

**WHEATBELT RAIL LINES — CLOSURE**

*Motion*

**HON KEN TRAVERS (North Metropolitan)** [10.06 am] — without notice: I move —

That this house notes that the Barnett–Grylls government failed to properly consider the economic, social, environmental and road safety impacts before deciding to close 700 kilometres of Wheatbelt rail lines. We believe this is a bad decision and it will result in thousands of additional trucks on Perth roads. We call on the government to reverse this decision and to place a high priority on the appropriate use of rail to our ports.

There is no doubt that the decision to close 700 kilometres of rail lines in our Wheatbelt areas is a bad decision. It is a bad decision for the people of the Wheatbelt; it is a bad decision for the people of the Perth metropolitan area. I want to say at the very outset, though, that this is not a debate about being anti-truck. At forums that I have been to recently, the Minister for Transport has tried to portray some of the community members who oppose the closure of these rail lines in that light. This is about using rail when it is appropriate to do so—that is, when bulk commodities have to be shifted and when containers need to be moved in and out of ports. That is what this is about. Everybody knows and accepts that trucks will continue to play a significant role in the freight task within Western Australia, but there are appropriate places to use rail. Moving grain from the Wheatbelt to the Kwinana and metropolitan grain terminals is a perfect example in which it is appropriate to use rail rather than trucks.

For a number of years I have been raising this issue in this house, and until now I have focused on the impacts that closing those lines will have on those Wheatbelt communities. Therefore, if anybody wants to criticise me because in this motion I finally start to talk about it being related to the impacts on Perth roads, let me explain why I have done that. It is because Mr Barnett, Mr Buswell and Mr Grylls have not listened to the concerns of the Wheatbelt community. If we can make sure that they understand and if the residents in those marginal seats such as Forrestfield, Jandakot and Riverton realise that this decision will mean thousands of additional trucks going down their streets as they travel to the Kwinana or the Forrestfield grain terminals, maybe we will be able to get this government to sit up and listen, because when we have simply raised the concerns of the Wheatbelt residents, we have been met with deaf ears from this government. I congratulate the Wheatbelt people because they knew from the very beginning that this was the wrong decision. They did not need to take time to analyse and go through the decision; they knew instinctively that it was wrong. The people of the Wheatbelt have continued to work over the past two years to show that the analysis carried out has simply failed to recognise the situation correctly.

There is still a range of questions about the business case and the modelling the government used in making its decision. One question that I look forward to getting an answer to through the estimates hearing process is about the type of truck the government's modelling is based on. Was it based on a restricted access vehicle class 7 or a restricted access vehicle class 3? Why is that an important question?

**Hon Simon O'Brien** interjected.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** The failed former Minister for Transport can laugh at me for that, but it is a very crucial point.

**Hon Simon O'Brien:** You're so far off the mark, it is unbelievable.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** When we asked the government's bureaucrats that question in the estimates committee, they could not answer.

**Hon Simon O'Brien:** You are so far off the mark!

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** I hope that the minister can answer that question for us today because it is crucial; it determines how many trucks are needed. A RAV 7 will carry almost double the load of a RAV 3 or RAV 4. That is a crucial question. If the government gets that wrong, its whole modelling falls apart. Let us face it, when we ask governments to model these things, sometimes they get it right and sometimes they get it wrong. I think, though, that if we ask a major player in the industry, such as Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd, whether it is prepared to put skin into the game and front up and put its money where its mouth is, the answer is yes it is. CBH would not say that if it had not done the modelling and the work on the business case to assure itself that the proposal is economically sound for the members of that cooperative. It is putting up \$175 million of its members' money. That CBH is prepared to do that tells me there is a good case to reopen these rail lines. In fact, one reason it wants to do that is the estimation that transporting grain by rail instead of road will save Wheatbelt farmers about \$6 a tonne. I would have thought that after the hard time Wheatbelt farmers have had in the past couple of years, everyone in this house would want to assist them as best they can. Finding a way to give farmers

Hon Ken Travers; President; Hon Simon O'Brien; Hon Matt Benson-Lidholm; Hon Philip Gardiner; Hon Lynn MacLaren; Deputy President; Hon James Chown; Hon Adele Farina

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an extra \$6 a tonne sounds to me like a good thing to do, especially as it is a simple equation for the government. The equation is that we put money into roads or we put the same amount of money into rail. We are not even asking the government to stump up more money for rail than what it is putting into roads. In many cases, these roads will not be used for any purpose other than to transport grain to terminals. That is why we should support this motion. That is why this Council, if it is a house of review, should be demanding that the government review this decision because the government has got it wrong.

Of course, we need to explain this to the people of the metropolitan area so that they start to understand the issue. I have to say there are some good people in the Fremantle area who are holding a rally tonight who have started to realise what the impacts of this decision will mean for people in the Perth metropolitan area. The government strategy is called the Brookton strategy. That is the basis on which the government has devised its model. Under the government's model, the plan is that we will close 700 kilometres of rail across the Wheatbelt. I have brought in a map for the benefit of anyone in this place who does not understand the issues. Under the government's plan, the rail will be closed to bins in places such as Quairading and Corrigin and the grain will be trucked from those locations to either Brookton or Kellerberrin, which are the two major points of delivery —

**Hon Jim Chown:** Merredin.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** And Merredin, but the two major bins that require an upgrade are at Kellerberrin and Brookton. Some grain will also be trucked to Cunderdin, but the two bins identified as needing a significant upgrade as part of this —

**Hon Jim Chown** interjected.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** If Hon Jim Chown wants to get up, I will look forward to him defending his government's position that is at the expense of his constituents. Please be my guest when I finish!

**Hon Jim Chown** interjected.

**The PRESIDENT:** Order!

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** I hold the map up for the benefit of members and if they do not have a copy, I am happy to table it a little later. This map shows how the government's strategy is to move grain by truck to railheads at Brookton, Kellerberrin and other places on the east-west line—but Brookton and Kellerberrin are the main two—and aggregate it at those locations.

When I speak to people in the Wheatbelt, they tell me that it simply will not work for a number of reasons. It is a bad decision for a number of reasons. The first reason is that once we have loaded grain into a truck and driven it to Brookton—we do not need to be very smart to know this—it is quite a short distance down Brookton Highway to the Kwinana grain terminal. There is the additional cost of unloading the grain. As anyone who understands the economics of train travel knows, often a big cost is in the double handling. Therefore, unloading grain from a truck to then load it into a train to take it to the Kwinana grain terminal will simply become uneconomic. The modelling that Hon Jim Chown referred to earlier showed—this is the government's own modelling—that it was supposedly cheaper to deliver grain by road, rather than rail, from Brookton to the port at Kwinana. However, somehow, mythically, under the government's modelling, it will be able to deliver that grain cheaper by rail, even though that is the government's own modelling! That is the government's own reports that Hon Jim Chown wanted to refer to earlier. The simple fact is that that modelling was wrong; it is cheaper to put the grain on at the head of the rail. In fact, we know for a fact that for places like Kulin, even under the government's own modelling, it was always cheaper to carry the grain by rail rather than road. Once we put grain transportation onto road, it will stay on road.

