

METROPOLITAN REGION SCHEME (BEELIAR WETLANDS) BILL 2018

Consideration in Detail

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

Clause 2: Commencement —

Debate was interrupted after the amendment moved by Mrs L.M. Harvey (Leader of the Opposition) had been partly considered.

Ms L. METTAM: I refer to the comments the minister made earlier about the outer harbour being the solution. This side of the house certainly does not oppose an outer harbour, but there is an issue around the replication of infrastructure. We know that Westport Taskforce's report, which assumed that growth would be about 2.8 per cent, states that Fremantle port has a life of at least 30 years. We know that it contributes about \$60 million to the state in dividends and taxes, and obviously it is a multibillion-dollar piece of infrastructure. Another point to make is that if Cockburn Sound and the outer harbour are the answer, how soon does the government expect an outer harbour to be delivered? My understanding is that if we were to initiate such a project, we would be looking at 10 to 15 years, with several billion dollars' worth of investment. That would see us turn our backs on infrastructure that is already working very well in Fremantle. The question is: how soon is an outer harbour a solution possible, and what needs would be required in the east–west corridor as well?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I thank the member for the question. I have been advised by the Leader of the House to keep my answers a bit more tight, so I will do that.

The Westport Taskforce process is underway. I will not prejudge the outcomes of that. When considering the road network, one must step back and look at the map of Perth and see that Tonkin Highway is becoming a major north–south freight corridor. As I have said, it is not a sustainable plan to continually generate traffic from the east and push the movement of containers in particular to the west through built-up residential areas across the metropolitan area forever. One does not have to be a road engineer to know what the future is for freight routes and changes to the existing freight routes when looking at the map of Perth, at the role of Tonkin Highway and the Anketell rail link.

The Westport Taskforce is taking a holistic approach. I do not want to labour the point, but I cannot believe that members on the other side are arguing about a project that they could not deliver in eight and a half years. For eight and a half years it did not deliver it and now the opposition somehow wants to make us deliver it? It is ridiculous. The opposition wants us to deliver a project that it did not do, even though we made a commitment not to do it. As I said, I will go through it. I am trying to be a bit more succinct, but, seriously, I do not know what else to say on this. The Infrastructure Australia report released yesterday looked at the top 10 road congestion issues across the network. They are the ones that we are working to address and the Liberal Party failed to look at.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: Just to follow up on this, the minister is pre-empting the Westport strategy. It has come out with a whole range of options. It is going through the community, putting forward some options and seeking discussions. There are three major options on the table, according to what Westport has told the community, and Hon Alannah MacTiernan has said that she is responsible as the Minister for Ports. One of those options is to continue to keep the port of Fremantle going for a substantial period, and, in fact, to address the transport links. If the government has ruled that out, tell us. That would make some sense, although that would be another debate. But as I understand it from what the minister has just said, the government has not ruled that out. The minister has said that the government looked at the roads and, logically, the freight would go down to the outer harbour, but that then erases timing, decades, funding, and therefore the reality of it happening. The minister has not answered that.

Here the government is expediting this legislation to excise a road reserve from the metropolitan region scheme through the provisions of the bill, rather than going through the consultation process, before the government has even given a commitment to the outer harbour, and, indeed, whilst it is still considering the viability of the port of Fremantle as a major port for decades to come. The Premier is still locked into election commitments—rhetoric, rather—that the port of Fremantle is quickly becoming full. That is not true. The Westport strategy makes it quite clear that the operational aspect of the port of Fremantle can go to three million twenty-foot equivalent units, so the port itself is not running into congestion. The Westport strategy is quite clear that it is the road links that are of concern, and that is what we are dealing with here. When planning for the future of this state, particularly one of its most industrial centres—that is, a container port—the question we are asking is: while the government is looking at the future of ports, why would it excise this land?

