

LIBERAL PARTY — ADVERTISING SIGN ON FREEWAY

127. Hon SUE ELLERY to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) When did the minister first become aware that the Liberal Party was intending to construct, or had constructed, an advertising sign on the freeway?
- (2) Did the minister or any of his ministerial staff have any discussions or briefings with Main Roads personnel about this matter?
- (3) Does the minister approve of the action taken by the Liberal Party to erect the sign without obtaining permission?
- (4) Will the minister be directing Main Roads to fine the Liberal Party for breaching Main Roads regulations?

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN replied:

That is without notice, is it?

Hon Sue Ellery: Yes, it is.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: There are a number of parts to the question.

- (1)–(4) Basically, the matter has not been drawn to my attention by Main Roads. The question of signs and their authorisation is primarily a matter for the relevant local government. As we all know, many issues arise that we see reflected through disallowance motions for local government laws relating to signage. It excites a lot of interest. There are also regulations made under Main Roads powers that relate to signage advertising and, most specifically, the structures that are used to display advertising that come within the concern and the purview of Main Roads. There are powers to do several things. There is the capacity to provide for a fine. Firstly, there is the capacity for Main Roads to direct that an advertisement in certain areas along a main road should be removed. If there is a failure to do that, there is provision for a penalty to be applied—I think it is \$40. With that decision-making process also comes another power of Main Roads, and that is to enter upon the property where the offending advertisement is and remove it if the owner has not done so.

No part of that process has commenced yet. My understanding is that in the case of a sign bearing the name of Don Randall, MHR, member for Canning, and a road safety message, Main Roads is watching for the outcome of some proceedings that are happening with the relevant local government. The advice that I have received is that, contrary to a news report yesterday, Main Roads has not taken an active role in this issue so far. It is simply a matter of the member for Armadale trying to write letters and drum up a bit of a news story, which is interesting.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: It was a comprehensive question without notice, and I do not know what the various parts were.

Hon Sue Ellery: The first bit was: when did you become aware?

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Become aware of what?

Hon Sue Ellery: That the Liberal Party intended to put up a sign.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: I was not aware that it was going to put it up at all. However, when the subject is raised, I cannot help but contrast this with the actions of the Labor Party in the south west. If the Leader of the Opposition is so concerned about these matters, perhaps I ought to be asking her when did she become aware of the intention of her colleagues, including a number in this place, to put up a sign, without authorisation, bearing the words “Country Labor WA”.

Hon Sue Ellery: I became aware this afternoon, but I would make the point that I am not the minister.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: No. In the *Donnybrook-Bridgetown Mail*, published on 16 February 2010, in an article written by Mr Peter Francis and headed “Laboring a political point”, we find that there is a story that some Country Labor WA members—yes, apparently there are some, Mr President, but I do not know how often they go there—had put up a sign. This is what Labor people do. When they are in government, they do not get a lot done, but they will put up a sign saying that they are going to do something. Because they have some pretension

to be in government, they put up a sign saying that they represent country Western Australia. The sign has some names on it. There is more information than this, but I will just conclude now.

Several members interjected.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: No, that is the caption on this photograph that goes with it. The sign says, "Country Labor WA: Your Country Labor Team". This is for people flashing past on the road to read this detail. It is quite a rollcall too. It says —

Matt Benson, MLC
Adele Farina, MLC
Helen Bullock, MLC
Jon Ford, MLC
Sally Talbot, MLC

Mick Murray, MLA
Carol Martin, MLA —

Has she not joined the Nats yet? Obviously not yet. It continues —

Tom Stephens, MLA
Peter Watson, MLA

Blackwood Warren Branch

Apparently this sign is to celebrate that the Blackwood branch and the Warren branch have amalgamated, because they probably do not have enough members to go around. The Leader of the Opposition will love this. The caption by the picture is —

TRUE BELIEVERS, above: the new sign was unveiled by Labor candidate Ian Bishop (centre left), —

I do not know whether that means where he is in the photo or whether he is in the centre left faction. Perhaps the Leader of the Opposition can tell us —

and Labor MLA Mick Murray.

Apparently the other country members were not in the country on that day to celebrate the opening of this important sign. However, I understand that there has been an order for this sign to be taken down. Perhaps the Leader of the Opposition can ask some of her colleagues why they have not complied with the law.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I know members are excited to be in here and to test the acoustics and the amplification, but I think it all works very well.