

BEELIAR WETLANDS

Statement

HON SIMON O'BRIEN (South Metropolitan) [6.14 pm]: There has already been mention of this and I will not let today go without further mention of it. The saccharin, sickening media statement released jointly today in the names of the Ministers for Transport and Environment is an absolute disgrace. The sanctimonious tone of this particular media release about protecting wetlands and so on is grossly misconceived, as has been the Labor Party's policy on this matter for years. I want to give notice of a couple things right now. The idea that the Roe 8 road reserve should be removed from the metropolitan region scheme is something that the Liberal Party, and probably others, will oppose. Let me be matter of fact about that so that everybody knows—no ifs, no buts. This is an act of administrative vandalism and this government deserves to be condemned for it and, ultimately, it will be condemned for it by the majority of the Western Australian community.

Hon Sue Ellery: Who voted for it?

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: I am not so sure that that is the truth. The government is behaving in a cavalier manner. It has a process in place to contemplate the location of future port facilities, and even if it favours closing the Fremantle inner harbour to container traffic, it will have to go somewhere else, and it has not worked out how it is going to do that. To take a key part of the Perth Freight Link project out of the equation for some arbitrary, bigoted, short-sighted and shallow reason, such as that advanced in the debate on Roe Highway in recent years, stands to the discredit of this government and the ministers who put out that ludicrous press release today. I am going to ask questions of the Minister for Environment in due course, and all of that will be going back and forward. But just understand this: the Liberal Party knows where it stands on this issue for very good reason, and we can argue it. Just now Hon Tjorn Sibma referred to the business case and the hard dollars and cents with which we can measure the value of the project that this government is proposing to scrap. There are plenty of arguments like that and they are real arguments, not nonsense campaigns funded by whatever feral group this government thinks it can curry favour with. I will tell members what is offensive. It is the government importing professional protestors to shin up trees and say that they are reflecting the will of the Western Australian people. We will have all of those debates in due course. But the government must understand where we stand on this, and we stand there for reasons that are supportable, such as the matter alluded to by Hon Tjorn Sibma, which is based on dollars and cents. But there is more to it than that—measurable things that are not only about the convenience and the future functionality of the road network. More than that, it is about reducing trauma on our roads. They are the sorts of penalties that our community will suffer because of this government's policy in this respect if it is allowed to progress. Understand this: do members know what road trauma means?

Hon Sue Ellery: More than you can ever imagine, thanks. Much more than you can ever imagine, my friend.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: It means that people are going to die; that is what it means. It means that people are going to die, and if you understand what that means, my friend, then you should not be allowing your government to visit this sort of cavalier policy on our electorate.

Hon Sue Ellery: Think about what you are saying.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: I have thought long and hard about what I am saying, and I will be saying it again. We will be opposing the government tooth and nail on this. It is a disgraceful policy being pursued by a morally bankrupt government that has no respect for due process, as we are seeing again and again.