The government is expediting an excision through this process, rather than going through the metropolitan region scheme process, which would take more time but would address some of the questions we are asking. The minister refuses to answer that. I can only assume that is because the minister does not have an answer. The minister does not know whether there will be a new outer harbour, and the minister does not know whether it will keep Fremantle

port. The minister's solutions as an alternative to Roe 8 do not stack up. Murdoch link does not add any value. The roundabout that the government is building does not solve the problem. We go back to the two cities that will have to deal with the aftermath of the minister's decision if we keep Fremantle harbour as the major container port for the next few decades and there is no Roe 8. We discussed in the second reading debate how the councils in the South West Group of councils, which includes the City of Kwinana and all those which are promoting the outer harbour, will have to spend hundreds of millions of dollars on additional road upgrades if the government makes that decision. We want to know the government's process. Has the minister ruled out the port of Fremantle being the major container port for decades, and, therefore, has it committed to the outer harbour; and if so, when, and where is the government going to get the funds?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I thank the member for the question. I believe I now need to be a bit more succinct in my answers, because we are running around in circles and I know people in this place are a bit tired. The opposition knows our plan. I have announced it in this place a number of times. The opposition does not accept that putting freight on rail takes pressure off our roads. The opposition has not accepted or acknowledged the impact of going from 15 per cent freight on rail to 23.9 per cent freight on rail. It has not accepted that when we look at Leach Highway, we see that High Street is an issue, and that we have a plan to fix it. The opposition has not accepted the role that intermodals will continue to play. The opposition has not accepted our independent process in Westport. When we talk about processes, we have a very good process in the Westport Taskforce, which we all stand by, with the work it is undertaking. When the opposition put forward a business case to Infrastructure Australia on Roe 8 and 9 back in 2015–16, it never included a new outer harbour in that assessment, and IA noted that. We are working through a process. This is the delivery of our commitment. The member talked about the Premier's words as focusing on election commitment rhetoric. We take our election commitment seriously. As I said, I stand here in a parallel universe. The opposition's idea is that we would not implement our commitment on this, when we have made it clear. I have said that the member for Riverton made an election commitment on this in 2008, and he never delivered it.

Dr M.D. Nahan: You ripped up the contract, remember!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The member for Riverton never delivered it. He had eight and a half years. When I asked the member for Riverton why he did not deliver his 2008 election commitment, he said that it was Julia Gillard's fault. That is not a sustainable argument. He failed to deliver his commitment. I have gone through why. He now somehow wants us to deliver something that we have committed not to do. We are not going to do that. If this is the member's whole election manifesto, or whole future, I know it may help the seat of Riverton, but it is not looking at all the other congestion points across the transport network. It is not identifying the priorities outlined by Infrastructure Australia. The opposition's whole idea is that the southern suburbs are somehow missing out. Member for Baldivis, could we be doing more for the southern suburbs on freeway upgrades? Member for Southern River, could we be doing more on Armadale Road?

Mr R.R. Whitby: Thank goodness we're doing something!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I know. We can do it only because we are using the money from the Perth Freight Link to upgrade the freeway.

Mr P. Papalia: Armadale Road.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Yes, Armadale Road, North Lake Bridge, and smart freeways. These are all projects that we can do because we have redirected the money from the Perth Freight Link, and these are all areas that were identified as priorities. I know the member has never cared about this issue beyond his electorate. It astounds me, if he really thinks this is such a big priority for his electorate, that he could not deliver it in eight and a half years. If I were the member, I would be embarrassed, and I would drag out this debate. The member for Riverton is trying to deflect from the fact that he failed to deliver his election commitment. I have been keen to engage. The Leader of the House has told me to keep my comments tight, but I am now thinking that when I was in opposition and asked the same question 10 times on one clause, I would be asked to move on and not actually talk to the amendment. I am being asked the same question, even though I have answered it. The member may not like the answer. We know that; that is fair enough. He does not like the answer. I am not giving him the answer that he wants. I am giving the member an answer. I have outlined our plan. The member commented that somehow the Premier's words were election commitment rhetoric. We are actually focused on delivering our commitments.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: We are addressing a bill that seeks to excise land for Roe 8 and expedite the process, rather than go through a process that will take two years. At the same time, the minister has a range of things up in the air, including the outer harbour. We are trying to pin things down. I think that the minister made an election commitment based not on planning grounds or the appropriate building of infrastructure, but simply to cater to a small cadre of voters in the area and some of the adjacent communities along the road. The minister is trying to backfill and justify that, and in the process make a mess out of one of our most important pieces of infrastructure,

