

PERTH–DARWIN HIGHWAY

**527. Hon LINDA SAVAGE to the Minister for Transport:**

My question without notice was originally referred to the Leader of the House representing the Premier as it refers to statements made by him. I understand, however, that it has been referred to the Minister for Transport by the Premier's office, and so my question without notice of which some notice has been given is to the Minister for Transport.

I refer to comments made by the Premier last week in relation to funding for the Perth–Darwin highway and in particular to his comments that it is in the “top couple of urban infrastructure projects” and that it is “on the horizon”.

- (1) Will the Premier explain why this project has not been put forward as an infrastructure priority to the federal government?
- (2) Will the Premier explain why a few months ago the Minister for Transport stated there were no estimates undertaken on this project and the project did not appear on the 10-year capital works program for government?

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN replied:**

I thank the honourable member for some notice of this question.

- (1) This was one of a number of candidate projects considered by the state as part of Western Australia's 2008 Infrastructure Australia submission. However, due to the many competing projects, it was not successful in making the final list of projects submitted for federal funding IA consideration.
- (2) Until recently, construction of the future Swan Valley bypass has been considered a medium to long-term proposal. The member may not be aware that a lot of project development work is required before construction of this proposed road could even commence. To facilitate federal consideration of project development funding towards this development work, Main Roads needs to submit a project proposal report to the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government—that is the federal instrumentality. To assist the development of the required project proposal report, Main Roads is preparing a preliminary business case for the project, which should be ready in coming months. This will then be submitted as a project proposal report seeking federal consideration of funding for pre-construction project development works.

The project development work will clarify the scope and cost of the project. Experience with other similarly large projects indicates that it will likely take two to three years to complete. It would include preliminary design, community consultation, environmental and heritage assessments, engineering investigations et cetera. Once the scope is determined, the project can be considered for construction funding by the commonwealth and state governments.