

RAILWAY (METRONET) AMENDMENT BILL 2019

Third Reading

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

MS J.J. SHAW (Swan Hills) [2.57 pm]: It is a pleasure to speak during the final stage of the bill implementing legislative authority for the construction of the Morley–Ellenbrook railway line. What a significant day it is for the people of Ellenbrook. It is so exciting. This project will finish the town centre for the people of Ellenbrook, delivering vibrant commercial precincts and additional forms of housing. It will finally finish all the beautiful villages that constitute Ellenbrook. A considerable amount of work has been done to deliver this project, keeping in mind that when the McGowan government was elected, absolutely nothing had been done on this project. So many people in Ellenbrook realise and appreciate that the promise was broken so many times.

From a standing start, we have commenced the earthworks for the project by relocating the telecommunications tower at the train station site in the heart of Ellenbrook just behind Charlie Gregorini Memorial Park as part of the new Lord Street project, which includes the creation and duplication of the dual carriageway. The preliminary earthworks have also been completed for the rail project. The planning changes required through Henley Park in order to facilitate the delivery of the rail line have been done. Geotechnical assessments, environmental assessments and design and engineering assessments are underway. Over the past two years, the minister announced a series of tender awards for detailed planning, design and engineering to complete the detailed business case. Noise assessments are underway. All sorts of work has been progressed following the fact that we came from a complete standing start.

As part of the delivery of the Morley–Ellenbrook railway line, we have engaged the community at every step of the way. I have been so pleased to participate in so many of those consultation processes.

I would like to thank all the people of Ellenbrook who came to the community forums. Nearly 2 000 people in the community completed the survey that was issued asking them what they wanted from the Morley–Ellenbrook railway line. As I say, this will complete the town centre. It will complement many other aspects of Metronet that this government is delivering for the people of Ellenbrook. The new Lord Street Park ‘n’ Ride facility will open in two weeks at the intersection of Gngara Road and Drumpellier Drive, or new Lord Street, where there used to be two-and-a-half-kilometre-long traffic jams. We have fixed that for the people of Ellenbrook. We have introduced a 355 bus service that links Ellenbrook to Whitfords. It gives people an east–west option and cuts the trip time from 95 minutes to 44 minutes. It allows people to access education, employment and health opportunities in Joondalup and also the Joondalup rail line. We have also increased the frequency of the services connecting Ellenbrook to Midland, which allows people to access St John of God Midland Public Hospital and the Midland rail line. It allows people to get to the commonwealth and community services that they so desperately need. This project complements all those other infrastructure and transport projects that our community deserves.

It is genuinely a pleasure to speak to this bill to acknowledge that this government is delivering a flagship commitment to the people of Ellenbrook. We are delivering local construction jobs; supporting the housing sector with the delivery of the Hesperia precinct; supporting the construction industry with the delivery of the railway line itself; and delivering railcar manufacturing to the Midland workshops, which is long overdue and will bring meaningful manufacturing employment back to the people of the north-east corridor. We are designing a community that people want, in consultation—in lock step—with that community. We are finally providing the services and facilities that Ellenbrook needs and deserves, and we are doing it in a thorough, purposeful, methodological and sensible manner. We are delivering it in a financially responsible way without the need to sell Western Power.

MS R. SAFFIOTI (West Swan — Minister for Transport) [3.01 pm] — in reply: I rise to conclude the debate on the Railway (METRONET) Amendment Bill 2019, which will facilitate the Ellenbrook rail line. Firstly, I thank everyone for their contributions, particularly at the consideration in detail stage. I want to recap many of the key points that were addressed during consideration in detail. This rail line has been much discussed in broad terms for many years, but today we went through it in a little more detail. I thank the member for Swan Hills for her third reading contribution in which she summarised the achievements we have already made in only two and a half years, which is —

Ms J.J. Shaw: Quite an achievement, minister.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: It is quite incredible when we think about it.