**Hon Jim Chown:** CBH disagrees with you.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** The member will get a chance to put his case. Grain transportation will stay on the road and it will come into the metropolitan area in volumes such as people have never before seen.

**Hon Simon O'Brien:** How many trucks do you think?

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** That is an interesting question and I welcome the interjection from the failed former Minister for Transport. Clearly, he does not know. The simple answer to that is there is about a 30 000 tonne average grain loading onto grain vessels. Therefore, at 55 tonnes a truck it will equate to over 1 000 truck movements every time a grain vessel is loaded with 30 000 tonnes. That is the sort of truck movements that we are talking about. When we transport grain by train, it is 10 train movements, not 1 000 truck movements.

**Hon Jim Chown:** So you're saying the —

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** No, the member will get his chance. If he lets me finish, he will hear it all.

Hon Ken Travers; President; Hon Simon O'Brien; Hon Matt Benson-Lidholm; Hon Philip Gardiner; Hon Lynn MacLaren; Deputy President; Hon James Chown; Hon Adele Farina

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**The PRESIDENT:** Order, members! We know that this session is limited in time. Each member who gets to speak has a limited amount of time; therefore, members who interject who want to speak at some later stage will have no excuse for being interjected on. I do not want to see that happen; I want to see each member have their allocated time without interruption so that they can make their point.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** Mr President, I appreciate that and I must say that at one level I am pleased that this debate has sparked Hon Jim Chown's interest in this issue. I forgot that he was even in the chamber because I had not heard from him for so long! It is nice to see the member here. This might be Hon Jim Chown's moment of glory in the chamber if he can prove me wrong.

However, let us look at the logistical issues that we are talking about. Another crucial issue to handle the task that the government has set itself requires a significant upgrade of the Brookton terminal. In fact, the business case prepared for the government as part of the WA strategic grain network review identified a requirement for a range of industry contributions to be made to the grain network. The report listed that a number of investments needed to be made by CBH. Page 46 of the report states —

- Brookton — New over-rail loading bins – \$10m
- Avon — investigation of rebuild of the Narrow Gauge/standard Gauge interchange (which would cost \$17m)
- Kellerberrin — New road receipt and fast conveyors for train loading – \$10m
- Merredin — Road receipt upgrades – \$7m

If we were so far down the track, one would think we would be at the point at which those upgrades would be occurring. When this issue first arose a number of months ago, I asked the failed former Minister for Transport when he was going to upgrade the roads to handle the task. He kept saying, "It will all be okay. I've got the questions here. If any members don't believe me, I can get them out for them." He answered Hon Matt Benson-Lidholm in the same way—that it will all be fixed; the roads would be sorted by the time the rail system is closed. What did we find earlier this year? They had not even started and they had to find a rescue package of \$3 million, which, if they close the rail, will be \$3 million worth of wasted, dead money.

**Hon Mia Davies** interjected.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** If the member waits, I will go through it all. The interesting thing is that Hon Mia Davies' party chose to sit with her Liberal buddies here. They are the government, they are the ones who need to fix it, and fix it today! Before the next election, I will make it very clear what the Labor Party's policies are. Do not worry about 12 months' time, let us worry about today. The National Party is in a coalition with its Liberal buddies, it has to deliver it! The Liberal-National government is the government today. We will have our policies out there for people. One of the things that I will put out very clearly is Labor —

Several members interjected.

**The PRESIDENT:** Order! Obviously quite a few members around the chamber want to have something to say about this. I want to give every member the opportunity to do that, but in their own time.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** I am more than happy to stand and debate anywhere, anytime, Labor's record on rail versus Liberal-National governments' record on rail in Western Australia. The Liberal and National Parties have 30 years' history in this state of making promises about rail and failing to deliver. Mr Grylls made the promise before the last election that he would fund and maintain all 2 300 kilometres of rail. Has he delivered? The answer is no. When we make a promise, not only do we deliver, we deliver it well, which is the difference. We make promises about rail that we intend to keep.

I come back. Not only has the Liberal-National government made a bad decision, it is failing on the implementation of that decision as well. The roads were not ready in time. The government has had to go out and spend \$3 million. That is \$3 million out of the state budget that could have been used in so many other ways to keep these rail lines open for another year. If it follows through on its policy, it will be money down the drain. Has the government got those agreements with Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd to upgrade the Brookton, Kellerberrin and Merredin locations? The simple answer is no. I asked that question this week of the minister representing the Minister for Transport. In his usual slippery way, the Minister for Transport did not want to give a straight answer. He said, "Yes, we've got ongoing negotiations." I wonder whether the government actually has ongoing negotiations because I understand it is very clear that CBH has said it is not going to make those investments; but that is for CBH to determine. The simple fact is what the Minister for Transport made very clear in his answers this week; they simply have not finished that work, yet in 12 months' time they expect to transfer it over. I predict that it will not be ready.

Hon Ken Travers; President; Hon Simon O'Brien; Hon Matt Benson-Lidholm; Hon Philip Gardiner; Hon Lynn MacLaren; Deputy President; Hon James Chown; Hon Adele Farina

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The reason that becomes a crucial issue can be seen if one looks at the Brookton terminal. It currently carries about 200 000 to 300 000 tonnes of grain through it on an annual basis; I think Brookton is about 200 000. Added to that will be about 500 000 from the up-country sites coming in. It will end up trying to move 750 000 tonnes through the Brookton terminal. I do not think it will be physically possible to load 10 trains out of that location, even if half that number came down from the Avon yard along the standard gauge rail so there would only be five in about a 10-hour period coming out of one grain terminal; yet that is the government's plan. I do not think it has thought through the logistics. I do not think it will be physically possible. It will result in more trucks coming down the hill, whether it is Brookton Highway or Great Eastern Highway. Grain will be travelling through seats such as Forrestfield, Riverton and Jandakot. They are the seats that it will go through as it heads to the Kwinana terminal, because, under the Brookton strategy, that is the only way the grain can be transported to the terminal. Trucks will need to be used. That is why this week, when I asked the Minister for Transport to guarantee we would not see an increase in trucks on our roads in the Perth metropolitan area, he was unable to give that guarantee. He knows in his heart of hearts that the Brookton strategy means more trucks on roads in the Perth metropolitan area. That is why we, as a house of review, need to be the force that says to this government, "Stop! Have another look at this. You have made a bad decision." It is a bad decision on economics. I have gone through enough of that today to highlight it, but as I again recap, if CBH is prepared to put its \$175 million up, that says to me that it might be the government that has its modelling wrong, not the private sector.

