

# Transport



## *Introduction*

Western Australia is a large landmass with a relatively small population, the vast majority of whom reside in a sprawling metropolitan area around the capital. The State is mineral rich but with quite modest local markets. Its economy is based very significantly on the export of minerals and agricultural produce. Indeed, several of the world's greatest ports (by tonnage) are located in Western Australia.

The State exhibits distinct transport challenges. Many of the major areas of production are remote from both major population centres and places of export. In turn, many of the goods consumed in Western Australia are sourced from outside of the State. As a people we also value our mobility, undertaking millions of individual journeys by private car, public transport and bicycle every day.

To meet Western Australia's many and varied transport needs, necessity has produced the engineering and network solutions to address them, from purpose built iron ore railways, to systems that convey the state's children safely to and from their schools, to a far-flung network of remote roads that carry infrequent numbers of very heavy vehicles.

All of this - and more - is necessary to sustain and build our community.

**The Liberal Party has always maintained that a sound transport policy, delivering high standards of safety, environmental performance and productivity at a sustainable cost, is fundamental to the welfare and advancement of the people and economy of Western Australia**

Our commitment to that position is reasserted by this policy document.

The Liberal Party understands the importance of transport to all Western Australians. The lifestyle we value so highly is reliant upon the existence and smooth operation of a well-planned, efficient transport infrastructure.

**We believe that the purpose of Transport Policy is to facilitate the movement of people and goods, without interference from Government beyond that amount of regulation necessary to ensure the wellbeing of the community and the environment and the efficient functioning of the transport services involved.**

We also believe that Western Australia needs a long-term planning horizon to meet community expectations and the needs of the future.

Transport planning will therefore be an integral part of a Liberal Government's Planning Strategy, safeguarding our lifestyle and our unique natural environment.

In Government we will continue to aim for the improvement of transport services to the public by road, rail, sea and air.

A Liberal Government will provide positive incentives to transport operators of all kinds to provide better services to the people of Western Australia.

A Liberal Government will foster the development of new technologies to improve environmental efficiencies and productivity.

Most importantly, a Liberal Government will deliver transport outcomes that will make a positive contribution to peoples' lives and the prosperity of the State.

# *Summary of the Liberal's Public Transport, Roads and Infrastructure commitments*

## Recurrent Initiative

- **20 Year Transport Master Plan**

A Liberal Government will provide \$6 million over the next three years to develop a 20 year master plan for Perth's future transport task.

## Capital Initiatives

- **Better Public Transport System**

A Liberal Government will provide \$49.5 million over the next four years to provide 3000 parking bays on the northern and southern railway lines.

- **Eelup Roundabout Flyover**

A Liberal Government will provide \$30 million over the next three years for the Eelup Roundabout Flyover in Bunbury.

- **Roe 8 Project**

A Liberal Government will provide \$20 million over the next four years to begin construction of the new Roe Stage 8 project.

- **Upgrade of the Coalfields Highway**

A Liberal Government will provide \$25 million over the next three years toward the Coalfields Highway upgrade.

- **Traffic Control Signals**

A Liberal Government will provide a \$250,000 grant for traffic control signals on the corner of Ardross Street and canning Highway to improve road safety.

- **North Greenbushes Railway**

A Liberal Government will contribute an additional \$5 million towards the upgrade of Greenbushes Railway.

- **Ranford Road Duplication**

A Liberal Government will provide \$5 million over four years to upgrade Ranford Road.

- **Ellenbrook Railway**

A Liberal Government will provide \$53 million over the next four years toward the construction of a new rail line to Ellenbrook, to meet needs in the fast growing North Eastern Growth Corridor.

## ***1. Air Transport***

Western Australia is a large landmass with a small, scattered population outside of the capital. Aviation is an important factor in the life and economy of the State. It enables Western Australians to travel widely in pursuit of recreation, reunion, career and business opportunities. It provides the capacity for us to maintain our presence in the wider region and among our major trading partners, to facilitate in-bound tourism, to provide fly-In, fly-out capacity to service the State's ever-expanding mineral and petroleum industries.

