

TRANSPORT POLICY — COMMENTS BY MINISTER

Statement

HON SIMON O'BRIEN (South Metropolitan — Minister for Finance) [9.56 pm]: I will be brief, Mr President, because there is not much to respond to but the previous statement does require a response. The bitterness of Hon Ken Travers is on display. He does not have a constructive thing to say. The fact of the matter is that this government has been doing a great deal with public transport—things that did not happen under the previous government.

Hon Ken Travers: Ha, ha!

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Hon Ken Travers should go and suck a lemon for a little while—it might improve his demeanour—and he should keep his mouth shut while he listens to some facts!

Hon Ken Travers: Stop making me laugh!

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: That is what Hon Ken Travers needs to do.

The Mandurah rail line was a project conceived and implemented by the Court government. The changes introduced by the Labor government that followed were about the route at the northern end of the line. I will acknowledge that they were significant changes. However, members opposite should bear in mind, while they are peddling their untruths about the Liberal Party never showing any interest at all in railways, what the actual record is. The truth speaks for itself. I also remind members opposite that the first several hundred million dollars —

Hon Norman Moore: Three hundred million.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: At least \$300 million was provided for that project—not in some sort of forward estimates or anything remotely like that, but in cash from the sale of the Dampier to Bunbury natural gas pipeline, if memory serves me correctly.

Hon Norman Moore: That is absolutely correct.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: That is the first thing. The second thing is that this government—I know as I was the minister who put the enabling bill through this very house—is doing some serious extensions right now to the northern suburbs rail line. Those extensions are different from the ones proposed on the run by the previous government—a government that also claimed it would build a railway to Ellenbrook. We should have worked out then that that claim was based on nothing.

Hon Ken Travers: You promised it as well, minister.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: When the then Hon Graham Giffard with the then Premier Carpenter by his side was out there in Ellenbrook banging in a star picket with a sign on it, one person was conspicuous by her absence; that was Hon Alannah MacTiernan, the then Minister for Planning and Infrastructure. She knew that that was an exercise in —

Hon Ken Travers: So why did you promise it then?

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: It is because we were silly enough to believe the then government's Premier when he said that they had done their homework and knew what the cost would be. That was simply not the case. We got in and found that none of the work had been done. We set about doing it. Mr President, it was I, as Minister for Transport, who initiated the process of providing this city with its first public transport master plan to guide the massive investment needed in the future. Hon Ken Travers does not even understand what this plan is intended to do. Perhaps he ought to seek a briefing —

Hon Ken Travers: I did, and you know what? The minister was too embarrassed to give me one. He wouldn't give me one because he was too embarrassed about the plan.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Order! We have a few microphone problems in the chamber, but certainly not in the case of the desk in front of Hon Ken Travers.

Hon Ken Travers: Now you tell me!

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Finally, Mr President, the honourable member was purporting to complain about not liking the way in which the now Minister for Transport has responded to the public allegations of Hon Ken Travers. Well, boohoo! The member should not throw stones if he cannot take a dose of his own medicine.

Hon Ken Travers: I will debate him anywhere, any time! I am happy to debate him anywhere, any time!

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Oh, are you just! Well go out there and do it instead of wasting our time with your nonsense!

The PRESIDENT: Order! Let us stick with the issues and not the personal comments or finger-pointing.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Mr President, if the honourable member is so upset that he wants to detain the house's adjournment in order to grizzle, so be it. The point is, when Hon Ken Travers goes out on the attack, he has to expect a response. The specific that I think he was referring to was when he went out and, with very little basis, tried to start a scare campaign, saying that people's homes will be resumed and demolished. And of course there have been no such decisions about that.

Hon Ken Travers interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: If Hon Ken Travers understood what the public transport master plan process was all about, which he clearly does not —

Hon Ken Travers interjected.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: We see how much gall he has. However, Hon Ken Travers does not like it when he is subjected to the same levels of accountability that he claims to demand of others. How do we know that he does not accept the same level of accountability? Because if anyone wants to query his outlandish statements, be they made in the house or in another place, we get nothing from him but squeal, squeal, squeal!

Hon Ken Travers: I welcome it and I am happy to have the debate.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: You just keep squealing!

Hon Ken Travers: I am not squealing; I am happy to have the debate.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: The member can keep squealing, but should try to get his facts straight, because he otherwise does not have any credibility.