

**PORTS REVIEW**

*Statement*

**HON SIMON O'BRIEN (South Metropolitan — Minister for Transport)** [9.55 pm]: If the house allows me to, I will briefly respond, as I must, to the matters just raised by Hon Ken Travers. Let the record show that I am not responding in an angry way or by raising my voice or anything like that. I am simply addressing the Chair to have placed on the record a rejection by the government of the assertions the honourable member has made. He has shown considerable mental gymnastics in reaching the conclusions he has advanced. I reassure the house that, as I said earlier today, the government rejects the principal assertions made so recklessly and deliberately by the honourable member in addressing media statements to the communities of Albany, Esperance, Bunbury and Geraldton. That is the first thing.

The second thing I would say is that there is no secret inquiry or secret review going on; we are simply getting on with business within the extended transport portfolio. It is no secret to any of the ports. Indeed, I raised it firstly with the Western Australian port authorities at one of their full plenary sessions held in Fremantle. The rest of the transport portfolio is involved because, amongst other things, I want to create better synergies between the port authorities and the wider transport portfolio. The Department of Transport itself is something that we are rebuilding after it was done away with by the previous Labor government. We are returning its capacity to assist in the strategic planning and policymaking needs of the state. That includes supporting all our ports, whether they be port authority ports or Shipping and Pilotage Act ports, in taking their place in the exciting times which are now with us and which will challenge us into the future.

In relation to the interpretation by Hon Ken Travers of the terms of reference of this working group, to save time and because of the restrictions we have now I will simply say that his interpretation is wrong. It is the sort of way that oppositions will try to interpret things, but I can reassure all members that the motives he has tried to attribute to the government are simply not there.

Finally, he seems concerned that the ports at Oakajee and, I think, Ashburton north and Anketell are nothing to do with the transport portfolio.

**Hon Ken Travers:** You're not the minister responsible for them at the moment.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** He fails to understand that part of the development of new ports includes their transition. In the near future the government will put into place some very significant governance matters and management arrangements for these ports, and others that will be put under the charge of the transport portfolio. It is pertinent for that matter to be considered now in the context of looking at how all our ports interrelate with each other. I have clarified that and I thank the house for the opportunity to do so.