which is access to the port of Fremantle. We are trying to find out the rationale for that, because we are responsible to our electors and our communities.

Point of Order

Ms S.F. McGURK: Madam Deputy Speaker, can I just clarify which clause the member is speaking on?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: We are on the amendment.

Ms S.F. McGURK: Can you spell out the relevance of the question to the amendment?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have been following the member quite closely and have given him a fair bit of latitude. I know this has been going on for quite a long time, but provided the member is bringing up questions that are relevant to the amendment and the minister is seeking to answer those questions, I need to let this continue.

Debate Resumed

Dr M.D. NAHAN: The amendment deals with not excising the land until the government has made a decision about the outer harbour and the port of Fremantle. That is what I have been discussing. I am trying to find out the government's position on the outer harbour and Fremantle port. It is very important. We are discussing excising land, when all the experts say that if we do not build Roe 8 and 9, we will have continued congestion regardless of whether we get 30 per cent of containers from the port of Fremantle onto rail. The government has increased the share of freight onto rail.

Ms R. Saffioti: What experts?

Dr M.D. NAHAN: Let me answer and I will go through it.

Point of Order

Mrs L.M. O'MALLEY: Madam Deputy Speaker, I refer to standing order 97, "Repetitious or irrelevant debate".

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I think I have just answered that for the previous member. I do not see that as a point of order at the moment. I am very mindful of the repetitious nature of this debate, as I have said before, but while the minister is prepared to address the question, it is up to the opposition.

Debate Resumed

Dr M.D. NAHAN: We are precisely on the amendment, and the amendment is very important. It is about the government's commitment right now to the outer harbour and the port of Fremantle. The government has a process underway through the Westport strategy; it has not been finalised. Hon Alannah MacTiernan said that maybe at the end of this year, there will be three options. One of those options is to keep the port of Fremantle as the sole port going forward, and improving or changing the transport links. Those transport links include turning Leach Highway into a truck corridor. That is one of the options. Go to the community consultations. If we do not build Roe 8, we will need to do something. The port of Fremantle will remain the port. According to the government's own survey, the Minister for Ports is considering that option. The government's problem is that it made a commitment that undermines the planning of some of our most important facilities in this state, for political reasons and to get a few votes in and around select areas. Now it is trying to backfill and justify that decision, and it is struggling. The minister has basically said, "We made a promise to walk away from this." We are saying that yes, Labor did make a promise and it ripped up the contract. We had drawn up contracts. The contracts were underway. Roe 8 and Roe 9 were all approved. We had jumped through all the hoops. The Environmental Protection Authority and everybody else—the High Court of Australia, the Supreme Court and the Federal Court of Australia—had approved the contracts and building was underway. Labor decided to rip up the contract—it stated before the election that it was going to do it—and filter the work out to other people. That is what this government did. It cannot say that we did not have the project underway—we did! Our problem now is that this government is trying to pre-empt a future government, including a future Labor government, from doing the right thing by building a freight link to the port of Fremantle. This government is doing this before it has a clear view on what it is going to do about the port. We are trying to find out what that view is, and I think we are getting there: the government has no idea. It has just committed to ripping up this area to stop Roe 8 no matter what the implications are. It has not decided if this project is going to Fremantle, the port or somewhere else.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I remind the member that we need a question.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: When is the minister going to commit to an outer harbour?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The questions are becoming repetitive.

