

Labor blame game getting too bizarre

Transport Minister Rita Saffioti blames firstly COVID and then the Russia/Ukraine war for delays in delivering the new system for allowing tag on/off on public transport with phones and credit/debit cards (*News*, 12/9).

Supply chains were affected apparently. For software? Or are there upgrades to the scanning hardware also involved that we are getting from Russia or Ukraine and they're too busy to make us some?

I look forward to her and the Government blaming delays to other government projects, and maybe fixing the health system, on the ongoing war.

Wayne Perry, Innaloo

Can we get our \$10 back?

So WA Treasurer and Transport Minister Rita Saffioti won't rule out an imminent move to a cashless transport system or the phasing out of SmartRiders. Should SmartRiders be phased out, perhaps Saffioti would care to explain how the upfront cost of \$10 to buy the card will be refunded to all cardholders.

Brian Plester, Como

Forget cars, go with rail

The West reports that the State Government's Burswood racetrack proposal continues to be divisive (*News*, 8/9).

We don't need a suburban racetrack, but we could do with a regional train track. Why not use the \$217 million partially earmarked for the racetrack that hardly anybody wants as a contribution towards an upgraded railway track for train passengers from Perth to Albany? This project would further develop tourism through Wheatbelt towns along the way and decrease the unsafe conditions where motorists compete with increasing numbers of road trains using Albany Highway.

Kalgoorlie and Bunbury already have a passenger rail service, so why not include Albany?

Reinstating the rail service



Rita Saffioti

for the present generations to enjoy, promoting our regional centres along the way and improving road safety, is a win-win situation worth considering.

John Maiorana, East Fremantle

Be like Mark, Roger

One of the things that made Mark McGowan such a respected premier was that he listened to what people were saying.

He wasn't ashamed to change his mind on issues and was able to say "we got it wrong".

Roger Cook and Rita Saffioti need to understand that we don't want a racetrack in Burswood or ferries and terminals on our beautiful river. Listen to what your community says and scrap these awful plans.

Helen Baker, East Victoria Park

Bell tolling for Cook

Beware, Premier Cook, your low priority racetrack could become your Bell Tower.

You might want to check with Richard Court on the political price paid for bad judgment pursuing an ego project that was not a public priority.

Richard Hammond, North Fremantle

Pay ruling dangerous

The Federal Court ruling that Woolworths and Coles must repay nearly 30,000 staff \$1 billion for wage underpayment (*WestBusiness*, 9/9) is symptomatic of the issues of our failing IR system, and an example of the biggest hurdle to productivity gains in this country.

The awards are so long and so complex that it is likely legal opinions on the subject will differ, and if the matter comes before the Ombudsman, the opinion will differ once again.

I suspect this is all by design to ensure the livelihoods of the unions, and legal fraternity.

Many people who do not work in the industry would not realise that the same rules apply to small and medium-sized enterprises, Australia's largest employer group, and a proportional result of the Woolworths/Coles decision, should they be involved in a similar situation, would see them lose their business and their homes.

A simple solution would be make receipt of a pay an acknowledgement of part satisfaction of your employment contract.

There is no comeback on the employer for that week's pay or previous pays after this point.

If the employee is not satisfied they are being paid correctly, they would have to, upon the receipt of their pay, advise the employer it is incorrect, and why. The underpayment and subsequent pay would remain in dispute until both parties sign off.

This puts a fence around previous pay and only raises concerns on pay from a certain point in time.

The FairWork Ombudsman has been very vocal in promoting a fair work system, but it invokes disclaimers as they know the insane complexity of the awards and need to ensure they protect themselves from any litigation.

Unfortunately, businesses cannot use the same disclaimers to protect themselves.

If the system doesn't change, the move to robotics, AI, and, in retailers' cases, self-service, will continue at a rapid rate.

It is now simply too risky to employ people, unless it is an old-style family business, where all staff members are members of the family.

Glenn Hutchinson, Burekup