

ROE HIGHWAY STAGES 8 AND 9

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

Can the Premier explain to the people of the southern suburbs why he is refusing to build the job-creating and congestion-busting Roe 8 and Roe 9 project?

Government members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members, I want to hear this.

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

It may have passed the Leader of the Opposition by, but at the state election two and a half years ago we committed to not building the road to nowhere. We took a policy to the state election. It might have also passed the Leader of the Opposition by, but in eight and a half years of a Liberal–National government, it did not build the road. Members might recall the former Premier was very reluctant about that particular proposition and the member for Bateman challenged his leadership over it, and lost. Our position is clear. Just so the opposition understands: the road itself does not reach Fremantle port. Fremantle port is going to fill. It is not a solution to the freight and trade issues confronting Western Australia. Under our government, we have had enormous success in getting more freight onto rail as opposed to the last government, which put no effort into rail. The Liberal Party seems to have a pathological and an ideological obsession against rail. Our efforts have been successful in getting more freight on rail.

A report from the Westport Taskforce, which will be coming down in coming months, will outline a range of options about how to deal with the long-term issues. One of the things I want to be clear with the house about is this state needs some long-term thinking. We need to actually think about infrastructure for the next 50 to 100 years; not what the Liberal Party might think solves a political issue in the next two years. Our approach to this has always been about what suits the interests of future generations if we are going to spend billions of dollars. The Liberal Party’s approach is to build a road through a wetland that stops three kilometres from the port and then funnel all those trucks into the middle of East Fremantle. That seems to be its approach to this issue and it seems to think that solves the problem. Let me explain that it does not solve the problem. I think the Leader of the Opposition is pretty ill informed when it comes to issues around the southern suburbs. When asked, she said, “That’s something you need to ask Dean about.” If the Leader of the Opposition needs to ask Dean about things, the Liberal Party is in a lot of trouble!