The second reason this is a bad decision is how it impacts on the environment. As I mentioned earlier, we are talking about 10 trains versus over 1 000 truck movements for one shipment of 30 000 tonnes of grain. Just from this area, we are talking about between 1.5 to two million tonnes of grain. The long-term average is just short of 1.5 million tonnes of grain. That means a significant increase in carbon dioxide gas. If one is a climate change denier, as many on the other side are, that might not be a problem, but for the rest of us in the community, that is a major problem. It is a bad decision on social grounds. There is no doubt that it will have a social impact on the fabric of the communities from which we will rip this rail out. That is why those communities are fighting. I take my hat off to those community members who stood up to be counted. I understand how difficult it has been. For many of those people, it is about challenging the political party for whom they have given life-long support. I understand how difficult that is for those sorts of people. I take my hat off and congratulate them for the effort they are making in this area.

It is a bad decision for road safety. Rail transportation is six to nine times safer than road. Of course we cannot always, as I said when I started this conversation, use rail transport, but there are places like Fremantle harbour where we can use rail over road. It is a bad decision that follows on from the bad decision made by the Court-Barnett government when it originally privatised these lines. It has not delivered. In fact, that privatisation has made it worse. Now this government wants to privatise our hospitals. God only knows what that will be! I look forward to finally hearing from the Liberal members of the Agricultural Region defending their region.

**HON SIMON O'BRIEN (South Metropolitan — Minister for Finance)** [10.27 am]: Firstly, the government rejects the premise in this motion that portrays either the mover's fundamental lack of understanding of this issue or the determination of the opposition to perpetuate a myth. The failed former parliamentary secretary for planning and infrastructure says he is going to tell us what the Labor Party policy is on this matter some other time, but we already know what the policy is.

**Hon Adele Farina** interjected.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** The member who was the parliamentary secretary, and the other one who is beetling on behind him, who was also, in her day, a parliamentary secretary to Hon Alannah MacTiernan, ought to know this as well, or perhaps they were kept in the dark because they were not important enough to know! But former Ministers Ellery, Ford and Ravlich were all ministers in a Labor government that received the proposals, I believe from the former Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, to spend money on various components of a package to deal with grain rail networks and other associated matters. They considered it at least once, but possibly in a couple of budget rounds in 2006 and 2007. Having considered that, the former Labor government decided to do nothing. There was no talk —

**Hon Ken Travers:** We were negotiating with the federal government to get money, and we did not close the lines!

**The PRESIDENT:** Order! Let me remind members that the same rules apply to everybody. We have limited time for each member to speak on this motion and they should be entitled to that time without interjections.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** The Labor government considered the matter and did not put anything into it. I heard no haggling from the failed former Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, the

Hon Ken Travers; President; Hon Simon O'Brien; Hon Matt Benson-Lidholm; Hon Philip Gardiner; Hon Lynn MacLaren; Deputy President; Hon James Chown; Hon Adele Farina

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mover of this motion, about \$3.3 million for this or \$100 000 for that, because there was nothing on the table—not one cent. So let us not have any of the member's blowhard nonsense on this motion about the millions of dollars that should be involved in doing this, that and the other, because when Labor had the purse strings and the policy levers, it did absolutely nothing. It did actively consider it, it researched it and, on that basis, it then made the decision to do nothing.

**Hon Ken Travers:** That is a lie and you know it!

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** Did the member just say I was lying?

**Hon Ken Travers:** I said, "That is a lie".

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** Mr President, if it is a lie, I urge one of those former ministers to get up and tell me that is the case, because the former Labor government did consider the matter—it was a very detailed matter and I believe it was considered in cabinet subcommittee budget forums—and all the outside evidence that was available and it rejected it.

**Hon Adele Farina:** How do you know that?

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** How do we know that? What is the ultimate proof? Was it an issue for years? Yes, it was. What showed up in any Labor budget? Zero. Was Labor asleep at the wheel? Was it blind to it then but it is suddenly aware of it now? The hypocrisy of these people is quite unbelievable.

The other point I want to nip in the bud right at the outset is all this emotive stuff about decisions being made to close railway lines. This government has made no decisions to close railway lines. This government is not about closing railway lines. If rail lines are not going to be used because there are no customers or because no rail operators want to operate trains on them, why should the taxpayers of Western Australia spend many millions of dollars upgrading rail lines that are not going to be used? That is the ultimate test. The point is that it is a question of whether rail lines are going to be used by farmers and others; it is not about whether this government is closing rail lines. We have done a heck of a lot—I am going to come to that in just a moment—to make sure that we have an extensive rail network fit for purpose and fit for the future. The previous government was spectacular in its lack of ability to get to the point and make a decision—to make a commitment on this. We know about the Grain Infrastructure Group; we have heard about it.

**Hon Kate Doust:** All you lot do is talk about things; you don't deliver.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** That interjection from Hon Kate Doust is a stupid interjection.

**The PRESIDENT:** Then you can safely ignore it!

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** Mr President, why do we not just compromise and I will simply treat it with the contempt it deserves.

We have already established that the Grain Infrastructure Group exercise of the previous government delivered zero. Under this government, when I was the minister, the strategic grain network review concluded and reported—we have discussed this before in this place many times—that there was merit in investment in parts of our rail network, that a considerable amount of re-sleeper investment was warranted, and that investment has been put into the tier 1 and 2 rail networks and, I might add, the tier 3 network. Money has been put into that network, which those people in the opposition ignore. As an alternative to having the grain from some tier 3 line bins going directly to port by road, the Brookton strategy was proposed. The whole idea of the Brookton strategy is to get grain onto rail—grain that otherwise would remain on road. All grain goes on road at some stage. There are no rail loading facilities in the middle of wheat paddocks. All grain goes on road at some point, and it is a question of how early in the supply train it is transferred to rail. That is what impacts on how much remains on road as it comes through the metropolitan area of Perth on its way to Kwinana, not the Fremantle inner harbour as Hon Ken Travers said, or, indeed, through the centres of Geraldton, Albany and Esperance. This state government, with the commonwealth government, assessed the strategic grain network review and we approved infrastructure funding of \$187.9 million for rail re-sleeper alone. Compare that with the zero that was put in by our critics. That is for the tier 1 and 2 rail networks, and a lot of progress has been made on that. I will not give members a progress update because of a lack of time. Also, \$118 million is to be applied to roads in the tier 3 rail line areas in particular, but also elsewhere. Of these funds, \$171 million was provided by the state government. In addition, a transitional assistance package of more than \$10 million was provided to keep unviable tier 3 lines open in the interim. The benefits of all those works, whether those benefits be to the grain industry, road users or other stakeholders in the rail industry, are being delivered by this government, whereas the former government failed to do a thing.

Hon Ken Travers; President; Hon Simon O'Brien; Hon Matt Benson-Lidholm; Hon Philip Gardiner; Hon Lynn MacLaren; Deputy President; Hon James Chown; Hon Adele Farina

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As I say, we are going to hear in due course from Hon Ken Travers, when he is ready, what Labor is going to do about this particular issue next time around, if it ever gets a chance. But it has a lot of ground to make up. I do not know whether Hon Ken Travers fancies himself as the next member for Central Wheatbelt. I want to say something about Hon Brendon Grylls. I have observed him closely in this debate and I think he has shown integrity and guts, which is lacking in members on the other side—especially integrity—when we review the hypocritical statements that are being made.

