

BERKSHIRE ROAD–ROE HIGHWAY INTERSECTION

Grievance

MR N.W. MORTON (Forrestfield) [9.55 am]: I rise today to grieve to the Minister for Transport. Although this may not be the world's longest grievance, we should not let that diminish its significance to the people in my electorate. Of course, the grievance is about the intersection of Berkshire Road and Roe Highway in my electorate. I note the great things happening in and around my electorate with transport infrastructure—namely, the \$1 billion Gateway WA project, which is delivering major interchanges to intersections around the Forrestfield area. These interchanges include the upgrade that is underway at Tonkin and Roe Highways, which will greatly improve traffic flow in that part of the road network, as well as upgrades to Horrie Miller Drive and Tonkin Highway, Leach and Tonkin Highways, and several other major interchanges, which will all improve congestion, traffic flow and, of course, productivity for all road users.

I also take this opportunity to thank the minister for his recent visit to inspect the noise and amenity wall that is under construction in High Wycombe, which will be of great benefit to my constituents living in that part of my electorate. Can I also thank the minister for attending to “switch on”, if you like, the 40-kilometre-an-hour flashing lights at Dawson Park Primary School. These lights are a stark reminder to motorists to slow down in these school zones, which is, of course, another great outcome for my electorate.

However, today I wish to bring the minister's attention to the intersection at Roe Highway and Berkshire Road. I note that the Leader of the Opposition was recently trying to throw mud at me for not delivering on this intersection. I would like to remind those opposite that when they were in government, they did absolutely nothing about this intersection. However, members on this side did something—we committed \$15 million to upgrade this intersection by 2015. I wish to ask the minister here today where that project is at with the committed upgrade?

This is a very dangerous intersection; in fact, when we analyse Main Roads statistics, they show that there have been 172 crashes at this intersection over the last five years. This creates a major issue for road users within my electorate and, of course, for people passing through my electorate at that intersection. The issues arise due to the fact that one-half of Berkshire Road is un-signalised, which means that there is no safe control at this part of the intersection; it all relies on driver judgement. An added issue is that this is the industrial side of the intersection and, as such, a lot of truck movements are coming in and out of the uncontrolled aspect of the intersection, making it particularly unsafe for all road users.

This intersection is a major issue for the people living in my electorate, and swift remediation of the issues as outlined here today would be greatly appreciated by my constituents. If the minister could outline the process from here for the undertaking of this project, I can safely say that it would be well received by the people living in my electorate. I look forward to the minister's response. Thank you.

MR D.C. NALDER (Alfred Cove — Minister for Transport) [9.59 am]: It is acknowledged that the current intersection layout, which consists of two staggered T-junctions, is substandard and has a high crash rate. I recently had the opportunity to inspect the site with the member for Forrestfield.

In the five years to the end of 2013, I also acknowledge that 172 crashes had been reported. This location has been a crash black spot in need of upgrading for many years. I acknowledge the persistent efforts by the current member for Forrestfield, Nathan Morton, when campaigning before the last state election, in raising this intersection as a primary concern for his local community. As a direct result of the member's representations, the Liberal–National government allocated \$15 million to realign the T-junctions to create an improved four-way intersection under traffic signal control. It was intended that the works on this \$15 million improvement project would commence in the 2013–14 financial year and be completed in 2014–15.

Following further representation by the member, Main Roads was asked to examine what other options may be available to reduce the crash rate and improve efficiency on what is one of the state's major transport routes. As a result of investigation and planning, it is considered that all road users, including members of the local community who cross the highway every day to access shops, schools and services, would be best served by the construction of a full-grade separated interchange, with Roe Highway passing over Berkshire Road. The estimated cost of the interchange option is \$45 million. Given the benefits that this option offers, the state has decided to pursue this course instead of the less satisfactory four-way intersection. I have been in discussion with my federal counterparts seeking a joint funding approach to the interchange proposal. I am very hopeful of achieving a successful state–federal partnership approach to this project that will deliver a safer and more efficient transport solution for all road users and the Forrestfield community.

Mr N.W. Morton: Minister, are you saying that my constituents are looking at the possibility of a full upgrade of the intersection to an interchange rather than just the four-way signalised intersection?

MR D.C. NALDER: Yes, I am quietly optimistic that in the near future I will be able to assure the member that we will progress to a full separated junction, with Roe Highway passing underneath Berkshire Road.

I also acknowledge that the state has a federal government that it can engage and work with in a true partnership. Across Western Australia, our community is seeing the benefits of this new partnership approach to delivering vital transport infrastructure aimed at underpinning the productivity and strength of our economy. This partnership approach is seeing the delivery of the Swan Valley section of the \$844 million NorthLink WA project and the \$1 billion Gateway WA project, together with major upgrade works on Great Eastern Highway, Great Northern Highway and North West Coastal Highway.

I thank the member for Forrestfield for his grievance. I look forward to visiting his electorate in the near future—hopefully in the next week or two—to announce construction of the Roe Highway–Berkshire Road interchange.