

METRONET — ADVERTISING

906. Mr R.S. LOVE to the Minister for Transport:

I refer to the taxpayer-funded advertising campaign for Metronet projects, and note this Metronet program of works originally promised to be delivered for under \$3 billion is now skyrocketing to probably more than \$11 billion with no end to the continual blowouts in sight.

- (1) How much is the minister spending on the advertising blitz to convince Western Australians that these billions of dollars' worth of projects are being run responsibly?
- (2) Amid a cost-of-living crisis, is it appropriate that the state government throws these taxpayer funds at a navel-gazing campaign about these projects?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:

- (1)–(2) I thank the member for the question. I was hoping to get a question from the member for Moore, the Leader of the Opposition. He was out there on a trackless tram last week saying how he thinks the trackless tram can deliver for regional towns. Talk about worrying about overseas influences! Where did that trackless tram come from, member? He is worried about where an international environmental organisation came from, but where did this trackless tram that he loves so much come from? He loves this trackless tram. Where did it come from?

In relation to the Metronet issue, we are seeing the biggest transformation of the public transport system in the state's history.

Mr R.S. Love: The question is how much are you wasting on the advertising campaign.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: If the member wants detailed information, we have already provided that in the other place.

As we know with Metronet, a fair bit of disruption is happening. Of course, we have to inform people about the disruption. We shut the Armadale rail line. Does the member think we should not inform people about that? Does he think we should keep it a secret and not tell people about all the alternative services that we are providing? The member thinks we should have shut the Armadale rail line. We are building 5.5 kilometres of elevated rail, seven new stations and an extension to Byford. We know that the member does not support Metronet or essential services to suburbs like Byford, Ellenbrook and Yanchep. The member does not believe in public transport. When it comes to cost of living —

Mr R.S. Love interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The member asked the question; I will answer it.

Let us talk about cost of living. Who capped public transport fares at two zones? We did, saving the people of Dawesville about \$3 000 a year. There have been thousands of dollars in savings through our Metronet capped zone fare system. That is what we have done. We know that we have created some inconvenience for the people of Armadale and that entire corridor, so we have given them free public transport for six months. That is a pretty good cost-of-living initiative—free public transport for six months. Seventy-six per cent of passengers who were catching trains are now getting free travel on replacement buses. That is a pretty good cost-of-living initiative.

Let us go through the cost of travelling on public transport versus cars. The estimated cost of holding a vehicle is between \$15 000 and \$20 000 per annum; we are looking at depreciation, vehicle costs and maintenance. The more people we can get onto public transport, the better it will be for their budget. This is one of the best initiatives we could do to support people on low incomes, fixed incomes and across any income, because public transport is a much cheaper travel option than using a motor vehicle. That has been established time and again.

Yes, I am proud that the people of Byford will get a brand new station, capped fares and a new rail line from Byford to the city. I am so proud that people in the Ellenbrook corridor will get new train stations. I am so proud that people in Butler, Yanchep, Alkimos, Eglinton and Canning Vale will be getting brand new public transport options. Of course, our priority is to benefit the entire area. We are not only benefiting the people who use public transport; we know that not everyone can use public transport, such as tradies going to their jobs or going to other work sites, but the more people on public transport, the fewer people on roads. We are saving people time and money by reducing congestion on our roads.

Yes, we are informing the public. The opposition spent \$25 million on MAX light rail—a project it never actually ever built. We did not create hats for projects that we did not deliver! We did not create USB models for projects we have not delivered! I know it is really strange, but we are advertising real things—things that actually exist. We are advertising things that are happening in real life: the biggest transformation of public transport in this state's history, and the opposition cannot handle the fact that the people out there love it and support it all the time. You guys want things to fail! It is desperate.

Let us talk about cost of living for a second and regional capped airfares. We understand that people in regional WA do not have access to our capped public transport fares. That is why we created a 50 per cent fare discount for the *Australind* replacement; we halved the price of travel to Perth from Bunbury and all the towns along the *Australind* route. For those who rely on air travel, we introduced a two-zone capped fare for air travel for the first time in this state's history. We will provide more updates on how many people have used that service. As people have told me, this is the best initiative ever rolled out in Western Australia in relation to cost of living.