I want to recap a couple of issues. First of all, I will refer to the consultation. The member for Swan Hills mentioned—I did not make this point during the consideration in detail stage—the forum we held in Ellenbrook last year that kicked off the public consultation on this rail line. At the time, we highlighted the planning process that was well underway for the Ellenbrook rail line. We got a lot of feedback on the route and also on the facilities and the style of stations that people want. As part of this project—it was outlined by the member for Swan Hills—

we will continually engage on the amenities and services to be provided at those train stations. Every train station will be different in its nature and how it interrelates with the community, and I will go through them all. We want all of them to have very good access, whether it be car parks, bus feeder services, or pedestrian and cycling infrastructure. We will look at all those different aspects in the design of the stations.

I will go through some of the issues raised during the debate. The member for Nedlands asked some good engineering questions, which is always good.

Mr T.J. Healy: That was an exciting part of the debate!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I quite liked the curvature of the discussion; it was quite interesting. Of course, in assessing rail lines, we have to make sure that we never make any very hard right or hard left turns.

I will go through some of the issues. The Ellenbrook centre train station has been identified for a number of years. We are working to deliver the train station in that area. Specific consultation is underway with Ellenbrook Christian College. It has been aware for many years that its oval lies partly over the easement for the public transport corridor. I remember that it was first raised with me by people at the college about eight or nine years ago when I was in opposition. Of course, the current college administration has picked up this issue after many years. There is good engagement with Ellenbrook Christian College to ensure that it has access to its oval, some of which was relocated as part of the bus rapid transit project. That engagement is ongoing to ensure that the college has really good access to its oval. That is something that the Metronet team is doing.

As the member for Swan Hills outlined, last year we had a really good initial consultation forum in the theatre that was attended by a lot of people. One of the big things that I took away from it was the level of excitement at the fact that this was being realised after it had been talked about for so long and that we were in government and we were planning it. The feedback I get from people is that they are glad that they have a government that is delivering on that commitment. That forum really kicked off our public consultation in government, after we had undertaken a number of forums when we were in opposition.

Further south, there is the Henley Brook area. As we have said, there will be some space there for the storage of trains. We also want to be able to build a Henley Brook train station in the future. That may be looked at in the future. It is not currently in the plans, but we believe that the Morgan Fields subdivision in Henley Brook, together with the planning that is underway for the rest of the Henley Brook urban area, will see up to 30 000 people in that district alone. We are making sure that we can facilitate that prospect in the future.

As part of the planning, we will look at noise attenuation. Because the line will be predominantly on the west side of Drumpellier Drive, apart from when it crosses Drumpellier Drive and Gngangara Road, we think we can manage the noise issues. Of course, the relevant noise walls will be built where required.

Even further south, there is the growing residential development of Brabham. That development has been undertaken by both the private sector and the Department of Communities. I think there was a sod turning for the Brabham joint venture development a few weeks ago, which I unfortunately could not attend. Again, it is a significant new housing development that will feed into the Whiteman Park train station. Dayton also continues to grow. Its development is probably a little more advanced than Brabham's. It continues to see significant housing development. The Whiteman Park train station is a very exciting train station. It will take international and interstate visitors and Western Australians to the front door of Whiteman Park. We will work with the local community and the volunteer groups on linking their exhibits and the train rides in the park to the Whiteman Park train station. It is an intermodal shift, but it is very exciting. I know that the volunteers are very excited by it. We just need to sit down and formalise the arrangement. The whole idea is that families and young kids will be able to catch the train to the door of Whiteman Park, and get off and catch the little train into the playground and other areas. Whiteman Park has been given a number of awards in recent years for its tourism promotion. As I have said, this government funded Pia's Place nature playground. That is an all-access playground that has been long wanted. Whiteman Park is continuing to grow and evolve. It is a great place for people in the northern corridor and across the northern suburbs. That train station will be absolutely incredible. It will draw visitors and families to Whiteman Park in record numbers.

