

KARRATHA COMMUNITY BUS SERVICE

982. Hon HELEN BULLOCK to the Minister for Transport:

I refer to the community bus operating between Karratha and surrounding towns.

- (1) Why has the government discontinued its funding to this service?
- (2) Is the minister aware that as a result of the lack of funding, the service has now been reduced to only two days a week?

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of this question.

- (1) The government has not discontinued its funding for this service. The service originally operated on a weekly Saturday basis, with the service being fully funded by the Public Transport Authority at a cost of approximately \$41 600 per annum. In July 2005 the service was expanded on a trial basis to include a weekly Sunday service, which was fully funded by the Shire of Roebourne and Pilbara Iron at an annual cost of \$41 600, the same amount. In July 2008 the service was further expanded, again on a trial basis, to include a Tuesday and Thursday service with equal joint funding being provided by the PTA, the Shire of Roebourne, Pilbara Iron and the North West Shelf Venture. The PTA's share of the total cost of providing the Tuesday and Thursday service was \$20 800 per annum, bringing the PTA's total cost share for all services to \$62 400 per annum. Due to the success of the trial services, and with the support of its funding partners, the trial period was extended to expire on 28 February 2009. However following this period, all funding partners subsequently withdrew their funding support due to the economic downturn, and from 1 March 2009, the Public Transport Authority carried the full \$166 400 per annum cost of providing the services. The PTA was not funded for this additional cost of \$104 000 per annum, and it therefore reduced the service to a Tuesday and Saturday service from 1 September 2009. The service now costs approximately \$83 200 per annum to operate, noting that this is \$20 800 more than the amount the PTA was contributing before the withdrawal of support from its funding partners for the trial services.
- (2) Yes.