**The Liberal Party understands the importance of maintaining air services to all corners of the State and the unique conditions that impact upon the viability of those services.**

For many Western Australians in regional and remote areas air transport is vital to gain access to essential, but distant services.

Without it the ability to transfer patients to regional or metropolitan hospitals, for students to commute to boarding schools, to facilitate visits by health workers and deliver goods to remote communities becomes a serious problem.

Commercial reality dictates the need for Government policy to positively support the maintenance of aviation routes and schedules.

A Liberal Government will work closely with the aviation industry to ensure that air transport is available to meet the needs of Western Australians. We will deliver on our commitment by:

- Supporting the viability of service providers through transport assistance schemes for members of the public in remote areas, including an enhanced Patient Assisted Travel Scheme, which will be boosted by \$7.7million per year;
- Provide \$68 million over five years to the Royal Flying Doctor Service to purchase three new aircraft;
- Encouraging the further development of aviation training as both a domestic and export industry; and
- Actively pursue new air services between Western Australia and overseas markets.

### **Perth Airport**

A Liberal Government will work closely with Westralian Airports Corporation to:

- Develop a new rapid transit service to connect with Perth Airport;
- Improve road connections to the airport estate; and
- Include Perth Airport as a major point of destination in a future, integrated public transport network.

### **Regional Airports**

A Liberal Government will maintain a Regional Airports Development Scheme to assist in the development of regional airports to support air services and the aviation industry around the State.

## ***2. Western Australia's Roads***

The Liberal Party's policy is always to strive for the highest standards of safety, environmental performance and productivity in the planning, design, construction, operation and maintenance of the State's roads.

- **Safety** for road users, pedestrians and residents
- **Environmental performance** that minimises the impact upon the natural environment of roads; the negative impacts of traffic (particularly heavy vehicles) on the natural and built environment and the contribution of road traffic to harmful emissions.
- **Productivity** through the efficient transit of people and goods.

### **Western Australia's Roads**

There are more than 170,000 km of public roads in Western Australia - around 17,500 km of main roads and the balance, local roads. The road network is by far the most used means for transporting people and goods around the state.

### **Road Maintenance**

Maintenance of main roads is the responsibility of the State Government, while Local Governments are responsible for local roads. Funding is drawn from a number of sources, including the State's consolidated revenue, Federal direct grants and other funding related to revenues such as excise or vehicle registration charges.

The deteriorating condition of WA's road network is a growing concern for the road transport industry, with some Local Government authorities now refusing permission for out-of-shire vehicles to cart on some local roads.

This has resulted in a fragmented network with a number of gaps in gazetted road train routes.

A Liberal Government will engage in a genuine partnership with Local Government. We will provide real assistance by:

- Entering into a partnership with outer suburban growth councils to assess the necessary infrastructure growing communities need;
- Securing Western Australia's fair share of capital funding from Federal road-building programs, to aid in the completion of the road network.

A Liberal Government will also work to improve the connectivity of the road network between major points of origin and destination and between major transport corridors.

### **Road Safety**

The Liberal Party in Government will take decisive action to increase the safety of our road network.

We will maintain a dedicated, cross-portfolio Road Safety policy specifically targeting the unacceptably high toll of Western Australians killed or seriously injured on the roads.

In the Transport portfolio, we will give high priority to reducing the high emotional, social and economic costs of the road toll through a range of educational, network and engineering solutions.