The Ellenbrook line will then go through the Bennett Springs cell, as I call it. As has been outlined, it will impact some private properties. All those landowners have been notified that we are planning this rail line in their area. They may not all be directly impacted by the corridor, but they have all received notification. We intend to work with those landowners over the coming months.

[Quorum formed.]

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: As outlined by the member for Nedlands during consideration in detail, we have written to some of the affected landowners in Bennett Springs to alert them to the route alignment. We are continuing to work with some of those landowners to try to minimise the impact on home structures in that area. Many of the landowners also see this as an exciting opportunity to develop land that they have long wanted to develop. As I said to the

member for Nedlands, as part of that, we are looking at planning for the Marshall Road–Bennett Springs area. We believe that some of the uncertainty that has plagued that area for many years in relation to buffers can be addressed. We just need to work through all those issues with the relevant landowners.

The rail line will then go into the Marshall Road land. We have talked about that. We are continuing to discuss the location of the proposed sporting complex, and to work with the Department of Sport and Recreation. We also want to continue to work with the City of Swan—if it wants to work with us. The new Mayor of the City of Swan is very keen to continue to work with the state government to improve infrastructure in that area. I hope the majority of the council will take a positive and proactive approach to infrastructure in that area. I hope it will not let some of the negative forces take over the City of Swan, and that it basically alienates itself from the process and is seen in the eyes of the public as opposing the Ellenbrook rail line. I hope that does not happen in that area.

The rail line will then cross, in a sense, Beechboro Road North, which has basically changed in nature because of NorthLink, to arrive at the new Malaga station. Malaga station will have a significant Park ‘n’ Ride facility, because it will be a significant catchment station for Ballajura, Bennett Springs and the Malaga industrial area, and also for a lot of suburbs along Alexander Drive, including Landsdale, Alexander Heights and Girrawheen, and also Marangaroo, as I recall.

We understand that Malaga station will service that entire community. As part of the operational plan, we will also look at the types of bus services that will be provided. The idea is that shuttle buses will service the suburb and bring people to and from the station. That will be a bit of a challenge, because of the significant infrastructure such as NorthLink, which surrounds this station. We will be working to see how the new infrastructure along Marshall Road will connect with the road, pedestrian and cycling connections into the new station. Another constraint is the high-voltage transmission lines in that area. I noted that this was a 30-hectare area. It is actually 70 hectares. Malaga station will be an exciting new precinct for the entire area. It already has the appropriate urban zoning, as I recall. It will feed into the Malaga employment area, and also service the Bennett Springs, Ballajura and wider Alexander Drive communities.

The line will then go under the southbound carriageway of NorthLink, through the median along Tonkin Highway, and stop at Benara Road and the new Noranda station. That has been welcomed by the community. We are working with local residents on some of the amenity impacts. The member for Morley has been very closely involved and is helping with the dialogue with the local community about the location of car parks and how the station will be positioned. A specific group has been set up involving the member for Morley to ensure that we engage really well with the local Noranda community and get a really good station precinct in that area.

The line will then continue further south to the new Morley station. That is also welcomed by the community in general. It will provide great connectivity to Morley Galleria Shopping Centre and assist with some of the traffic issues. The great aspect of the new Morley station is that it will not be landlocked or lack permeability into the wider suburbs. It will service suburbs both east and west of Tonkin Highway. It will also have great connectivity to Broun Avenue for cars and buses, and for walking and cycling. It will provide a transit node that will connect to Morley Galleria through buses. That will help decongest the area around Morley Galleria and facilitate further redevelopment. I think it will work as a really good station. I have talked to some of the locals in the area. There is a level of excitement from the business owners and landowners and the wider community about this new access along Tonkin Highway.