Dr M.D. Nahan: Well, answer them—that's easy!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member, the minister is on her feet. Please let her answer the question.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The member asked: what is our commitment now compared with our commitment during the election campaign? It is the same. Again, the member for Riverton is embarrassed because he could not deliver his election commitment from 2008 after eight and a half years in government. He has outlined the same question and I have outlined the same answer a dozen times. Madam Deputy Speaker has said that if I continue to engage in answering the questions, the issue of repetition will not be addressed properly. I have answered the question a number of times. The member does not accept the answer, but that is not something that I can fix. Our commitment and our plan has been spelt out a number of times.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: That was getting to the repetitious point. I think we need to address a new issue, if members have one, about this amendment.

Ms L. METTAM: I have a question about the amendment. The minister referred to plans to close Fremantle port. What are those plans; when does the minister expect to close Fremantle port; and is the McGowan government planning to shift the port to the outer harbour ahead of Fremantle port reaching capacity?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I refer the member to the Westport Taskforce process and my previous answers.

Dr D.J. HONEY: Has the minister read the Perth Freight Link project report? It was published in April 2016 and produced jointly by the federal government, the state government and Main Roads Western Australia.

Ms R. Saffioti: Sorry, what is the member referring to?

Dr D.J. HONEY: The report is titled, in part, “Perth Freight Link Project” and is a joint report published by the federal and state government in April 2016. It was an analysis —

Ms R. Saffioti: Was it a business case?

Dr D.J. HONEY: It was a Perth Freight Link report. Unfortunately, I do not have a printed copy here, but I am happy to send the minister a link to the report, if I am allowed to. The report was published in 2016 under the banner of the federal government, the state government and Main Roads and titled, “The Perth Freight Link project: Developing Transport Networks; Delivering Safer Roads”. It contains a detailed analysis of the traffic flows and predicts that from 2021 to 2031, in the “do nothing” scenario, which is the absence of another port—which is likely to be the case regardless of the willingness to go to the southern port—total vehicle numbers heading south down Curtin Avenue and Stirling Highway will increase by 29 000 vehicles. That is a 56 per cent increase in total vehicle numbers during that 10-year period. The report predicts that truck numbers will increase by 700, which is a 21 per cent increase. The figure of 700 trucks is only 2.4 per cent of the 29 000 increase, whereas the number of trucks in total is normally around five per cent, depending on which way the minister chooses to look at it—it is up to or above five per cent, but about that number. It is a relatively smaller proportional increase in the total number of trucks. I have given the minister those numbers to reinforce that there will be a massive 50 per cent increase in traffic—I said this before but I wanted to quote the proper numbers to the minister—of north–south traffic from Curtin Avenue and Stirling Highway and across the two bridges on Stirling Highway. It comes back to the question: what is the government’s plan, in conjunction with the projects that deal with the port, to deal with that massive increase in north–south traffic?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: This has nothing to do with the amendment, but I think the member is advocating for a dual carriageway along Curtin Avenue. That seems to be the Liberal Party’s plan. Member, we have gone through this. The outer harbour will change traffic flows and take pressure off Curtin Avenue with the continued rollout of freight and rail across the whole network and the continued development of intermodals. The member talked about a “do nothing” scenario. We are not in a “do nothing” situation. We are moving to get freight away from residential roads and to move more freight onto rail. If the member wants a dual carriageway along Curtin Avenue, he should tell us that. It is something that a future Liberal government can deliver, but does the member want a dual carriageway along Curtin Avenue?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I just remind the member to keep to the amendment

Dr D.J. HONEY: My question was very straightforward: what are the government’s plans, given that trucks make up only five per cent of the traffic? If the port did not exist, there would be a massive increase in traffic. That was my direct question. I am not in government. I would like to be in government but I am not. I am interested in what plans this government has.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: It was the Liberal Party that reduced the reservation along Stirling Highway and the capacity along that corridor. It would be interesting to know why that happened. I do not know how they were able to reduce the corridor reservation from the road reservation. But if the member wants a dual carriageway, he should tell us. Our plan is to take pressure off those roads through developing an outer harbour and putting more freight onto rail. If the member wants a dual carriageway, he should tell us.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I just remind members that this is it about the construction of the outer harbour, not other issues.