**Hon Kate Doust:** Excuse me! That is not appropriate.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** It is highly appropriate, in view of what was said earlier in this debate. Unlike the opposition spokesman, who is just trying to get some sort of leverage out of this for the seat of Riverton, or whatever he mentioned, Hon Brendon Grylls represents a very large part of the Wheatbelt. I have been with him on a number of occasions when he has stared down those people who say that the government has to keep all these railway lines open regardless of whether there is a case to do so. He has asked them why they do not put their grain on those rail lines. He has publicly said that if a benefit of 50c a tonne is to be made, some farmers will get up in the middle of the night to take their trucks down little, rickety back roads to avoid paying the extra 50c a tonne. And that has the stamp of truth on it. Hon Brendon Grylls inhabits a real world that I do not think Hon Ken Travers even knows exists.

I am proud of what this government has done, and of what I have done for that matter, via the strategic grain network review, in producing a package of hundreds of millions of dollars to deal with the future of the grain rail and associated road networks in Western Australia. I am proud of it. It is something that I can hold up as an achievement. Of course, it is always going to be a work in progress, and that is why the package I took to the Barnett-Grylls government, as the member opposite likes to call it, which was approved and funded by that government in concert with the commonwealth, exhibited the flexibility to deal with an emerging and ever-changing environment for the state's grain growers. Of course, from one year to the next there are going to be peaks and troughs—highs and lows—of yield in various districts in response to weather and other conditions, and we have to have transport systems that are responsive to that world reality as well. That is what we are delivering. Is it capable of evolving? Indeed, it is. I do not know whether members are aware of it, but the government has now authorised further money to assist with the operational life of a number of tier 3 lines to reflect the current larger-than-average harvest.

**Hon Ken Travers:** No, it is because you didn't do the work. That is why you are putting more money in. You failed to implement your plan.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** The empty pockets of the empty vessel condemn those opposite who want to criticise what we are doing. We have shown that we are adaptable and flexible, but more to the point we are committed to guaranteeing the future of a grain rail network in Western Australia. That is what we have done. Coming along in our wake and wallowing in their irrelevance because of their former inactivity are Labor Party members; all they want to do is to try to nitpick on some matters around the periphery. They do not bring a lot of credibility to this debate.

Will there be more trucks on metropolitan roads, as the member threatens us with? The final sentence of the motion states —

We call on the government to reverse this decision —

I have already dismissed the premise of that part. It continues —

and to place a high priority on the appropriate use of rail to our ports.

We have a government that has put a high priority on the appropriate use of rail to our ports. That has been demonstrated at the port of Geraldton. That has been demonstrated at the port of Kwinana. I think it was a slip of the tongue by the member, who said that we go to the Fremantle inner harbour. The appropriate use of rail to our ports has been exhibited in Albany. I am proud to say that the re-sleepering that I argued for and got funded for that line is now approaching completion. It is out there, Mr Travers, when you want to tell us that we never do anything about rail. We have done it and it is out there between Perth and Albany, if Hon Ken Travers wants to go and have a look at it. Clearly, this motion has no basis. Clearly, the mover of this motion has no credibility. The debate does not merit any further attention.

**The PRESIDENT:** I know that members want to speak in this debate but I have to try to be fair. It is non-government business, so I will give the call to Hon Matt Benson-Lidholm. I have noted the other members who rose and I will make sure that each party gets a chance to put their point of view.

**HON MATT BENSON-LIDHOLM (Agricultural) [10.43 am]:** Thank you, Mr President. Firstly, I thank Hon Ken Travers for bringing to the attention of everybody in the house and no doubt the many communities who are

Hon Ken Travers; President; Hon Simon O'Brien; Hon Matt Benson-Lidholm; Hon Philip Gardiner; Hon Lynn MacLaren; Deputy President; Hon James Chown; Hon Adele Farina

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listening to this debate today—who will also read it in *Hansard*—issues that are of significant importance to the very livelihood of many of the constituents whom I represent. A number of comments have already been made in the chamber. I just want to focus on some of them. Hon Ken Travers made a very pertinent remark when he said that Labor is basically concerned about the appropriate use of rail and the appropriate use of trucks. The appropriate use of trucks is not to transport grain to Kwinana through the escarpment and the Swan coastal plain. That is a given. Hon Ken Travers also made a particularly relevant point about the Brookton strategy, explaining the roles of Brookton, Kellerberrin and Merredin. He particularly noted the unworkability of that strategy. The other point that I think bears repeating, and I will make mention of this in a while, is that Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd has done its modelling and is prepared to go ahead with an initial investment of something like \$175 million for the rail transportation of grain.

**Hon Simon O'Brien:** It was this government that gave it the confidence to do that. That is what they have said publicly.

**Hon MATT BENSON-LIDHOLM:** Minister, I am not here to argue with you. The minister had 20 minutes in which to speak and I have only 10 minutes. I have only eight and a bit minutes left now. The fact of the matter is that if CBH is prepared to go down that pathway, let us give it a chance and let us shore up the future of communities that have tier 3 rail lines throughout their localities. That is my comment.

The minister said that we do not understand. I wonder whether he has conveyed that message to the farming communities that are promoting the retention of these rail lines. They are going to be around the place. Is the minister prepared to go out and tell them that they do not know what they are talking about? I doubt it. I am also led to believe that there was in place some sort of 15-year cyclical maintenance review agreement. However, come 2008 Labor obviously lost the state election, so that particular responsibility is now very much vested in the current government. I believe that the minister is talking about a selective grain rail network. The government's only promise is to guarantee tiers 1 and 2. Tier 3 lines, as I will demonstrate very shortly, are the ones that are going to be closed if the government has its way. They are the ones I am particularly concerned about.

I would like to acknowledge the endeavour and commitment of a couple of groups. One is the Wheatbelt Railway Retention Alliance. I particularly note the contributions thus far of its chairman Bill Cowan and coordinator Jane Fuchsichler. The second is the Fremantle Road to Rail Campaign group. I have not had a lot to do with that group. I have met with them, but being more concerned with the Agricultural Region, I have steered clear of the group in relatively recent times for no other reason than that it has not necessarily been my focus. Many thousands of Western Australians from both the Agricultural Region and the metropolitan area have thrown their support behind this campaign—we will see that this afternoon with the presentation of petitions. This is a campaign that will hopefully, for the farming communities I represent, see a refocus on the long-term retention of rail as the predominant means of transporting grain, particularly in the southern Wheatbelt zone.

I will give some historical perspective to this matter. Hon Ken Travers has already mentioned something about the privatisation of Westrail Freight. The promise was made some 10, 11 or maybe even 12 years ago to deliver a dynamic and sustainable rail system. Largely, that has happened. But what has happened in Wheatbelt south and what could possibly happen over the next year or so, once the next 12 months are out of the way, is something I do not necessarily want to see. The windfall payment to the government back in 2000 either has been squandered or, as has been suggested in many quarters, was not used to maintain the ageing infrastructure, let alone to invest in rolling stock improvements. That is a condemnation of this government because of its obvious relationship with the previous government. Now the government is seeking to adopt the cheap option and to force grain onto an unprepared road system. That is why we are seeing a 12-month hiatus. In the meantime, no money is being spent on those roads.

