

TOLLWAYS — FEDERAL GOVERNMENT REPORT

300. Mr J.M. FRANCIS to the Premier:

I read with great interest the story in *The Australian* on a report the federal government has today released that recommends a greater use of tollways. Premier, does the state government plan to hit Western Australians by introducing tolls on major roads?

Mr C.J. BARNETT replied:

I thank the member for Jandakot for the question. Given that we have what Labor would call a privatisation debate, particularly being targeted into the Jandakot electorate, members opposite may be interested in this, if they have not already looked at it. This report, released by federal Minister Albanese, is entitled “Communicating the Imperative for Action”. This report was delivered, I understand, as effectively the policy direction of the federal Labor government. The report talks about the need for state governments to privatise. It advocates privatisation. It specifically calls for the privatisation of Fremantle port—it is named within it. That is the Labor Party policy at a federal level. It also calls for the privatisation of the water authority and water utilities.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Thank you, members!

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Is it not interesting, Mr Speaker? WA Labor, where does it stand? Its own federal party, the party that instructs it, is now calling for the privatisation of Fremantle port and the privatisation of the water utilities!

Several members interjected.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I want to reassure the people of Western Australia —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Victoria Park, I formally call you to order for the first time today. My memory tells me that that question was asked by the member for Jandakot; I doubt that the member for Jandakot is able to hear what is currently being said by the Premier. I would like to provide you with that opportunity, member for Jandakot.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I wish to reassure the people of this state that the Liberal–National government, unlike Labor policy, will not be privatising Fremantle port. We will not be doing it.

Several members interjected.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I also want to make it clear that although we welcome private investment into public infrastructure, and we do, we will not be privatising the Water Corporation, nor will we be privatising any other utilities.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for West Swan, I formally call you to order for the first time today.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The Labor policy document also calls for the introduction of toll roads and implies that that may in some way even be tied to federal funding. **So I want to make it very clear: this government will not privatise Fremantle port, we will not privatise the Water Corporation and we will not introduce toll roads into Western Australia. I think the public needs to know that.**

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Cockburn, I formally call you to order for the first time today. Member for Armadale, I formally call you to order for the first time today.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: If we have a government that is free to make its own policy decisions, as the Liberal–National government in Western Australia is —

Several members interjected.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: This state, as a result of the referendum, will not have daylight saving, it will not have pokies in every club and pub on every corner and neither will it have toll roads. There is a difference between this side of the house and the other side of the house, because the Liberal–National government here is able to set its own policies and make its own decisions; that is not true for Labor members opposite. It is not true and —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members! I presume there are other members in this place who want to ask a question today; I am hoping there are. Sometimes I am provided a list with members' names on it because they would like to ask a question. Some of you might not get to ask that question today with the way things are going.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: We saw it so evidently yesterday—that is, the lack of independence allowed to WA Labor—when I asked the simple question, “Do you support or oppose the carbon tax?” It is self-evident to me that federal Labor —

Mr W.J. Johnston interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Cannington, you obviously did not listen to me. In my subtle way, I was indicating that I do not want any further interjections. Member for Cannington, I formally call you to order for the second time today.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: It is self-evident to me and I think most Western Australians that the Leader of the Opposition and WA Labor, as they like to call themselves, are prevented from expressing their opposition to the carbon tax.

Several members interjected.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I have never in my 20 years in public life seen a leader of a —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Armadale, I formally call you to order for the second time today. Member for Willagee, I call you to order for the first time today. I am quite happy to stand here for five or 10 minutes, however long it takes, for everybody in this place to understand that this is question time, with the ability for people to ask questions and get answers. It is not an opportunity for people on both sides of this place to roar at each other; it does nobody in this place any credit at all. If you want me to stand here for another five minutes until you can stay silent, I am happy to do that. I do not want any further interjections on this question. Premier, I want you to close the question as soon as possible.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I conclude by making the observation that is apparent to every member of this house and, had it been reported more widely, would be apparent to every Western Australian: for the first time we have a leader of a major political party who is frightened—frightened to express his view on the carbon tax. He fails to stand in this place and say whether he supports the carbon tax or opposes it. On probably the most significant public issue affecting people and the cost of living in this state, we have a Leader of the Labor Party who is either not allowed, or is too frightened, to comment.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Forrestfield, I formally call you to order for the first time today. When I sit, I will seek another member for the call.