Division

Amendment put and a division taken with the following result —

Ayes (14)

Mr I.C. Blayney	Mr P.A. Katsambanis	Mr J.E. McGrath	Mr D.T. Redman
Ms M.J. Davies	Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup	Ms L. Mettam	Mrs A.K. Hayden (<i>Teller</i>)
Mrs L.M. Harvey	Mr A. Krsticevic	Dr M.D. Nahan	
Dr D.J. Honey	Mr S.K. L'Estrange	Mr D.C. Nalder	

Noes (37)

Ms L.L. Baker	Mr M. Hughes	Mr P. Papalia	Mr C.J. Tallentire
Dr A.D. Buti	Mr D.J. Kelly	Mr S.J. Price	Mr D.A. Templeman
Mr J.N. Carey	Mr F.M. Logan	Mr D.T. Punch	Mr P.C. Tinley
Mrs R.M.J. Clarke	Mr M. McGowan	Mr J.R. Quigley	Mr R.R. Whitby
Mr R.H. Cook	Ms S.F. McGurk	Ms M.M. Quirk	Ms S.E. Winton
Ms J. Farrer	Mr K.J.J. Michel	Mrs M.H. Roberts	Mr B.S. Wyatt
Mr M.J. Folkard	Mr S.A. Millman	Ms R. Saffioti	Mr D.R. Michael (<i>Teller</i>)
Ms J.M. Freeman	Mr Y. Mubarakai	Ms A. Sanderson	
Ms E.L. Hamilton	Mr M.P. Murray	Ms J.J. Shaw	
Mr T.J. Healy	Mrs L.M. O'Malley	Mrs J.M.C. Stojkovski	

Pairs

Mr W.R. Marmion	Mr W.J. Johnston
Mr K. O'Donnell	Ms C.M. Rowe

Amendment thus negated.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: Earlier this year, we passed legislation to establish Infrastructure WA. As I read in the press, the first chair is John Langoulant, and the deputy chair—I might be wrong on her position—is Nicole Lockwood, who is the chair of the Westport Taskforce Steering Committee. I understand that John Langoulant is a consultant for the Westport strategy. Two of the leaders looking at the issue of the future of the port are on the Infrastructure WA board, when the government has repeatedly said that Infrastructure Western Australia was established to take the politics out of infrastructure planning. The task of this Infrastructure WA is to develop a comprehensive 20-year plan for infrastructure in this state, which, of course, would include roads. My problem is that if we establish a new group with Infrastructure WA, develop a 20-year plan, and put onto that group two of the major leaders of our port strategy development, we would integrate, quite rightly, port and road developments with our infrastructure strategy. That sounds very logical. Those two people seem to be very competent.

My point is: why are we doing that and at the same time excising a road reserve that has been integral to our planning for 60 years? Why are we not taking time? There is no urgency. Labor will be in power for another 20 months or so. Why not go through the MRS process and allow Infrastructure Western Australia to consider the port and road and rail connections before we excise and rule out one of the options? Why would we not put this off and go through the MRS amendment process in the meantime? It would take two years, as I understand it. It would allow Infrastructure WA to come in and deal with this issue, which has been contentious for a long, long time, and advise the government and the community of Western Australia, in a non-political way, about the infrastructure needs for the port and associated rail and road. The government has gone out to the business community and made great play that the establishment of Infrastructure WA will take away from politics and government and the whims of ministers and the faulty lack of connected planning on behalf of government. The Premier, who has carriage of Infrastructure WA, made it quite clear that he does not think that there has been integrated planning. Labor has set up an institution, manned it with good people and given it a remit, and now it is taking action in this bill that will stop it from doing that.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member, sorry to interrupt. I remind you that this is about the commencement of the act.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: Why would we have this bill and commence it before we allowed our new Infrastructure WA to consider this?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I think you are on the borderline but finish the question.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: Why would we do it?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I have answered this question and if the member for Riverton was to continue to filibuster, it would be an embarrassment for himself. We have been on this clause for, I think, four hours, so if he wants to continue to do this, he is showing contempt for this place, for me and for what should be a good discussion of this bill.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is that clause 2 stand as printed. All those in favour, aye.