Basically, what the government is now seeking to do through the Strategic Grain Network Committee report is to close down 736 kilometres of Wheatbelt railway lines. The Strategic Grain Network Committee review suggested that rail transport is \$78 million more expensive than road transport. However, according to the new CBH-Watco proposal—I understand they have done their homework—that particular deal is now seen to be in the order of \$9 million cheaper than road transport. It is also noteworthy that CBH is committed to using tier 3 lines for the long term. CBH is also committed to investing in infrastructure to support rail use, including rapid rail-loading facilities. It is also worthwhile to note that, being a cooperative, CBH is there for the long haul. It is not like a publicly listed company that is prepared to take its money wherever it suits. CBH represents farmers and farming communities; it is there for the long haul. It has done its homework and I would believe CBH rather than a publicly listed company that is prepared to move its money at the whim and fancy of the markets.

Farmers in the Wheatbelt south zone are entitled to feel let down over the government's decision to seek to close tier 3 rail lines. I mentioned that back in 2000 the Court government went down the privatisation pathway, and I

Hon Ken Travers; President; Hon Simon O'Brien; Hon Matt Benson-Lidholm; Hon Philip Gardiner; Hon Lynn MacLaren; Deputy President; Hon James Chown; Hon Adele Farina

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just remind members about the \$585 million price tag on the sale of Westrail Freight, and a supposed \$400 million commitment to track maintenance and rolling stock over a number of years subsequent to that. The net effect of that particular benefit should have been something like \$985 million. It was the responsibility of the Court government to make sure that that was well and truly put in place, but from what I can see, that did not happen. The promise from the Court government, though, was a dynamic and sustainable rail system. As Hon Ken Travers has already indicated, privatisation has been a disaster, particularly in some of these Wheatbelt Railway Retention Alliance shires—Narembeen, Merredin, Mt Marshall, Quairading, Kondinin, Trayning, Corrigin, Cunderdin, York, Beverley, Bruce Rock, Kulin and Mukinbudin. These shires are now calling for tier 3 lines that are destined for the chopping block to be reinstated as the preferred means of getting grain to the port.

I would like to address some of the points made by Hon Ken Travers, particularly the economic considerations, because at the end of the day this is a dollars and cents issue. However, it is not purely and simply a dollars and cents issue, as I am sure other members will articulate shortly. There are some facts worth considering. Firstly, a business case prepared by CBH for government shows that, with the new, more efficient trains that are proposed, tier 3 rail can move grain cheaper than road, saving something up to \$6 a tonne. I know where farmers would rather that money be. They would rather it be in their pockets, not in the pocket of trucking companies. The other interesting point is that I am led to believe that 98 per cent of grain arriving at Kwinana port comes by rail, with a significant contribution to that coming from the Wheatbelt south zone. That 98 per cent is the largest received on rail by any port in Western Australia. That certainly calls into question the minister's earlier claims.

I turn to some other very important economic facts. Capital spent on rail lasts 35 to 40 years, whereas capital spent on roads lasts one to 10 years. The cost of repair and upgrade to rail is around \$150 000 to \$160 000 a kilometre; whereas the cost of repair and upgrade to roads for road train specifications ranges from \$600 000 to \$1 million a kilometre, and most of the roads that are in place now are unsealed, old roads that need lots of work, and the machinery that runs up and down those particular roads is very, very new and much larger.

**HON PHILIP GARDINER (Agricultural)** [10.53 am]: I disagree with the motion because it refers to “deciding to close 700 kilometres of Wheatbelt rail lines”. Nothing is closed until the trains or trucks have actually stopped running. Currently we have a decision that these railway lines will be open for at least another 12 months. We are really talking about some of the background that can be considered in making a decision of road versus rail in the tier 3 area. For me, nothing is final until a closure is absolute so that nothing runs on those lines.

In the process of discussion we have had over a number of months on this issue, we have not just consulted CBH, which is claiming efficiencies it can bring on rail compared with road, but also spoken to those outside CBH who are highly experienced in rail, both in Western Australia and the United States, and the efficiencies that people external to this argument are making; they tend to reinforce a difference from what was concluded in the December 2009 grain freight network report. When I examined that report soon after it was released, I found it to be flawed. However, that was the foundation upon which decisions have so far been largely cast—not totally, but so far. The flaw is that we cannot rule off something if there has been no maintenance expenditure on rail for the previous 15 or so years; we are just drawing an arbitrary line. We then used that logic in the analysis that was the basis for the \$100 million it appears we need to spend on rail when comparing it with road, when road has had taxpayers' funds spent on it continuously. If we are to deal with this using economic rationalism, either we have to add equity to the argument or we need to respect the differences. That difference really affected the way I considered the grain freight network report.

The report claimed that road is cheaper than rail in the long haul. It certainly was at that time. That is absolutely true. The interesting point is that road was cheaper than rail by between \$1.80 and \$15 a tonne across different parts of that tier 3 area, so road was much cheaper. What did the people out there who were growing the grain do? They paid the higher price to put 92 per cent of the grain from paddock—not from bulkhead—onto rail. Does that make sense to any of the economic rationalists here?

**Hon Jim Chown:** It was subsidised.

**Hon PHILIP GARDINER:** No, it was not subsidised. I am sorry, but Hon Jim Chown has got it wrong yet again, unfortunately. People are voting with their pockets at a higher price. Why have they done that? It is because the most important thing for a farmer harvesting grain in his paddock is to make sure that that truck is back at the farm, so they are not sitting in a header waiting for it. The further the truck has to go, the greater the chance it will not get back in time. Why is that so important? It is because the risk of not getting a crop off is high if a farmer is sitting around and wasting time while there is the risk of rain, thunderstorm, hail or even fire—they could do the insurance. Rain deteriorates the value of their grain, and if there are 1.5 million tonnes of grain in the paddock, which is the average five-year harvest—I do not know if that included last year but it is a fair number to consider—and, let us say, one-third of that is there when a storm comes on in mid-December,

Hon Ken Travers; President; Hon Simon O'Brien; Hon Matt Benson-Lidholm; Hon Philip Gardiner; Hon Lynn MacLaren; Deputy President; Hon James Chown; Hon Adele Farina

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which is well into the course of the harvest, farmers might lose 500 000-odd tonnes, at \$30 a tonne. The grain will have been downgraded from good quality grain to stained grain or, even worse, sprouted grain, when the discount is greater. There is a cost to that community and to those growers of losing that time. They cannot afford those delays.

The only thing that is certain in the costings of road versus rail is the rail cost. Brookfield has done a good job on that. Road is a very variable cost in this whole thing, and the risk is that money will continue being poured into roads because either the foundations or the edges are not right. The Department of Transport has told us that the roads will be pretty good, but that is a risk we will have to run. Already they are over \$800 million behind in maintenance work, as a result of getting in contractors who have not done that work quite to the standard that CBH wanted for state roads. They are running behind anyway, and they have already received \$60 million to try to cover that delay. They are battling. We know that they are battling because the program that was meant to be implemented this year has not been. That is why rail is back operating for this harvest.