In the Transport portfolio these will include:

- Provision of dedicated freight routes and by-passes to:
  - decrease heavy vehicle traffic in built-up areas and
  - separate heavy vehicles from passenger traffic to the greatest extent possible;
- Improve safety for cyclists and investigate extending the network of cycle paths;
- Explore ways to reduce traffic congestion in the CBD
- Implement education and engineering initiatives to make more efficient use of freeways and major roads
- Improve safety standards for heavy vehicles and their drivers (see Road Freight below)
- Identify and complete effective regional freight routes for multi-trailer vehicles

### ***3. Road Freight - an Essential Service Industry***

The Liberal Party recognizes that the road freight industry plays a vital role in the life and prosperity of Western Australia. We also believe that by increasing the efficiency of road transport and investing in road infrastructure, all Western Australians will benefit from increased productivity and competition.

The freight task is set to double in the course of the next decade and the bulk of movements will be on road. As the industry grows, so too will pressures on transporters, communities and other road users.

Government should be encouraging transport operators to improve safety, environmental efficiencies and productivity.

However, the Labor Government has forced cost and other imposts onto the road transport industry without regard for the consequences, which include thousands of extra kilometres by heavy vehicles, burning fuel, creating emissions and reducing the capacity of the roads and the industry.

**Unlike Labor, the Liberal Party understands that unnecessary transport costs add to every household's weekly shopping bill.**

It was the Liberal Party who backed the road freight industry strongly over issues like axle-spacings and Harvest Mass Management - and won some concessions. In Government we will do much more, delivering outcomes that will make a positive contribution to household budgets and the prosperity of the State.

### **Long-term Planning**

Consistent with the essential need for long-term planning a Liberal Government will conduct a full audit of the State's freight network to guide future planning and expenditure.

The Total Network Audit will:

- identify key points of origin and destination
- determine the capacity of freight routes to sustain multi combination vehicles and what additional construction is require to enable the safe operation of multi combination vehicles

- Identify efficient links to key termini (seaports, rail terminals and air-freight facilities), ensuring the protection of local communities from the potential hazards posed by the transport of goods to and from these facilities and by loading / discharge operations.

## **Investment in Road Infrastructure**

In addition to the investments announced throughout the campaign (above), a Liberal Government will secure Western Australia's fair share of capital funding from Federal road-building programs, to aid in the completion and upgrading of the full inventory of heavy haulage roads.

## **Permits, Licensing and Accreditation**

A Liberal Government's overriding objective will be to ensure all road transport businesses, large and small, can operate on a level playing field in relation to permits and accreditation. The Liberal Party will work with the industry to overhaul the regulation of the road freight industry, including the permit and accreditation system.

**We will establish a Ministerial Advisory Panel, consisting of industry stakeholders and charged with:**

- **Making recommendations for changes to the current mandatory WA Heavy Vehicle Accreditation system to introduce optional alternatives for low usage and farm vehicles.**
- **Ongoing review of the permit system for Restricted Access Vehicles (RAVs) and Concessional Loading Permits.**

## **Training and Workforce**

An ageing workforce and the sourcing of new employees is a challenge for the road freight industry.

- **The Ministerial Advisory Panel will review the current heavy vehicle driver licence training and testing system to ensure that it meets required standards and importantly does not restrict the entry of suitable people in to the industry.**

## **Vehicle Inspections**

The Liberal Party is aware of the current constraints on the road industry brought about by long delays at vehicle inspection centres and the lack of inspection centres in remote areas.

- **A Liberal Government will initiate action to outsource vehicle inspections to appropriately accredited inspection stations.**

## **Enforcement and Compliance**

Effective enforcement of the industry is fundamental to maintaining essential standards of safety for drivers, other road users and the wider community.

A Liberal Government's statewide enforcement policy will be focused on working with industry to achieve and maintain compliance, assisted by well trained and properly resourced officers on the roads.

## **Alternative Technologies**

A Liberal Government will work with the industry to establish a range of incentives to develop and use vehicles that operate on alternative fuels.

## ***4. Public Transport - General***

The Liberal Party recognises the importance of public transport to the social fabric of society, in connecting Western Australians to essential services and in ensuring mobility in their day to day lives. An efficient and accessible public transport system also allows us to make more efficient use of our road network and enables the rapid movement of larger numbers of people in periods of peak demand.