Government members: Aye.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: All those against, no.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: No. The member for Vasse stood up.

Ms R. Saffioti: No-one sought the call.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I did not finish the call, but I remind you that you need to be pretty quick on this. This has been a long and arduous debate and I am not going to be giving too much leeway or latitude on this in the future.

Ms L. METTAM: Thank you, Deputy Speaker. The member for Riverton makes a very good point about why this government has taken the extraordinary decision to bypass standard process and rush through this excise of the road reserve. It would make sense, given that earlier this year the government introduced a bill for Infrastructure WA to look at transparency in government, the gold-standard transparency that we have heard this government talk much about at least, and the process to remove this road reserve. Given that there is a lot of support in the community for a solution to address the east-west corridor, it is an important issue. No solution has been provided by this government, apart from an outer harbour, which is at least a decade away and would require the replication of public infrastructure. That so-called solution would cost much to the state in the short term and would effectively ignore the community and the need for transparency. That is why we continue to ask why the government and the minister have made the decision to not at least go through the process of providing more scrutiny of the decision that has been made.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I am going to say to you, member, that it was really very hard to find relevance to the commencement date of the legislation. From my understanding, you were calling for other things involved in this, rather than when the legislation starts. Minister, go ahead if you wish to answer.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I think members opposite are just doing a political stunt and wasting everyone's time.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: I move —

Page 2, before line 5 — To insert —

- (1) Notwithstanding anything in this Act, this Act comes into operation only if and when it is reviewed by Infrastructure WA, and a report of the review is tabled in both Houses of Parliament.

The reason for this amendment—which we introduced, and the minister basically did not want to answer it very effectively—is that we have, of the government's creation, a body called Infrastructure Western Australia that has been tasked with developing a 20-year plan for infrastructure across the state, of course including ports and rail. It has been staffed by two well-known experts in the transport area. Indeed, I think the chair or deputy chair of the Westport Taskforce is involved in it, and John Langoulant, who is a consultant to the Westport Taskforce, is the inaugural chair. The government has set up Infrastructure Western Australia, staffed it with people who are experts on port issues, amongst other things, and tasked it with developing a 20-year strategy. I accept that the McGowan government has made it very clear that it is not going to build Roe 8 and 9, but this is a 20-year strategy. This bill precludes a future government from considering or doing that project, and that is the point. The government can rip up contracts; that is fair enough. It stated that it was going to do that, and it is committed to not building Roe 8 and 9. That is not its priority. But we are talking about a long-term strategy, and the government has set up Infrastructure Western Australia and the Westport Taskforce to look at long-term infrastructure needs, and this is clearly one that should be considered in that process.

If Infrastructure Western Australia acts as its legislation and the Premier gave it the imprimatur to act—independently of government—I fully expect that it will consider this. It could not help but do so. It might say it is not necessary, it might say we should move more quickly to the outer harbour or it might suggest turning Leach Highway into a truck port; I do not know. Our point is that this bill and the decision to excise this land is far too premature, is inconsistent with the Westport strategy timing and, more importantly, is inconsistent with the formation of Infrastructure Western Australia. The government has set that up and gone around the community saying that it has tasked it with creating a 20-year plan, and part of that is the port and connections to the port but, through this bill, the government is trying to nobble it and prevent it from doing its task. As we have heard in debate today, it is doing so in an illogical manner that suggests that it is trying to politicise Infrastructure Western Australia by limiting its remit and options.