Then we come to the risks that we will be running with so many trucks on the road—if we do go the road route. Opting for the road route will mean that CBH will move nearly all its grain from its sidings located along the rail line onto roads that are yet to be done up or are in the process of being done up. CBH, a business organisation, which also is pretty sensible about where its dollars go, has invested \$175 million—it is a cooperative so it is grower money—in rolling stock. Any board would have to be pretty confident to make a decision to spend that much money on rolling stock. If there was any doubt that rail would not work for the company, the board would not do it. The only reason CBH spent the \$175 million is because new information has come through that makes the December 2009 grain freight network report outdated. The new information is that an American operator, which confirms what we know about it from outside discussions we have had, has confirmed CBH's claim of efficiencies that can be extracted. That is a critical part of the confidence we can have in the numbers and the business case that CBH has made.

The figures I have from the Office of Road Safety show that the Wheatbelt of Western Australia has the highest road fatality rate of anywhere in the world—the highest rate in the world. Unfortunately, four deaths have occurred in the past three months out there. The number of road deaths in the Wheatbelt is higher than it is in places such as Thailand, Greece and Poland. This is not only about trucks, but an additional 55 000 50-tonne truck movements up and down the roads, because we do not have rail, will add to the risk. In the meantime, we should not forget that CBH is a logistics manager.

However, if members opposite think that maintaining the tier 3 line will mean that all the grain will go on rail, they should change their minds. That will never happen. We know that 92 per cent is transported on rail already, but at the CBH sidings CBH has to mix protein loads that require segregation for the shipments. They might be 50 000 to 70 000-tonne shiploads of wheat. They have to get enough grain of the same quality from different sites, but often they have to use trucks to aggregate those loads, because there is no rail system there. Members should not think that no trucks will go on the road; they will. But the rail system is the foundation of the transport system that serves that area. In my view, our system will be much riskier if we go for road over rail. Economically, at worst transportation on rail breaks even, but is more likely to be cheaper than road transport based on the efficiencies that CBH–Watco claim they can make. The government may have to consider more investment into rail if it takes that course, and that investment would be about equal to any investment it would have to make into roads. In addition, rail is cheaper to operate and if the Brookton strategy is used, it means an ongoing subsidy will be paid by government of \$1.30 or \$1.50 a tonne, because Brookton works only if the government pays that subsidy under the transport access project. The government has done well with tier 1 and tier 2 rail lines. The tier 3 line should therefore remain.

**HON LYNN MacLAREN (South Metropolitan)** [11.03 am]: Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak. I know that many members in this chamber want to speak. It is particularly important that the Greens (WA) put on the record that we are 100 per cent behind this motion. There are several reasons for that; one is that this motion is particularly well crafted. It indicates that we are concerned about economic, social and environmental issues and road safety in light of a decision this government has made to close rail. We are also calling on the government to reverse the decision.

**Hon Simon O'Brien:** What decision? Identify a decision that has been made along those lines.

**The PRESIDENT:** Order! Let the member on her feet have her say.

**Hon LYNN MacLAREN:** Thank you, Mr President. This is not a motion that merely seeks condemnation. This is a constructive motion that calls for particular aspects of a decision to be reviewed and for that decision to be reconsidered. The Greens are 100 per cent behind that. Hon Alison Xamon is really keen to discuss how the extra truck movements will impact on her electorate as they will, particularly in my electorate in Fremantle.

Hon Ken Travers; President; Hon Simon O'Brien; Hon Matt Benson-Lidholm; Hon Philip Gardiner; Hon Lynn MacLaren; Deputy President; Hon James Chown; Hon Adele Farina

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This issue has created unlikely alliances. The first thing I did when I got the Greens portfolio for transport was to front up to the Pastoralists and Graziers Association of Western Australia campaign to restore the tier 3 lines. Can members imagine how difficult it was for me as a Greens member of Parliament to walk into a PGA meeting? But we found common ground on which to fight a campaign that we are equally committed to. It was a beautiful moment. We did not discuss genetically modified food or live exports in detail. We talked about rail and about reducing the number of trucks on the roads in these communities. As Hon Philip Gardiner has so aptly pointed out, 740 people have been killed on the roads in the southern Wheatbelt in the past 10 years. Three hundred and twelve people per 100 000 head of population have died just because of the roads. This is unacceptable and using rail provides an opportunity to increase safety for those residents. That is one of the key reasons for this campaign and one of the reasons we support it. I want to point out that in Cunderdin the additional trucks we are talking about putting on the road—I remind members there will be 85 000 extra truck movements a year because of the decision to close the tier 3 line—will go past a school, a retirement home and a hospital. That will involve vulnerable people and they will be put at greater risk because of this government's decision.

In Moora, as I am sure Hon Philip Gardiner will know, the council has been worried for a while about more trucks on the road and has been examining ways to improve rail efficiency so that it can take more trucks off the road. How will this decision impact on the council? The Barnett–Grylls government seems hell-bent on going in the opposite direction and that is why tonight there is a public meeting in the Fremantle City Council chamber at 6.30 when the Mayor of Fremantle will speak, along with the Wheatbelt Railway Retention Alliance; Fremantle Councillor, Sam Wainright; and the Fremantle road-to-rail campaign speaker Barry Healy. This is what they are putting out to the public. Everyone needs to be aware of why this is a key issue. They are saying that shifting millions of tonnes of grain by truck will make regional WA roads deathtraps and it will funnel more truck movements through the metropolitan area. Up to 98 per cent of the harvest in the Kwinana zone is currently rail freighted to port. The sheer scale of what Troy Buswell intends is mind boggling. Tens of thousands of road train movements will destroy roads and communities, spewing diesel particulate pollution. They are also concerned about the health impacts, which I will cover quickly if I can.

**Hon Jim Chown** interjected.

**Hon LYNN MacLAREN:** The Wheatbelt situation is similar to that of Fremantle. The overwhelming majority of people want the obvious solution to the freight task and that is rail, and it is a motive because it matters, Hon Jim Chown. If he underestimates how much this matters, he will pay for it at the next election. Fremantle residents can be proud of the role our council is playing by joining the Wheatbelt Rail Retention Alliance. Fremantle people have joined their regional counterparts to stop the government's mania for trucks. These are unlikely alliances; they are not just a few people living in a country town out in the middle of where the minister does not visit.

**Hon Simon O'Brien** interjected.

**Hon LYNN MacLAREN:** We all care what happens on those roads. This is a city issue. As Hon Ken Travers mentioned —

Several members interjected.

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** Order, members!

**Hon LYNN MacLAREN:** — there are three particular areas where this will impact; namely, Forrestfield, Jandakot and Riverton. Members will know why they are important. They are not the only people who care about this issue and I wanted to bring that to members' attention. I want to cover two other reasons the Greens support this motion and then I will sit down because other members want to speak.