The Public Transport Authority (PTA) and its predecessors have a fine record of providing bus, rail and ferry services to Western Australians, working through its operational divisions Transperth (metropolitan) and TransWA (regional) and in partnership with its service contractors.

The Liberal Party is committed to improving the PTA's overall service delivery and the increasing the uptake of services by the public by:

- Promoting the benefits of public transport services for prospective passengers and the environment;
- Increasing confidence in the public transport system by:
  - Creating a secure and user-friendly public transport environment;
  - Decisive intervention to remove anti-social behaviour from the public transport network, including car parks, rail stations and bus interchanges;
  - Maintaining a high level of customer satisfaction in services running on-time;
- Increasing accessibility.

## **Public Transport - Buses**

The Liberal Party recognises that bus services offer a cost-effective, user-friendly and flexible mass-transport system.

Immediately upon coming to office a Liberal Government will establish an industry taskforce to enhance the bus network. In addition, we will establish public consultative forums to encourage community consultation in identifying specific bus service needs.

Under Labor, bus services have become a distant second priority in public transport with a conspicuous imbalance of Government attention and funding allocated to rail.

A Liberal Government will redress the imbalance, provide stimulus to service providers and better services to the community by:

- Trialing and developing additional peak-period trunk routes;

- Promoting the advantages of commuter use of bus feeder services to access passenger rail corridors;
- Continuing the introduction of more eco-friendly buses to reduce polluting emissions;
- Employing new technologies such as hydrogen fuel cell vehicles to achieve greater economic and environmental benefits; and
- Ensuring that TransWA services meet the needs of regional Western Australia.

## **Public Transport - Ferries**

The Liberal Party supports a diversity of public transport options and will explore opportunities to make more use of the Swan and Canning Rivers for Public Transport purposes by private operators.

## **Public Transport - Passenger Rail Services**

The Liberal Party recognises the importance of rail in the public transport arena. However we also recognise that to get optimum use out of the system it must be perceived as a safe and convenient way to travel.

Currently, there is a strong perception in the Western Australian community that the rail system is not safe particularly at night. In addition the lack of suitable and secure parking is a mitigating factor against people choosing to use the rail system.

A Liberal Government will promote use of rail by:

- Building a rail line to Ellenbrook.
- Undertake a \$49.5 million expansion of park and ride facilities along the Northern and Southern rail lines. The funding will provide up to 3,000 additional parking bays, representing a 30 per cent increase on the current 10,000 bays.
- Install additional CCTV and other security measures at train stations through the \$6 million WA Community Crime Prevention Program.
- Improving the security of rail passengers by increasing the number of police officers on the rail network.
- Provide free public transport to WA Seniors Card holders, aged pensioners and disability support pensioners between 10am and 3pm from Monday to Friday and all day Saturday and Sunday. The Liberals will publicly review these arrangements after six months with a view to extending this to 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

## **Develop a \$6 million 20 Year Transport Master Plan**

A Liberal Government will develop a blueprint for a future integrated public transport system, including planning for:

- High capacity passenger rail services to major centres such as the Perth Airport and major hospitals.
- Rail services from Fremantle to the Southern rail line
- A new rail service to Ellenbrook
- Extension of the Northern Suburbs line to Butler, Brighton, Alkimos and beyond.
- Extending the Armadale line to Byford and examining the case for services to Mundijong
- The extension of high-speed future services to Bunbury, with possible extension of tourist services to Busselton.

## **Public Transport - Taxis**

The taxi industry is an integral part of the Western Australian transport system providing a personalised and specialised service to the community. The Liberal Party believes that an important role of Government is to ensure the maintenance of a professional and efficient taxi service, thereby assisting in meeting the mobility and public transport needs of Western Australians and providing vital support to our Tourism industry.

