

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

108. Ms K.E. GIDDENS to the Premier:

I refer to the Cook Labor government's significant expansion of affordable public transport services across the state.

- (1) Can the Premier update the house on the delivery of key Metronet projects, including the Morley–Ellenbrook train line?
- (2) Can the Premier inform the house what planning this government is undertaking for future expansion of our public transport system?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

- (1)–(2) I thank the member for the question. Let me pose one to all members assembled: Do members recall the Liberal Party promising to build the Ellenbrook rail line in 2008? Do they remember that? I think we do. For eight and a half years they came up with every excuse. They included, “It was never a core promise”, “We did not mean to promise it”, “The rail line is not needed until 2035”, and “We will provide a bus instead.” Of course, we all remember the Metro Area Express.

Mr W.J. Johnston interjected.

Mr R.H. COOK: Thank you, member for Cannington.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, members!

Mr R.H. COOK: For those who do not recall, here is a bit of MAX merchandise—a USB stick—that they produced at the time. As we all know, the Liberal government lied to the people of Ellenbrook, not only once but again in 2013. When the WA Labor government was elected in 2017, we started from scratch to right the wrong. The ghosts of broken Liberal Party promises have haunted the Minister for Transport for many years, as she works tirelessly to make up for all the bad things that members opposite did to those people. As the transport minister and local member, she has driven the Morley–Ellenbrook line project with an all-consuming passion.

A week ago, I drove to Ellenbrook and saw the great new Ellenbrook train station. Before my eyes, Metronet came to life. When the people of Ellenbrook are eventually connected through the Metronet system, they will have a 30-minute commute into the city—a similar commute to mine from the Wellard train station. It is a sign that Metronet is steaming ahead towards completion and the work is starting to come to fruition. In the south east, we also have the Byford rail extension that continues to make huge progress, and the Armadale line level crossing removals and viaduct construction is going ahead at a pace. The Thornlie–Cockburn Link will soon form Perth's first east–west cross line connection, and the new Bayswater station is now open and becoming a worldclass junction of the Midland, airport and Morley–Ellenbrook Metronet lines.

This is not remarkable; we are simply doing what we said we would do. We did not, like the Liberal Party, lie to the people of Western Australia. As Metronet steams along, we are now looking to apply its success in other parts of the network. We are seeing an incredible activation of the Swan River. We have seen successful ferry systems in other states and we have watched the growing popularity of our existing route between Perth and South Perth. In fact, January was our busiest ever month for the ferry service, with nearly 110 000 boardings compared with just 49 000 in January 2022, but we have never fully cracked the code for expanding beyond that one ferry route in Perth. As our city continues to grow and improve, we are now giving a rethink to an expanded system for not only commuters, but also tourists and locals as another way to enjoy the city. We have already heard that people are getting excited about the prospect of a shortcut between Applecross and Matilda Bay, then a short walk to the University of Western Australia or Queen Elizabeth II Medical Centre, or a leisurely ride connecting the Raffles Hotel to Optus Stadium. There are a lot of options to consider and we will be finalising the business case for the proposal very soon.

The government remains focused on its long-term vision of transforming public transport in Western Australia. It is not about us and it is not about media stunts; it is about doing what is right for WA. We are on the cusp of an enormous economic and social transformation of our state and city, and we will have more choice than ever. There will be more choice in housing, more choice in transport, more choice of jobs, more choice of entertainment and so much more, and we will have the schools and hospitals necessary to match this growth. Under my government, we will continue to be the powerhouse of the national economy.