We know that extra trucks on the roads will have climate change impacts. One single 600-metre train can carry the load of 50 trucks, or 80 trucks if the load is double stacked. That is a good result. If we can shift that freight onto rail we will reduce the number of trucks and reduce the climate change impacts, which this government seems to have no commitment to, but we would like to see a greater commitment for that. Per container, road transport consumes four times as much fuel as rail on a short haul, and over six times as much on a long haul. My friends, have you considered peak oil? There is no long-term solution to how to move important products in this country, including grain, which is a significant product. We need to take into account the peak oil impacts of moving that grain out to export, and that is an economic and a social issue.

I will wrap up by saying that the health concerns are growing the more we move trucks on our roads, and that is why the people in Fremantle, who have had it up to here with that smog right in their backyards, are now activating in big numbers to stop that movement. We know the impacts of trucks on human health. It is no longer

Hon Ken Travers; President; Hon Simon O'Brien; Hon Matt Benson-Lidholm; Hon Philip Gardiner; Hon Lynn MacLaren; Deputy President; Hon James Chown; Hon Adele Farina

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a question. We want to reduce those impacts. This decision will push more trucks onto the roads, and we are entirely opposed to that.

Several members interjected.

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon Brian Ellis):** Order, members!

**Hon LYNN MacLAREN:** Any person in Western Australia can drive on these roads. If people live in Fremantle, they do not drive around just in Fremantle; they go —

**Hon Simon O'Brien:** I grew up in Fremantle. Have you ever been there?

**Hon LYNN MacLAREN:** Has the minister ever been out to the Wheatbelt? Has he ever driven on those country roads where people's lives are at risk?

Government members: Come on!

**Hon LYNN MacLAREN:** Three hundred and twelve people per 100 000 die, and the government is making a decision that —

*Point of Order*

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** The President was keeping order earlier and keeping that noisy rabble on the other side quiet to allow members to hear what speakers were saying, and I would urge you to do the same, Mr Deputy President.

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon Brian Ellis):** There is no point of order.

*Debate Resumed*

**Hon LYNN MacLAREN:** There has been a lot of talk about trucking grain to Brookton and then putting it onto rail. It would be easier for trucks to continue straight to Kwinana rather than putting grain on a train up to Avon and then down to Perth. The closure of tier 3 lines will inevitably result in more trucks not only on regional roads, but also on our city streets, especially around Kwinana, which any member for the South Metropolitan Region would be well aware of. The increase in the amount of freight on our roads is largely unplanned and unbudgeted for. I have not even begun to ask why we did not ask for federal infrastructure funding to upgrade those tier 3 lines. I have not even mentioned that and I am hoping that another member will. We need proper regional planning to move our freight in the most efficient way possible, not this current ad hoc approach that the Barnett–Grylls government is adopting. I entirely support the motion and I ask both those parties on the other side to give good explanations for why they are intending to close the tier 3 lines.

**HON JIM CHOWN (Agricultural) [11.12 am]:** I am changing the whole gist of my address today and I will tackle the issue of heavy transport coming to the metropolitan area during the harvest period. Obviously, Hon Lynn MacLaren has no idea what takes place out there in the Agricultural Region when harvest time comes around. We are hearing this fallacious story, also from Hon Ken Travers, that 20 000, 30 000, 40 000 or 50 000 heavy traffic movements will take place in the metropolitan area in the next few months. Rubbish; it is not going to happen. As Hon Philip Gardiner expressed earlier, it is logistically impossible. Let us not forget that the Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd receival points are still operating. Farmers will be carting grain from their properties to those receival points, and unless those receival points fill up and overflow, there will be no additional traffic in the metro area during harvest. Let us also not forget that the transport of that grain out of those receival points takes place over 12 or 18 months—normally over 12 months. It is a very rational process. In fact, the only time in recent history when there has been a surge of heavy transport through the metro area was two years ago when deregulation took place. The markets demanded grain out of this state within the first four months after harvest, and CBH did not have the rail traffic or the ability to move by rail the tonnage required to be moved. In fact, it is only recently that the Kwinana receival point has been made available to unload road transport. Most of the road transport goes to Forrestfield. I have never heard in recent times of heavy grain road traffic going through Fremantle, so Lord knows why people are having a rally down there, but best of luck to them. Let us not let the facts get mixed up with a good, emotional story that appeals to the member's political base.

**Hon Simon O'Brien** interjected.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Exactly. One of the reasons the tier 3 lines have an issue regarding competition with road transport is that they head in the wrong direction. They head towards Merredin; Fremantle port is west. Therefore, from an efficiency perspective, every grower would understand that CBH has subsidised their freight task until recent times, and it is no longer tenable in this deregulated situation. So many of those growers have taken the option to use transport to a bin closer to the port of Fremantle. With the rationalisation, the tier 3 lines

Hon Ken Travers; President; Hon Simon O'Brien; Hon Matt Benson-Lidholm; Hon Philip Gardiner; Hon Lynn MacLaren; Deputy President; Hon James Chown; Hon Adele Farina

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will be open for 12 months for all the reasons expressed by Hon Simon O'Brien, and in time they will be mothballed. But the industry is virtually pursuing the fact that tier 3 lines be mothballed.

**Hon Lynn MacLaren:** I don't think your National Party colleagues agree with you. I think your National Party colleagues are disagreeing with you, Hon Jim Chown.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Just hang on a minute. I am talking about the industry. I will read a letter that was sent by the general manager of CBH operations, Colin Tutt, to the Minister for Transport at the time, Hon Simon O'Brien. It is dated 14 April 2009.

**Hon Max Trenorden:** It's ancient history.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** It is not ancient history. It is still relevant today. The letter states —

- The CBH Group has grave concerns about the future of the southern half of the Kwinana zone. As you are aware up to 4 million tonnes of grain passes thru the Perth metropolitan area each year via the rail network. Nearly half of this grain is moved on rail lines which have a circuitous route to port —

As I said, they head in the wrong direction —

and where road is increasingly becoming a more competitive pricing option for the transport of grain to port. This is occurring because the road distance for many of our rail receipt points is half that of the rail distance. Currently CBH is assisting the rail system by implementing a "network pricing" model which distributes the additional rail costs over all sites in our storage network. In the inevitable circumstance where —

In other words, other growers throughout the state are subsidising the rail task, the rail freight, in the tier 3 area, and that is untenable today.

**Hon Max Trenorden:** Were.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Exactly. That is the point I am absolutely making here, Hon Max Trenorden: they were. CBH no longer has the ability, due to transparency requirements through deregulation, to subsidise these things.

**Hon Philip Gardiner** interjected.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** There are no new efficiencies yet. The letter continues —

CBH experiences direct site based storage and handling competition, the "network pricing" model will be at grave risk of collapse ... This scenario will see large sections of the narrow gauge network ... made redundant overnight and road become the dominant competitive mode of transport.