Western Australian taxi patrons are entitled to expect that if a taxi is booked it will attend, or if a taxi is called for will attend within a reasonable time. To achieve that, Government must first create a viable operating environment for taxi owners and drivers.

Under Labor the Western Australian Taxi Industry feels increasingly alienated from Government with uncertainty over basic policy and direction, totally inadequate consultative mechanisms and a general lack of respect for operators that frequently finds expression in open hostility. The taxi industry and the public deserves better than that.

A Liberal Government will restore confidence in the State's taxi industry through a range of measures based on the following principles:

- That viability of the taxi industry and the prospects of the public enjoying the best possible levels of service are enhanced when those providing services have a direct interest in the future of the sector, its long term standing and reputation;
- That a well performing taxi service relies on reasonable levels of return for owners and drivers, having regard to the overheads involved in running a taxi;
- That Government has a responsibility to provide affordable access for those who rely on taxis for essential mobility because of age, disability or infirmity.

## **A New Taxi Advisory Board**

A Liberal Government will establish a Taxi Advisory Board comprised of industry and government representatives and tasked with:

- allocating monies held in the Taxi Industry Development Fund;
- restoring positive operating conditions for taxi drivers;
- making recommendations to improving taxi services available to the public;

- striking the right balance between release of plates, growth of the market and operator sustainability;
- monitoring fare schedules and cost inputs;
- harnessing the best advice and experience available to guide decision making;
- maintaining the mobility of the aged, infirm and people with disability through assistance schemes such as the Taxi User Subsidy Scheme (TUSS);

## **A Fair Return**

The Liberal Party in Government will seek to ensure that taxi operators receive a return on investment that is attractive and that encourages operators to further invest in the industry. To achieve this, the Taxi Advisory Board will regularly review taxi fares to ensure they are adjusted appropriately and in line with key economic indicators.

It is important that taxi fares remain affordable whilst providing a fair return to operators; ongoing and regular fare reviews will ensure that Western Australians are not hit with large one-off increases.

**A Liberal Government will return the ownership of taxi plates currently owned by the Government to the private sector.**

## ***5. School buses***

The orange school bus system has been operating in Western Australia on a dedicated contract basis since 1918.

### **Orange school buses:**

- service districts outside the Perth Metropolitan Region Transport Area where students do not have access to regular public transport services, and
- provide transport to specialist metropolitan schools catering for students with disability with high support needs.

There are around 800 contracts, mainly operated by small family businesses, servicing over 700 mainstream and specialist education schools.

The service has an excellent record of safety and reliability and is highly valued in the many communities in which it operates.

The Liberal Party recognises the quality service that is provided under the orange school bus contract system in this State. Further, we recognise the significant and specific demands of providing a service to children with disabilities and will work with contractors to ensure that this specialised service is preserved. We also recognise how important it is for parents' peace of mind to know their local bus operator.

We will preserve the integrity of this system by valuing the small business people who provide this service.

### **A Liberal Government will:**

- Commit to a general review of the contract document.

- Work with the industry to find better and quicker ways to resolve points of dispute between the government and contractors, including appointment of an independent arbiter.
- Ensure that all new buses coming into service are of the highest standard.

## ***6. Rail Freight***

Western Australia is a huge state whose economy relies heavily on primary production. The need to move large volumes of bulk product from production areas to the state's metropolitan and regional ports makes an efficient rail network essential.

The common user rail network in Western Australia extends to approximately 5,100km of standard, narrow and dual gauge lines. The management of the network (including maintenance) lies with WestNet Rail as holder of a 49 year lease entered into in 2000. Key users of the network are the Public Transport Authority (passenger services), freight hauler Australian Rail Group (ARG) and numerous customers including CBH, Portman Mining, Alcoa, Worsley Alumina, Iluka, APEC, Griffin Coal, BHP Nickel, Western Power and Cockburn Cement. 80% of land freight from the eastern states comes by rail.

