

## WA Labor's Infrastructure Policy Paper

March 2015

On the 25<sup>th</sup> of March 2015, West Australian Opposition Leader, Mr Mark McGowan, released a policy paper detailing Labor's Infrastructure policy plan. The next West Australian state election will be held on 11 March 2017. The paper outlines that if elected a Labor government will have four key infrastructure priorities:

- Establish Infrastructure WA, an independent advisory body of senior private and public sector representatives reporting directly to the Premier on all major infrastructure projects.
- Publish a State Infrastructure Strategy, which will aim to establish priorities for infrastructure planning and investment across Western Australia for the next 20 years.
- Subject all big infrastructure projects to a rigorous and transparent cost-benefit analysis.
- Establish the necessary mechanisms to allow unsolicited infrastructure proposals to be evaluated.

### Infrastructure WA

A Labor government plans to establish Infrastructure WA- an independent body of senior private and public sector representatives reporting directly to the Premier on all major infrastructure projects. The body will be charged with overseeing the development of the State Infrastructure Strategy based on a cost benefit analyses. The paper indicates that Infrastructure WA will be chaired by an experienced local citizen who will provide independent advice on the State's Infrastructure Strategy. This person will be helped by a board consisting of senior representatives of both the private and public sector.

If established, the body will be concerned with infrastructure projects valued at more than \$100 million and also manage Commonwealth funding applications. It is envisaged that Infrastructure WA will give its recommendations to the Premier on the planning and delivery of projects. These recommendations will be made publicly available. Infrastructure WA will publish five-year infrastructure plans identifying short-term priorities; set medium and long-term goals for infrastructure; identify how these projects can be funded and financed, and anticipate demand for infrastructure. The body will also seek to identify and attract funding from private, State and Federal sources.

Similar Infrastructure bodies exist at a federal and state level.

Hawker Britton's occasional paper on Infrastructure Australia is available [here](#).



## **State Infrastructure Strategy**

A Labor government commits to making a 20-year strategy that will focus on multi-million dollar infrastructure projects that aim to 'enhance the economic and social fabric of the State'. The Strategy will be developed with the input of business, community and other stakeholders.

The policy paper emphasizes that the aim of the Strategy is to ensure Government does not work in isolation to the private sector. The State Infrastructure Strategy will provide a guide to agency budgets and will ensure that major projects identified by the Strategy also appear in the program of works for the relevant agencies, such as Main Roads WA, the Department of Transport and Government utilities.

## **Transparency**

A labor government will introduce the necessary mechanisms to allow unsolicited infrastructure proposals from the private sector. Unsolicited proposals are proposals for infrastructure projects made to Governments directly from private contractors. They involve a Government often negotiating exclusively with a third party without a competitive tender process.

There are procedures for dealing with unsolicited proposals in every other mainland State. In NSW, the Department of Premier and Cabinet coordinates the receipt of proposals while Infrastructure NSW manages their assessment. WA Labor will follow the advice of the ERA, which recommended last year that the Government set up procedures for evaluating unsolicited proposals.

**The full policy paper on WA Labor's Infrastructure Plan is available [here](#).**