On the transport issue, as I have already explained, there will not be a massive surge in heavy transport through the metro area at any time in the near future. Just for the information of the people in this house, especially Hon Lynn MacLaren and Hon Ken Travers, this year's harvest is estimated to be a very good harvest of about 12.5 million tonnes. In its report, the Grain Infrastructure Group dealt with the percentage of road transport into receipt ports down the west coast and south. The report states that the Geraldton zone, for example, will receive 1.8 million tonnes by road, which is 60 per cent of its harvest. Albany will receive 1.15 million tonnes by road, which is 50 per cent of its harvest. The Esperance zone will receive 1.26 million tonnes, which is 90 per cent of its harvest.

**Hon Ken Travers:** And Kwinana?

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** For Kwinana—I have just been corrected—the Grain Infrastructure Group report estimated that 65 per cent would go by rail and 35 per cent by road.

**Hon Ken Travers:** No, 96 per cent goes to Kwinana by rail today, and it will go by road under your proposal.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** On the extrapolation of these figures, that is two million tonnes by road.

**Hon Ken Travers** interjected.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** I agree that that percentage is wrong, but the reality is —

Several members interjected.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** I do my own research. The point I am making is that the majority of the grain that goes to port in this state is by road through built-up areas without a problem.

Hon Ken Travers; President; Hon Simon O'Brien; Hon Matt Benson-Lidholm; Hon Philip Gardiner; Hon Lynn MacLaren; Deputy President; Hon James Chown; Hon Adele Farina

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Let me get back to the proposal in the Grain Infrastructure Group report, which was commissioned in 2004 by Hon Ken Travers' government, under the auspices of the then transport minister, Minister MacTiernan.

**Hon Ken Travers:** So you accept that we did some work on it.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** I accept that that government did some work; absolutely.

Several members interjected.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** But the basis of that report's recommendations had more than 1 000 kilometres of narrow gauge line being closed and the rationalisation of 196 receival points up-country to 46 key bins. Therefore, in effect, that report estimated if that took place, there would be more grain transport traffic on the road over a longer distance at harvest time than ever before.

**Hon Ken Travers:** And that report was wrong, and it was rejected.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** No, it was not rejected. What actually happened is that members opposite lost government—thank goodness for that!

The report also made recommendations to the effect that all tonnes transported on rail would be levied; therefore, growers would be taxed to put their grain on rail to pay for the narrow gauge system infrastructure. That is how the previous government was going to finance it. Legislation was required to formulate rules of entry for potential competitors, so it was going to be anticompetitive. We were going to have a monopoly—these are the recommendations, members opposite should read their report!

**Hon Adele Farina** interjected.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** No, I am not making it up. There would be a single coordinated manager to manage the supply chain for efficiency and equity. We know who that would be—Co-operative Bulk Handling—so there goes deregulation out the door and the industry would be captured by a couple of entities. What is most interesting about that GIG report is that the people represented on the committee were from the Department for Planning and Infrastructure, the Australian Railroad Group, rail carrier WestNet Rail, the Australian Wheat Board and CBH. It is the minister on this side who, when he was Minister for Transport, threw it out the door and instigated another group of people who included representatives from industry groups. They spent 12 months deliberating the issues of the efficiency of narrow gauge and how to overcome the problem. That group included industry representatives—namely, from the Pastoralists and Graziers Association, the Western Australian Farmers Federation and, yes, CBH. After a year of deliberation, that group signed off on the fact that the best way to make the narrow gauge system efficient for the grain industry was to mothball the tier 3 lines, as I said before, because they headed in the wrong direction. If members opposite want to put inefficiency into the transport system of this state, go right ahead.

Some issues are evolving in regard to grain freight across the whole state, which has been mentioned in this place today; that is, the fact that CBH has taken on the task of having its own rolling stock. That rolling stock has to be operational by 1 May next year because ARG has walked away—it has lost the tender. As a member for the Agricultural Region, I am very concerned that that will not take place. In fact, industry sources tell me that it is unlikely to be fully operational by August, September or October next year, if then.

**HON ADELE FARINA (South West)** [11.22 am]: I welcome the comments made by Hon Philip Gardiner who has obviously given consideration to this matter and is right across the issue. The only thing that concerned me about what he said was that he felt he could not support the motion because a decision had not yet been made about closing the tier 3 rail lines. I just point out that I am holding a mass of media articles in which the Minister for Transport acknowledges that that decision has been made and that the decision to allow freight to continue on rail for the next 12 months is finite—it ends in 12 months' time. As far as the minister is concerned, his decision is made and he will implement it.

**Hon Max Trenorden:** There are two parties in this government.

**Hon ADELE FARINA:** I acknowledge that and I am grateful that there is.

**Hon Ken Travers:** There is only one Minister for Transport.

**Hon ADELE FARINA:** Exactly! Hon Ken Travers is absolutely right; there is only one Minister for Transport. If my experience with that minister as a local member is anything to go by, the Minister for Transport does not listen before he makes a decision, so the chance of getting him to listen after he has made a decision is absolutely impossible. Just ask all the people in Busselton about the Busselton Hospital decision that he will not move on.

This motion identifies that the decision has been made and needs to be reversed. Therefore, I urge all members of the National Party to support this motion because it asks for exactly what they want as an outcome at the end

Hon Ken Travers; President; Hon Simon O'Brien; Hon Matt Benson-Lidholm; Hon Philip Gardiner; Hon Lynn MacLaren; Deputy President; Hon James Chown; Hon Adele Farina

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of the day. The issue is that communities want freight on rail. For members to say that Hon Alannah MacTiernan did nothing to achieve that when she was Minister for Planning and Infrastructure is absolute nonsense. As her parliamentary secretary, I spent a huge amount of time attending and chairing public meetings that were all about getting freight on rail and having meetings with rail operators on a range of issues. It was a major issue in the south west, but it related to logs and not to wheat, obviously. We invested a huge amount of time and effort in ensuring we got to the point at which we could get logs on rail and reopen the Greenbushes–Bunbury rail line. That was ready to be signed off on when we lost government. What did this government do? Absolutely nothing! This government sat on its hands, despite the fact that right before the election its members went to the community and said that they would honour Labor's commitment to put \$20 million into reopening the Greenbushes rail line.

Several members interjected.

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon Brian Ellis):** Order, members!

**Hon ADELE FARINA:** But once this government was elected, it just sat on its hands and did absolutely nothing. Three years later we are still waiting for this government to honour that commitment. The reality is that this government has a poor track record on rail. It has no commitment to rail. We have an excellent track record on rail—absolutely!

Several members interjected.

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** Order! There is only one speaker at a time and there is little time left.

**Hon ADELE FARINA:** I urge members in this place to support this motion because it delivers the outcome that National members want.

**Hon Max Trenorden:** We don't accept those lines are going to close.

**Hon ADELE FARINA:** The member is living in la-la land! The Minister for Transport has acknowledged time and again that he has already made that decision. For the member to simply say that decision has not been made is just ridiculous, given that the minister continually acknowledges and reaffirms that that decision has been made.

Motion lapsed, pursuant to temporary orders.