### **Why Rail is Important to Western Australia**

The Liberal Party recognises that significant environmental and economic benefits may be obtained through the movement of goods by rail. We also recognise that to maximize the use of rail there needs to be investment in the network.

Whilst it is accepted that rail infrastructure is expensive to construct and maintain, it is also understood that capital cost may be offset by several important benefits including:

- Environmental and cost efficiencies, generally achievable when large tonnages are to be moved over a minimum distance of around 80km. This is particularly so in the transport of shipping containers and bulk products such as grain or mineral ores.
- Reduction in the capital cost of maintaining heavy freight road routes through reduction in wear and tear and
- Safer and less congested roads through the reduced presence of heavy road vehicles

The Liberal Party believes a long term approach must be taken to developing WA's rail network that Government must be prepared to work with rail operators, where necessary invest in upgrading the regional rail freight network and address the difficult decisions about expanding the network.

### **Protecting the rail network**

Immediately upon coming to Government, we will engage with the agricultural sector, rail operators and the Commonwealth to make the decisions necessary to secure the future of the grain rail network.

### **Providing for future expansion of the network**

A Liberal Government will ensure that expanded port operations near James Point will be properly serviced by rail infrastructure. Furthermore, when identifying and reserving a future express freight corridor to that port, provision will be made to accommodate future heavy rail.

## **Streamlining railway services especially in fast handling of freight**

A Liberal Government will examine the feasibility of establishing a major freight interchange near Kalgoorlie, to reduce the volume of freight being unnecessarily transported to, around and then out of the metropolitan area

## **Long-term planning**

The Liberal Party believes Western Australia needs long-term, visionary planning to meet community expectations and the needs of the future.

A Liberal Government will undertake a comprehensive survey of regional/country rail transport in order to:

- remove the anomalies of Labor's policy;
- achieve the right balance between rail protection and road movements; and
- target future rail investment to achieve maximum real benefit for regional Western Australia, agriculture and the State as a whole

## **Long-term, Common User and Regional benefits**

A Liberal Government will also ensure that new railways built to service proposed or expanding mining operations should where possible be constructed with long term planning in mind, to provide ongoing benefits and transport options to the regions in which they are located.

## ***7. Seaports***

Western Australia has relied heavily on its maritime links since 1826. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, shipping remains as important as ever in conveying this great exporting state's products to trading partners around the world. The State's ports are also the point of entry for the vast bulk of imported goods, principally through the port of Fremantle, with important roles filled by regional ports in facilitating the local delivery of general cargo and bulk petroleum products.

Western Australia's major waterfront infrastructure is located at eight statutory Port Authorities (Albany, Broome, Bunbury, Dampier, Esperance, Fremantle, Geraldton and Port Hedland) and a large number of other "Departmental" ports and harbours.

The Liberal Party appreciates the vital importance of these ports to the communities and industries they serve. We also recognise the need for port operations to be supervised and resourced to ensure they operate in a safe, environmentally responsible and efficient manner. For that reason we attach high priority to:

- the efficiency of land side transport links associated with ports and
- the protection of local communities from the potential hazards posed by the transport of goods to and from the port and by loading / discharge operations

As the freight requirements of Western Australia continue to evolve, the Liberal Party recognises the need for bold new infrastructure projects to help the State gain the benefits of its prosperity and meet the needs of the future. In Government we will facilitate the development of new port projects including:

- **Fremantle** - Large scale development of outer harbour container capacity, solving the systemic weaknesses of the present infrastructure and reducing the current and future impact of port related traffic on residential communities

- **Mid-West** - Development of necessary infrastructure to service the mid-west mining industry with new deep-water berthing facilities at Oakagee.

### **Intra-state shipping services**

The Liberal Party supports the important role of shipping in providing transport options for regional Western Australia; in Government we will retain contracted shipping services.