

TAXI INDUSTRY — SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS

852. Mrs L.M. HARVEY to the Minister for Transport:

I am aware of the government's plans to get more taxis on the roads. Could the minister please advise the house of the impediment preventing this government from assisting the Perth travelling public?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL replied:

I can; thank you, member. The impediment is the member for Belmont, pure and simple. The biggest impediment to enabling this government to get more taxis on the roads, to deliver better services to the people of Perth, this year, is the member for Belmont, the Leader of the Opposition, who heads a party whose policy position is this: that despite the fact that people cannot get a cab in Perth when they want one, they will not let any more taxis on the roads.

Ms M.M. Quirk interjected.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Sorry, member for Girrawheen? I can tell the member for Girrawheen that I made an interesting observation of her the other week, when we were out opening the Reid Highway —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: We still have some time left in question time. There are some other members, I am sure, who want to ask questions. Be careful where you go, Minister for Transport.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Yes. Thank you, Mr Speaker. I know where I was going. I was out at Reid Highway—Mirrabooka Avenue. There were two members of Parliament there who had not written a letter to me asking about that overpass.

Point of Order

Mr M. McGOWAN: Standing order 78 states that the answer must be relevant to the question. The question was about taxis. This minister is segueing to another subject matter —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr M. McGOWAN: — and engaging in personal invective against a member who cannot respond because she is on her third warning.

The SPEAKER: Member for Rockingham, I respect what you have to say in respect of standing order 78 and if the answer is not relevant, member for Rockingham, I am prepared to make the minister aware of that.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

That is an intersection used by a lot of taxis in Perth. The only point that I was going to make was about not being able to get a seat in the front row, because the member for Nollamara and the member for Girrawheen had dashed down there. When I was trying to go out to cut the ribbon, the member for Mirrabooka set a sub-10-second 100 metres to get to the front of the queue at the ribbon cutting, having not written one letter to us or made one representation—but back to taxis, Mr Speaker.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: The issue is that there are not enough cabs on the road. We announced —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members! Member for Warnbro, I formally call you to order for the first time today.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: We announced in April that we would change the regulations so that we could create a bigger pool of full-time taxis to get out on the roads. The only people in this state who I have found oppose—except for taxi drivers who may have a slight vested interest —

Mr E.S. Ripper: What about peak periods? That is when the demand is.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: There are already additional peak-period taxis going on the road, Leader of the Opposition. The Leader of the Opposition is stymieing the release of taxi plates in this state. I have a very simple message: this year, when the residents of Perth are out queued up waiting for cabs or are outside their house

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Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Mark McGowan; Speaker

waiting for a cab to come to pick them up, and it does not turn up, the Leader of the Opposition is the baulker. The Leader of the Opposition is the person who will stop them from turning up. There is a disallowance motion on the notice paper and I hope that members opposite —

Mr E.S. Ripper: There will be no extra taxis at Christmas, whatever happens with this debate.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: There would have been had this disallowance motion not been moved, because we could have got on and released cabs. Members opposite have no interest in providing decent services to the people of Perth.

Mr E.S. Ripper: Of course I do!

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: It is exactly the same as the Leader of the Opposition's position on retail trading hours—all over the shop, non-contemporary and stuck in the past. That is where the opposition is at! Members opposite have the opportunity to bring this on for debate during private members' business and I expect that they will do that.

Several members interjected.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: And I expect that they will do it in line with the conventions of this house.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members! Member for Cockburn and member for Willagee, I formally call you both to order for the first time today, and the member for Warnbro for the second time today.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Before I wrap up, I thought it would be useful to reflect on a number of initiatives that have come from this side of the house in support of the Western Australian taxi industry and users of that industry. Security cameras are being rolled out. On-road security patrols are now in place. If there is a problem, the driver presses a button and private security contractors are there to help.

Tomorrow I go down to open the secure rank at Northbridge. People will have a secure place to leave Northbridge from. There are more on-road compliance vehicles on a Friday and Saturday night making sure that driver standards are acceptable. The demerit point system is being developed to be introduced. There have been changes to the testing regime in this state. The only area in which we are having difficulty advancing is that of getting more full-time taxis on the road and the only person blocking that is the Leader of the Opposition. I have a message for the Leader of the Opposition: get into the real world, understand the concerns that people have when they are trying to get a cab, and fix the problem!