

ELLENBROOK RAIL LINE

203. Ms J.J. SHAW to the Premier:

I have framed my question in a way that is understandable! I refer to the McGowan Labor government's election commitment to deliver the Metronet Morley–Ellenbrook railway line.

- (1) Can the Premier update the house on the McGowan Labor government's delivery of this world-class public transport project, which the former Liberal–National government failed to deliver in over eight years in office?
- (2) Can the Premier outline to the house how this rail line will create significant benefits and opportunities for people living in Perth's north-east?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

I thank the member for Swan Hills for the question.

- (1)–(2) Of course, the Morley–Ellenbrook rail line has had a long and chequered history. Members might recall that the Liberal–National government, upon its election in 2008, was fully committed to it. It said it was going to build it and committed to it before the 2008 state election. What happened then? Absolutely nothing. It committed to it again before the 2013 election saying, “It slipped off the agenda; we’ll do it then” referring to the 2013–2017 term. What happened then? It did absolutely nothing. Then it committed to the Metro Area Express light rail project to Mirrabooka and a whole range of people invested, bought land and so forth on the basis that they were going to build around this light-rail project. What happened then? It did absolutely nothing.

When we arrived in office, we had to start from scratch because there were not even any drawings for the Morley–Ellenbrook line. The great news is this: the Minister for Transport, Rita Saffioti, has driven this project. The local members—the Minister for Health, the member for Swan Hills and the federal member for Perth—and I went out there on Sunday. The project is going ahead in leaps and bounds. There is a huge amount of work going on—huge engineering and construction work and a range of train stations being built. One of the last things you do when you build a rail line, strangely enough, is lay the track! We are now in the process of laying the track. We were there to have a look at the ballast and sleepers for 1.5 kilometres of the 21-kilometre rail line between Bayswater, Morley and Ellenbrook. This project will be the longest rail line since the Mandurah rail line was built by the last Labor government. It will halve the commuting time and mean that people in those rapidly growing suburbs—the hundreds of thousands of people in that part of Western Australia—will have access to a rail line.

What we have done, which I think is really important, is build massive and major infrastructure ahead of population growth to meet the needs of the population in the future. I compare and contrast that with what is going on in Sydney and Melbourne. In Sydney, a rail line is being built to the new airport in Badgerys Creek. That rail line will cost around \$20 billion and it is the same distance as this one. It is roughly 20 times the cost per kilometre. There is another up to Chatswood, I think it is, which is nine kilometres or so. Again, it is 10 to 20 times the cost per kilometre of ours. The one in Melbourne is between 20 and 30 times the cost per kilometre of ours. That is because they are building them after the population is in place and after they are all built out, and they have to do all sorts of engineering, construction, tunnelling and so forth. We are building these important projects to meet the needs of the future urban growth of this state and this city and we are doing it much, much, much more affordably than they are in other states in Australia, by a factor of up to 20 times less than what it is over there.

This is terrific news for the state. I thank all the members involved. I thank the commonwealth for its contribution and I thank the Minister for Transport for the great work. The Ellenbrook railway is underway. It is being built and we are very hopeful we will open it during the course of next year.