The Ellenbrook rail line will then go south and feed into Bayswater station. Planning is being done for the Bayswater station redevelopment to facilitate the Forrestfield–Airport Link and the Ellenbrook line, and forward works will be underway very soon. As we have outlined, it will be a two-platform station, one to facilitate the rail link to Ellenbrook, and the other to facilitate the rail link to Midland and Forrestfield. As we know, the Forrestfield dive structure will come out to the east of the new station. The rail bridge will be lifted to provide greater clearance. The aim of the Bayswater station redevelopment is not only to improve the infrastructure to facilitate the Ellenbrook, Forrestfield and Midland lines, but also to generate activity. A lot of planning is being undertaken by the City of Bayswater to redevelop that area and it has put forward its own structure plan for the area. We want to work with the City of Bayswater through the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority to pick up many of the ideas put forward by the City of Bayswater and have that redevelopment scheme. The Department of Communities, a big landowner in that area, is keen to do some revitalisation and refurbishment of its properties. We also want to assist landowners who want to develop. I think we will see not only a really good transport precinct and major hub where the Forrestfield–Airport Link will connect Bayswater together with Ellenbrook, but also there will be a lot of new activation supporting the old High Street, King William Street, working well with the community facilities owned and run by the City of Bayswater. We have had a very good relationship with the City of Bayswater. It has been very clear about wanting to be very involved in talking to the community about how the planning should look around this new station and this area and about looking at a core of activity, while allowing single residential zoning to continue, as was the case, without impacting on the heritage or the more historical parts of the area. We are very keen to facilitate that. I know our very good relationship with the City of Bayswater will continue in the future because we both want the

same thing. We want preservation of much of the amenity of the area, with the understanding that we can improve the local precinct by some really sound development and improved transport infrastructure into Bayswater.

This project will be delivered in three parts. We will do that because we want to capitalise and ensure we have value for money. Bayswater station will be redeveloped as part of the Forrestfield–Airport Link, so, of course, we will be also building Ellenbrook station. We will try to get value for money and reduce disruption. In any particular space, we will try to undertake all the work we need to so that we are not going backwards and forwards creating a lot of disruption and undermining value for money.

As I said, the forward works for the Bayswater station project will commence very soon. Approximately eight kilometres of Tonkin Highway will be rebuilt, including new bridges. Depending on the successful contractor, the Tonkin Highway corridor works up to Malaga will be done as part of that contract. We have brought forward the Tonkin Highway gaps work so that we can facilitate the Ellenbrook rail line and make sure we get value for money and a smart process. On the rest of the Ellenbrook rail line, pretty much the rail infrastructure and civil works from Malaga through to Ellenbrook will be part of the last contract.

The member for Bateman questioned the process. As I said, it is not unusual to bring in legislation before business cases are developed. Rail, unlike roads, needs enabling legislation, but even when building a billion-dollar road like NorthLink, we did not go through this process because it did not require specific parliamentary approval.

We have worked really hard with Infrastructure Australia. My outstanding concern, not for my transport projects because we have an established process and we are going through all of that, is that in the future, the IA process probably needs to be a little more streamlined and not cause so many months of work and cost millions of dollars of consultancy work. I again put on record that some of the federal government time frames given for environmental approvals were simply too long. The federal agencies do not have the resources to, first of all, meet their statutory time frames. As I said, there are three key parts: meeting statutory time frames, delivering in an appropriate time frame and making the right decisions. Unless we can have people on the ground in WA to physically see the affected areas, we will see, and we have seen, some bad decisions. This is not to diminish in any way the role of the environmental agencies or the level of environmental protection of our work. It is about understanding that if bad decisions are made, it will not help protect the environment in the longer term, because the confidence in the system is undermined. We will stay on the case of seeking more resources from the federal government agencies to help get our projects on the ground, get the jobs and deliver the infrastructure.

I could not be more excited and more proud to have brought this legislation into this place. I wish the bill well as it travels through the upper house. It is something that I have been absolutely passionate about from day one. It is a result of a lot of campaigning and a lot of work and, in government, millions of dollars' worth of work with hundreds of people working on it, throwing every resource we could to get this project done. We gave a commitment to the people in that corridor and there is no way we will let them down.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.