

METRONET — COSTINGS

570. Mrs L.M. HARVEY to the Premier:

I refer to the article in *The West Australian* of 6 July by Josh Zimmerman and Nick Butterly highlighting the massive cost blowouts on the Premier's flagship Metronet project.

Can the Premier explain why, according to his own election costing document and his signed funding submission to the commonwealth government, the Thornlie line extension costs have blown out by 33 per cent, the Yanchep line costs have blown out by 35 per cent and the Ellenbrook rail line costs have blown out by 16 per cent before construction has even started?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

The premise of the question is incorrect. The comparison, which, as I understand it, was done by the Leader of the Opposition's office, compared a range of projects to which there are additional projects with the projects we took to the state election. What we sent to the commonwealth was a range of additional projects to the ones we took to the state election. Then the Leader of the Opposition rolls up and says there is a cost blowout. We sent to the commonwealth a whole bunch of new projects.

The second reason the Leader of the Opposition's analysis is not correct is that we are still doing final costings and also, when we went to the commonwealth, we obviously sought to maximise the return to the state. When the tenders come in, it may well be that the costings come in lower, but we went with what I would call "high ball" estimates to the commonwealth. I would have thought that was entirely appropriate. The former government did not even ask the commonwealth for money, and hence it did not get any. The former Premier said about the new stadium, "We're not going to ask the commonwealth for money. Why would we do that?" We all scratched our heads, thinking there was some logic behind that. We thought that maybe there was some brilliant logic behind what he was doing. It turns out there was not. The former government just refused to ask the commonwealth for money, so it did not get any. It is a bit like it failed to resolve the GST issue. My government resolved the GST issue, has got more money out of the commonwealth than any government in history, has got more money for rail and roads than anyone has ever seen before, and has got money for hospital capital works, but the former government got nothing when it was in office. When the Leader of the Opposition makes these false comparisons and promotes this information based upon a falsehood, and when she listens to the member for Bateman when constructing arguments, I think the Liberal Party might have a few problems.