

ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE — REGIONS

**23. Ms R.S. STEPHENS to the Minister for Transport:**

I refer to the Cook Labor government's record investment in improving roads in regional and rural Western Australia.

- (1) Can the minister update the house on this government's delivery of massive transport initiatives, such as bringing road maintenance back into Main Roads Western Australia and building the Albany ring-road in my electorate?
- (2) Can the minister advise the house how this government's record of delivering for regional Western Australia compares with the record of members opposite?

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:**

- (1)–(2) I thank the member for Albany for the question. The good thing about the question is that it relates to the state government. That is a good thing because the other side of politics maybe wants to go to Canberra and ask questions of the federal government.

As the member for Albany knows, we are spending a record amount on regional roads. Of course, I drove down to Albany with my good friend the Minister for Police. We have already outlined that we bought sausage rolls at the Bannister bakery and not the doughnuts—a decision I still regret. We also saw firsthand the amount of roadworks that are being undertaken in regional WA. The feedback I get is that people have never seen so many detours or taken so much time sometimes, as the member for Geraldton said, because of all the roadworks.

**Mr R.S. Love** interjected.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** Sorry, Leader of the Nationals WA, what was that?

**Mr R.S. Love:** Rough surfaces and broken pavements.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** The fact that the Nationals did not spend any money on regional roads: is that what he said? I think that is what he said!

**Mr R.H. Cook:** That is what he is trying to say!

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** I think that is what he said. I think what he was trying to say was thank goodness you are there because the National Party ignored regional WA. That is what I think he said.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Members!

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** As we drove to Albany, we saw significant roadworks. The regional road safety program is a generational program improving the safety of our regional roads. We are putting audible lines on the edge of the road and we are widening the shoulders. That means that when people make a mistake—we all make mistakes—they are able to correct themselves. They are able to correct themselves without running off the road. We know that single vehicle run-offs are one of the key causes of death and serious injury on our regional roads. Approximately 85 per cent of the Albany Highway has had that treatment.

While we were down there we saw the significant progress of the Albany ring-road: another project that will support the region for generations to come. I hate to use the words “game changer”, but I will. It means not only smoother movement of freight into the port, but also an improvement to the lifestyle and the amenity of those living in the Albany town centre. It means people will be able to get to school to drop off their kids without interacting with trucks. Let us face it, when we were down there, there were a lot of cars on those roads in the Albany town centre. The Albany ring-road will make it much easier to live in what is already a beautiful city.

I also popped out to Broomehill; the Minister for Police was with me on that venture, where we saw the upgrades to CBH. We are working with CBH and with the federal government, supporting new infrastructure that will increase the productivity of the grain terminal, assisting farmers to get their freight to port more quickly, in a shorter window, which means we can maximise our economic output.

We met many of the workers who now have permanent jobs with Main Roads. Last week, 100 workers were brought back onto the government payroll from contractors. There were 100 throughout the great southern and south west and we met them. They are generally happy people; they have permanent jobs. I saw them with their new outfits; they are very happy with their new rosters as they go to work for Main Roads.

We passed through Manjimup and saw the new office that we are building. We met eight or 10 workers who are now based in Manjimup. We are going to make an office in Manjimup for up to 20 people. All up, members can see the difference we are making compared, of course, with the National Party together with the Liberal Party. We are talking about standing up for regional WA, as the Leader of the House mentioned yesterday—it was a very

good contribution. Yesterday in the debate, opposition members came in here and talked about standing up for their communities. What were they doing when the Liberal Party was in government—the government that held the treasury benches and sat around the cabinet table—closed tier 3 rail lines? What were they doing when they continuously outsourced work?

When members opposite were in government, closing tier 3 lines and outsourcing road maintenance, what were they doing? What were they doing?

**Mr R.S. Love:** That was a decision of Parliament.

**The SPEAKER:** Order, please!

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** I read the report. It was signed off by the Minister for Transport in your government! That is who signed it off.

What were they doing? They were putting bumper stickers and signs in regional WA. Remember, they put bumper stickers on the TransWA buses. They ignored regional students and they put royalties for regions stickers on TransWA buses. We pulled them all off, like I said, like a good new government. Again, it is a demonstration of what we can do, compared with the opposition.

I have a Valentine's Day poem, members. Shall I read it?

*Roses are red*

*Violets are blue*

*We're spending records on regional roads*

*Why didn't you?*

**The SPEAKER:** Just before I give the member for Roe the call, I note that I like to have a certain number of questions asked each day. We have had only four asked, and it is 2.25 pm. I ask that the answers be a little briefer.