

MAIN ROADS — MAINTENANCE CONTRACTS

636. Ms E.J. KELSIE to the Minister for Transport:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to bring outsourced services and jobs back into the public sector.

- (1) Can the minister update the house on the work that is underway to end the outsourcing of road maintenance and bring jobs back in-house at Main Roads?
- (2) Can the minister outline how this decision will support the local economies of regional Western Australia?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:

- (1)–(2) The house will be happy to know that I went out to Northam this morning, which—again, to rehash my joke—is the member for Mandurah's home town. As the Premier said, he went into the school looking for the member for Mandurah's name on the dux board, but it was not there; rather, there was "Mr Congeniality, David Templeman"! I went out to Northam because, of course, one of the other things that we are doing in regional WA is bringing back road maintenance jobs to regional WA. Do members remember which nasty government cut all those jobs from regional WA? Members would be correct in saying it was a Liberal–National government that outsourced and contracted out road maintenance from regional WA. In one fell swoop, it cut 700 jobs from regional WA. The permanent workforce across Western Australia went from more than 2 000 to less than 1 000.

Mr D.J. Kelly: It did the same with the Water Corp as well.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: It did the same with the Water Corp. Of course, these are the parties that privatised Westrail freight and had planned, and were ready, to sell Fremantle port and Western Power. They did massive wholesale privatisation in regional WA. They did all this privatisation and now they come in here and ask about road quality and potholes. We have made the decision to bring it all back to Main Roads; there will be 490 permanent jobs in regional WA alone. Today, the first tranche was delivered, with 48 workers in Northam all wearing their brand new Main Roads outfits. They are all very, very proud to be back working for Main Roads. Three guys, Graham, Steve and Stewart, worked for Main Roads 23 years ago and now they are back at Main Roads. I talked with another person about the benefits for the regions of having Main Roads employees, and he said, "What it means is that people make choices to move their families out to the regions." This guy lives in Toodyay and he said, "This is going to make it much easier for people to move their families because it's a permanent job in a regional town", so it will be supporting local communities. It will also give a career path for young people. We are also delivering new programs to encourage young regional Western Australians to stay and work for Main Roads. I met three Aboriginal workers out there and, again, they are very, very proud to be wearing the Main Roads uniform and delivering projects for Main Roads. This is another example of real change for regional Western Australia. There are no bumper stickers—just real change and real reform that is delivering benefits for not only communities and workers, but also the overall road network. It is a very, very proud day. I made the trip out to Northam. It was a very exciting morning.

Mr D.A. Templeman: You should've taken me; I would've come.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I was going to say some negatives, but I will not. It was a positive morning and I did not want to ruin it!

Several members interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Sorry, that was harsh—unnecessarily harsh for Mr Congeniality! It was a great day and a very proud day, and very exciting for the town.