging our old-growth forests again. I would be interested to know which ones the Leader of the Liberal Party does not want to occur. We have an ambitious program.

We smoothed some of them out last year and pushed it forward. We got criticised for that and now the Leader of the Liberal Party is criticising us for having infrastructure in the asset investment program. He should tell us which ones he is not interested in and does not want delivered so that we can let the community know. I will tell members what: this government invested in infrastructure at the same time as paying down debt and delivering surpluses. They are operating surpluses, not cash surpluses. I know the Leader of the Liberal Party does not know the difference between the two, but we are delivering operating services while still paying down debt and delivering a record infrastructure program.