

15th July 2009

The Editor
West Australian Newspapers
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PERTH WA 6843

Dear Editor

I refer to Ben Spencer's excellent article on the new Bunbury Highway.

Ben however was greatly misled by Alannah MacTiernan in reporting her claims that it was she who implemented the project after long battles for funding with the Howard Government.

In fact and to the credit of the MP for Canning, Don Randall, the Howard Government voluntarily offered to pay half the then estimated cost with an extra up front grant of \$150m, later increased to \$170m if the work commenced immediately. Ms MacTiernan as Minister refused to accept the money and the official record is clear on this matter.

So important did the Howard Government consider this project from a public safety aspect that it withheld the approximately \$400m of regular road funding until the offer was accepted. Ms MacTiernan's response was to buy paid advertising accusing the Federal Government of delaying these payments.

A meeting consequently called by then Minister Truss of WA Federal Liberals confirmed his position notwithstanding MPs such as myself who had to explain the delay of large projects in my electorate.

It was only then that MacTiernan agreed.

It is further worthy of note that the project has operated under Howard Government special industrial relations criteria also criticised by MacTiernan which, unlike MacTiernan's railway line, is no doubt the major reason for the on budget, ahead of time outcome.

Yours sincerely

Hon Wilson Tuckey MP