

MURDOCH DRIVE CONNECTION PROJECT

Statement

HON SIMON O'BRIEN (South Metropolitan) [6.44 pm]: I want to offer a hand of support across the chamber to the McGowan Labor government as it likes to call itself, as its road-building program threatens to come to a great screaming, shuddering halt. We have a tree sitter, named Sarah unless the roster has changed, up a tree at Bibra Lake. This is how serious it is.

In the wake of the Roe 8 issue, of course, this McGowan Labor government said, “We’re not going to build any of that”, but it has to build a little bit because even the anti-road people in the McGowan Labor government understand that there are two freeways in that neck of the woods that somehow have to be connected to Murdoch Drive. Why do they need to be connected to Murdoch Drive? Because along Murdoch Drive is access to both public and private hospitals—the major hospitals, the emergency department hospitals—together with the district headquarters of the various emergency services, the personnel of which, of course, need to get in and out for the preservation of people’s life, limb and property. Even the members of this government understand that they have to build a bit. I do not know what they are calling it. I think it is the Murdoch Drive connection. Heaven forbid they would call it “Roe 7 and a bit” or “Roe bit of 8” or “Roe 7.2”. It is the Murdoch Drive connection, but it crosses the sensitive wetlands immediately to the west of Kwinana Freeway. Further on, it impacts as far as Bibra Drive, and that is where our tree sitters are.

Anyway, Main Roads, which used to be the sort of building agency that we could rely on as a no-nonsense agency, has put out a Bibra Drive construction update of 18 November 2018 on Facebook, which tells us that a tree-sit protest commenced on 17 November. A rally was held there yesterday, on 20 November. I am not sure how many people had to leave their gainful employment to go there, but Main Roads’ gesture is—this is the bottom line; this is the agency under the control of this McGowan Labor government—to go so far that it has to clear some grass, some real, growing, living grass, which has feelings; shrubs, one palm tree; and three small paperbark trees. Good luck to the government as it forges ahead with its road-building program in this part of the world.

Hon Michael Mischin: Can they not go round?

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: No; it has gone round other bits, apparently.

We support the government trying to put in at least some sort of road infrastructure to connect people, haphazardly in the case of the people of Leeming of course, who are being denied their current direct access. Good luck; do not be intimidated by these tree sitters and others. Go ahead. I know the Minister for Environment has a very pro-development attitude to all these things, and we will support him as Main Roads battles these people, who, heck, we thought were the government’s friends! Good luck; I know already the campaign has commenced on social media. Ring, email or text Stephen Dawson, who I assume to be —

The PRESIDENT: That would be Hon Stephen Dawson.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: No; that is what was said on the thingo. People do not bother with the honorific on these things. I am interpreting that to mean the Minister for Environment. I imagine he has been inundated by —

Hon Michael Mischin: How do we get in touch with him?

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: I will give the member his number.

Good luck to this beleaguered government as it desperately tries to come to grips with the reality of what it is dealing with. Main Roads is hoping to resume its work in the week commencing 3 December. I wonder how many High Court injunctions are going to go in between now and 3 December to save those blades of grass, that one palm tree and those shrubs. Good luck, McGowan Labor government.