

GREAT EASTERN HIGHWAY, UPGRADE

158. Hon N.D. GRIFFITHS to the Minister for Transport:

Is the minister aware of the City of Belmont's view that Great Eastern Highway from Tonkin Highway to the Graham Farmer Freeway is the major gateway to the State and its capital from the domestic and international airports and by road from the eastern States? Why was the upgrade of Great Eastern Highway east of Kooyong Road, Rivervale deleted from the current 10-year program of Main Roads WA? Was the work previously planned to commence in 2004, what is the current timetable for the work, and if there is no timetable, when will the minister have one?

Hon M.J. CRIDDLE replied:

The program through Main Roads is assessed and re-assessed every year, and obviously the priorities change from year to year. The Government will re-assess the building of that road in the future. When the road system program is put in place for next year, I am sure it will be a very good one. People should be well and truly aware of the Government's work on road funding in recent times. When the Labor Party left office, \$320m a year was spent on roads, and in this financial year the Government will spend \$769m on roads. People do not have to go very far to see the benefit of the work done over that period. If they look out of the window they can see the new Narrows Bridge and the extension of the freeway.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Members, I am trying to listen to the Minister for Transport.

Hon M.J. CRIDDLE: This Government has done more for roadworks and road construction than any other Government has ever thought about, and it will continue with that well into the future. The Government has a program in place for the next 10 years. Priorities change, but the people in this city and those in the regions well and truly appreciate the work done. It carries on throughout the industry, and there is a major saving. The trucking industry is having a difficult time at present -

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: Thanks to your lot.

Hon M.J. CRIDDLE: I am talking about the representation this Government has given to the people. Clearly, Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich has no idea of the benefits of the trucking industry to this nation and State. Western Australia produces 27 per cent of the export earnings of this country, and the road network is a very valuable component of that. I call on the Opposition to indicate whether it will continue with the road network and the funding this Government has allocated.