As we indicated earlier in debate on the previous amendment about the outer harbour, if the government is not going to build Roe 8 and 9—that is its choice—it should pursue the excision of this land through a standard metropolitan region scheme process, which would take two years, and allow Infrastructure Western Australia to

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY — Wednesday, 14 August 2019]

p5528b-5534a

Ms Rita Saffioti; Dr Mike Nahan; Deputy Speaker; Ms Libby Mettam; Dr David Honey

get on with the brief the government gave it to look at a long-term plan, including transport links to the harbours. This amendment essentially provides that the government should hold over any change until Infrastructure Western Australia has had a chance to do its work. That is what is called good government.

Ms L. METTAM: I would like to support this amendment moved by the member for Riverton. This amendment is basically about seeing some proper process. It is already well understood that this government has avoided proper process and is not addressing its proposed planning changes through a metropolitan region scheme of the Western Australian Planning Commission. Through this amendment, we would like to see this important infrastructure project and the issues affecting congestion in the south-west metropolitan suburbs go through Infrastructure Western Australia. The legislation presented by the government makes a mockery of Infrastructure Western Australia's objectives and all the objectives the government has set out to achieve through what was meant to be a proper process.

There is no urgency to remove the Beelihar wetlands road reserve. There is a lot of community interest in seeing the government address the significant congestion issues affecting the south west metropolitan region. There are a lot of industries at stake here. Quite apart from the community, a lot of industries and industry groups have special concerns about the comments made by the Minister for Transport about closing the Fremantle port, particularly in light of the fact that it is a port that raises about \$60 million per annum for the government and is a multibillion-dollar piece of infrastructure. Why replicate infrastructure ahead of time? This side of the house is not necessarily against an outer harbour, but we raise serious questions about the credibility of a government that is planning to invest in an alternative option ahead of time and is looking at replicating infrastructure ahead of time. If the government were to initiate an outer harbour at this time, it would take about 10 to 15 years to develop it and it would cost billions of dollars.

These are important questions for the community of the south west metropolitan area, and they are important questions and considerations that have an impact on the Fremantle port and all the industries, employers and employees that rely on it and work there. According to the government's own Westport Taskforce, it is a port that has a life of about 30 years. That is why it is only fitting that such decisions be considered by a body such as Infrastructure Western Australia. We know that the Roe 8 project was considered by Infrastructure Australia in 2016. At that time, it was considered the most important project in Australia; it beat 93 other projects around the country at that time, given the significant gains in productivity that it would have achieved for the state.

When the Infrastructure Western Australia legislation was first introduced, the government said it would help build a strong economy by improving infrastructure coordination and planning, encouraging investment and supporting job creation. What is unclear is what the government plans to do in the short term to address these significant congestion issues. It is clear that the government does not have a short-term plan and that the alternatives it is looking at are completely reckless and deserve the level of scrutiny that could be provided by a body such as Infrastructure Western Australia. That is why I also support the amendment put forward by the member for Riverton.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: The history of this whole project has of course been highly politicised for decades. The minister read out some of the history of the attempts to excise Fremantle eastern bypass back in the 1990s, and the effect of doing that, reinstating it and then eventually doing it again by selling off the land to prevent anything happening. Once the Fremantle eastern bypass was excised, opponents of the project moved on to Roe 8 and Roe 9. If the government were really strong in its views about the technical and long-term needs of the state, it would allow an independent body staffed by people it chooses, which would be Infrastructure Western Australia, to depoliticise this project and make some recommendations on it in order to take the project away from the argy-bargy of politics that has plagued it for some time.

Debate interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.

[Continued on page 5559.]