

HANSARD 16 JUNE 2011

ROE HIGHWAY — STAGE 8

QUESTION TIME

Dr M.D. NAHAN to the Minister for Transport:

At the last state election, the Liberal Party committed when in government to spend \$20 million to advance the project development of a vital road link, Roe Highway stage 8. Would the minister please advise the house of the progress on this road?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL replied:

Thank you very much for the question, member for Riverton. I know that this project is very near and dear to the member's heart and to a number of people in his electorate and in electorates nearby. This is a good opportunity to give an update on Roe stage 8, to which we committed \$20 million to advance that project, because Monday is an important day in terms of Roe stage 8 moving through the approvals process.

Of the money that has been allocated thus far, we have spent about \$16.5 million, and there is about \$3.5 million to spend this year. That is being spent on developing the preferred alignment; it is being spent on an extensive community engagement process; it is being spent on working through the environmental approvals process; and it is being spent on working through issues around Aboriginal heritage across that site.

On Monday, the project will go to public comment—a 12-week public consultation period—as part of the public environmental review, which was the level of assessment set, appropriately, I think, by the Environmental Protection Authority for this project. We will work through that process with the EPA and with the local community. When the outcomes of that assessment are known, we will be in a position to finalise design work and then to look at the final costings around that project. Of course, as Roe stage 8 has unfolded, I have been interested to see the comments from the opposition.

It is my understanding—I am sure the Leader of the Opposition will correct me if I am wrong—that the opposition does not support Roe stage 8. Is that correct, Leader of the Opposition?

Mr E.S. Ripper: What I notice is that you do not support it, because you have not put money in the budget for it.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: We are putting plenty of money on the table to move it forward.

Mr E.S. Ripper: You have not put in the money to do it. It is just tokenism.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: The Leader of the Opposition said that about the City Link project, and that is now happening. The Leader of the Opposition said that about the foreshore project, and that is now happening. We will work through the processes around Roe stage 8.

The opposition does not support Roe Highway stage 8. Subsequently, a potential pool of funding that may fund Roe Highway stage 8 has become like a magic pudding for the opposition. The shadow transport spokesperson has been spending that magic pudding around Western Australia over and over and over again. Every time the pudding is depleted, it fills up again with more money. The shadow Minister for Transport was in Bunbury when the member for Bunbury and I were talking about the Eelup Rotary. The member for Collie—Preston might remember that. He jumped out of the bushes and scared us to death when we were there making that announcement. It was a very scary day.

The member for Bunbury and I were giving a media conference when the bushes rustled and the member for Collie–Preston lurched out. It was a very interesting experience. Mr Travers said that the extra money that is to be used for Roe Highway stage 8 would allow a number of regional projects to get off the ground, including the Eelup flyover, upgrading the Coalfields highway and new bypasses for numerous regional towns. He also said that it could be used to fund many metropolitan projects. He spent some \$100 million on the Eelup flyover on that day. He has now committed that same funding pool to put in three lanes down the Mitchell Freeway all the way to Safety Bay Road. To go from Leach Highway to Roe Highway costs \$670 million. To go to Safety Bay Road would cost hundreds and hundreds —

Mr B.S. Wyatt: Who told you that?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: It was in the newspaper. It is from Ken Travers. I assume that the media got him on an uninflamed day, but it does not stop there.

Mr E.S. Ripper: Who gave you the advice for the costing?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: We have just signed contracts for \$60 million to develop the project from Leach Highway to Roe Highway. To go from Roe Highway to Safety Bay Road is a heck of a lot further. That \$60 million would be multiplied many times over. That was Hon Ken Travers' second bite of the cherry. He then said that we should use the money to take the Mitchell Freeway through to Hester Avenue. I understand that that project will cost in the vicinity of \$250 million.

Hon Ken Travers was in the member for West Swan's electorate talking about duelling Gnangara Road. This magic pudding has been spent many, many times. The last one I will touch on is the opposition's light rail project. Today that would cost \$400 million. We are really looking forward to the Labor Party funding the Ellenbrook rail program as we head towards the next election. That would cost between \$700 million and \$1 billion. The last part of the opposition's transport jigsaw is the shadow Minister for Transport's plan for the new Bunbury–Merredin train line. Look at it, Mr Speaker! It is a detailed plan; I have never seen such a level of intellect! Based on the Labor Party's experience with Ellenbrook, I am not surprised by it. How much has the shadow Minister for Transport spent? A couple of billion dollars.

Mr M.P. Murray: What about the Greenbushes–Bunbury road?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I will add that on; let me get out my pen! Does the opposition have any more? We are up to \$3 billion and going north. Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Thank you, members!

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: The point I am trying to make is that the opposition has this magic pudding of money that it has spent many, many times.

Mr E.S. Ripper: What is your current costing for Roe Highway stage 8?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: The costings for Roe Highway stage 8 will be finalised once the environmental approval process is done. Opposition members interjected.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I will give members opposite a tip; I do not expect it to be over \$1 billion, and the opposition has spent \$3 billion.

Mr E.S. Ripper: You can tell us a lot about the opposition's spending but nothing about the government's spending.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition!

Ms R. Saffioti interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for West Swan!

Mr F.M. Logan interjected.

The SPEAKER: I formally call the member for Cockburn to order for the first time today. Generous is not a word that I would use to describe myself, but I have been most generous in question time today. I have been very generous with the amount of time the Minister for Transport has had on his feet. I hope he will conclude his answer very rapidly.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I will, Mr Speaker, and I thank you for that incisive direction.

Ms R. Saffioti interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for West Swan!

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: The opposition is on the record as opposing Roe Highway stage 8.

Ms R. Saffioti interjected.

The SPEAKER: Take a seat, minister. Member for West Swan, I know that you can read between the lines, so I formally call you to order for the second time today.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: The opposition is fundamentally opposed to Roe Highway stage 8. I picked up a paper from the southern suburbs the other week to see the shadow transport spokesperson and an upper house Labor MP called Kate Doust now committing the opposition to building parts of Roe Highway stage 8. They are spending all the magic pudding money and have said that the opposition will build part of Roe Highway stage 8. I will show members the part they said they would build. It is biggest road interchange in Western Australia—Roe Highway and Kwinana Freeway. It is the proposed extension of, and intersection with, Murdoch Drive.

Mr E.S. Ripper: Tell the truth.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I will table the document. The Leader of the Opposition can take a look at it. They are saying that they do not support all of Roe Highway stage 8 but part of Roe Highway stage 8. The opposition may now have plans for Roe Highway stage 8A. The information I have from Main Roads is that that end is the expensive end. The opposition has just kicked over its magic pudding. The good news —
Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, members! Minister, I directed you before about how long you have been on your feet. I want you to conclude your answer. I want to offer another question in this place today but time is running out.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I was just going to say that on Monday the public environmental review will commence.