

## HIGH STREET–STIRLING HIGHWAY INTERSECTION — UPGRADE

### *Grievance*

**MRS L.M. O'MALLEY (Bicton)** [9.28 am]: My grievance today is to the Minister for Transport. The \$118 million High Street–Stirling Highway intersection upgrade in Fremantle is a welcome infrastructure project that will increase safety and fix congestion on a 1.5 kilometre section of High Street between Carrington Street and Stirling Highway. The project began works in February this year and construction is now well underway. The upgrade features a new roundabout at the intersection of High Street and Stirling Highway; a widened median strip on High Street to separate traffic lanes and maximise tree preservation; a single-lane, one-way service road for residents on the north side of High Street; and two new pedestrian underpasses. The new roundabout has been designed to include bypass lanes that will separate local traffic from traffic going to and from Fremantle port, or locations north of the river.

For commuters from my electorate of Bicton and beyond, this project will improve traffic flow, increase road safety and reduce travel times. The jointly funded state and federal project will deliver a safer and more efficient local commute for drivers, cyclists and pedestrians. The works will create some 700 new jobs. Another major benefit for our community will be improved parking and safety at Frank Gibson Park for the Fremantle Netball Association. I was so proud to see the completion of the McGowan Labor government's \$1.8 million upgrade to Gibson Park last year. The upgrade is greatly appreciated by the 10 000-plus players and supporters who visit the facility weekly during the netball season. However, far too many of them park opposite the courts and scramble across High Street on game days, which is another major reason that this project is very important. For the constituents of the electorate of Bicton, one of the major benefits will be the two pedestrian underpasses; one at the junction of Forrest Street and Stirling Highway and the other at the junction of Montreal Street and High Street. The two pedestrian underpasses will enable safe pedestrian movement north–south across High Street and east–west across Stirling Highway, facilitating access to Booyeembara Park, Royal Fremantle Golf Club, Fremantle Netball Association at Frank Gibson Park, East Fremantle Primary School and homes and businesses, and create more connected communities.

Main Roads has worked hard to incorporate the priorities identified by the local community into the High Street upgrade project, including the retention of around 70 per cent of established trees in the area and a comprehensive revegetation and landscaping strategy. I understand that the project will feature considerable noise walls, including along Stirling Highway to the extent of the project's north boundary on both sides of Forrest Street.

The community recognises the benefits of the upgrade and acknowledges and understands that disruption is part of the process. However, my office has been contacted by many residents in Forrest Street, particularly those who live along the cul-de-sac adjacent to Stirling Highway, who have asked that more be done to mitigate noise and visual impacts of the upgrade, which have been made worse by the temporary realignment of Stirling Highway to facilitate construction. This has resulted in a much larger than anticipated removal of trees and foliage at the end of the cul-de-sac and to its immediate south. This loss of natural screening, along with the temporary increased closeness of Stirling Highway to the Forrest Street cul-de-sac due to the road realignment, has left the residents feeling exposed and vulnerable. Additionally, Forrest Street residents with children attending East Fremantle Primary School, along with principal Jenni Chittick, have communicated their concern about the loss of the supervised crossing point, which was previously located at the Forrest Street and Stirling Highway junction, for the duration of the works. I know that Main Roads conducted an extensive community consultation process prior to works beginning on the project, and I commend it for its efforts. I understand, however, that as works have begun, there have been additional unintended and urgent issues for local residents. Although I have received a large array of feedback from residents, the overwhelming response is that with the additional clearing of vegetation, most notably at the end of Forrest Street, they now feel exposed to noise, visual and traffic pollution. Although the project includes a revegetation plan, it is understandable that it may take a long time for vegetation to grow to such a point as to provide a visual and natural screen to Stirling Highway similar to the one that previously existed. The change to the vegetation makes Stirling Highway far more visible to residents. According to my notes, one Forrest Street resident writes —

Where our street used to finish in the visually pleasing cul-de-sac, it now opens directly onto Stirling Highway as we have lost our entire visual screen of large trees and shrubs that used to ameliorate the noise levels and provide a visual and psychological screen from having to view the traffic.

According to my notes, another resident writes —

We wish to ensure there is adequate screening at the end of our street, and that such screening is aesthetically pleasing.

On behalf of the residents who have contacted me, I respectfully ask that the minister considers investigating the implementation of further noise-mitigation strategies for the end of Forrest Street along to Marmion Street and that traffic management is strengthened to provide safer crossing strategies at Stirling Highway before and after school. I will leave the final word to a resident of Montreal Street who, according to my notes, writes —

We are a strong connected community. The road concept itself is very positive. It seems a shame to spoil good planning with this small oversight.

**MS R. SAFFIOTI (West Swan — Minister for Transport)** [9.34 am]: I thank the member for Bicton for her grievance. I should no longer be surprised by how connected the member for Bicton is with her local community and how well she knows local issues and continually communicates with the Bicton community. To be honest, she is a very strong, proactive and positive advocate for her local community, which is what communities need in a local member. The member for Bicton works with her community to try to improve outcomes, and I congratulate her on her efforts, which, of course, give me more work, but that is a good thing.

Of course, the High Street upgrade from Carrington Street to Stirling Highway is part of the government's record infrastructure package. The project will upgrade High Street between Carrington Street and Stirling Highway to a four-lane dual carriageway. As the member outlined, the upgrade includes: a new roundabout at the intersection of High Street and Stirling Highway; underpasses at the intersections of High Street and Forrest Street, and High Street and Montreal Street to improve pedestrian and cycling connectivity; a single lane, one-way service road for residents on the north side of High Street; and wide medians to separate traffic lanes. Another significant benefit of the upgrade will be the improved safety of the netball courts with improved parking around the courts. We have all experienced travelling along High Street and seeing people running across those lanes of traffic trying to access the netball courts. That will be a massive benefit.

As with all projects, issues arise and we have to manage those issues whether they be in the construction phase or in the maintenance of the infrastructure over many years. The member for Bicton has been contacted by a number of residents of Forrest Street who have expressed their concerns about the noise and visual amenity impact of the High Street upgrade on their homes. As the member outlined, non-native vegetation was removed from land between Forrest Street and Stirling Highway to construct a pedestrian underpass and accommodate a temporary realignment of Stirling Highway during construction, and this has removed the visual buffer between the cul-de-sac and the highway. The residents have reported that the removal of this vegetation has impacted their quality of life through increased road and construction noise and the loss of a visual screen between Forrest Street and the highway. Main Roads acknowledges that the removal of vegetation has had a negative impact on residential amenity and it has been working on some proposals, which we hope to work through with the member in consultation with the community, about how can reduce that visual and noise impact. The proposal is to construct substantial screen walls where the vegetation has been cleared. There will be consultation on the type of screen walls that will be constructed to make sure that the community is satisfied with the construction material and their placement. We will be working with the member for Bicton to determine how we do that. As I said, there will be discussion about how the walls will be constructed and a revegetation program. We acknowledge that the revegetation program will take a while so we really want to put those screen walls in place as soon as possible to reduce the negative impact on local residents.

Significant concerns have been raised about the loss of a traffic guard. As I understand, the pedestrian crossings were temporarily closed in order to undertake construction works. Community representatives, with whom the member for Bicton has met, want better access for pedestrians crossing the highway. We will look at providing traffic controllers on school days to assist people to use the crossing in both the morning and in the afternoon. We are investigating that option while construction takes place and until the underpass has been built.

I thank the member for raising these issues and the concerns of her community. We are very keen to move to the next stage, working with the member, to make sure that we can provide screening and the safe passage for schoolchildren in the morning and afternoon.