

RAIL CROSSINGS — SAFETY

Motion

MS M.J. DAVIES (Central Wheatbelt — Leader of the Opposition) [4.03 pm]: I move —

That this house calls upon the state government to invest in initiatives to increase rail safety at all passive rail crossings across Western Australia and ensure adequate advocacy to the federal government is being made to improve this critical issue across Australia.

I rise today to speak to an issue that I believe most, if not all, members in this place will be supportive of. I know that many of the debates in this place can be robust, even adversarial, but that is not the approach that the opposition or myself, as the member for Central Wheatbelt, will be taking on this matter because I think it is something that every member would be supportive of. It is an issue that has been subject to parliamentary debate around the nation. It has been debated in this chamber in previous Parliaments going back over 20 years. It has been the subject of committee inquiries and it has been the subject of petitions and many, many media articles. It is an issue that, for some families, has been the focus of a 20-year campaign to bring about change.

For 20 years, three wheatbelt families have mourned the loss of their loved ones after their lives were cut short in a horrific accident. Christian Jensen, Jess Broad and Hilary Smith were killed when their Toyota ute collided with a fully loaded 28-wagon grain train on 8 July 2000. They were travelling along Yarramony Road to a twenty-first birthday party at the Jennacubbine Tavern. A coronial inquiry determined that no drugs or alcohol were involved and that speed was not a factor in the accident. They simply just did not see the train coming and there was no warning or signage at the crossing to alert them to the train's proximity. Those three young people lost their lives that night. The life of the train driver involved was also changed forever. After the accident, he said that the train was not going overly fast, from his recollection, and that it was likely that they had mistook his approaching train as one of the tractors or vehicles that were out in the paddock at that time. As someone who spends a bit of time driving through that area and in regional Western Australia, I can attest that when it is seeding or harvest time and there are vehicles out in the paddocks, it is hard to determine proximity and movement, certainly a train with only a front light. I have been in circumstances in which I have come across something very startling. Everybody would have stories of near misses, if they drive regularly in regional Western Australia.

Unfortunately, that incident was not isolated and, very tragically, another person had been killed at a crossing very close by, seven years before, on a family farm—Amanda Dempster. Amanda's family know all too well the pain that these other three families have lived with for 20 years, after Amanda lost her life in a rail collision. Interstate, there are further sobering examples of cars and trucks colliding with trains at all types of crossings. In New South Wales, in January 2001, five people were killed near Gerogery. A driver was killed on 25 May 2006 in Lismore, Victoria. On 27 November 2008, two people were killed near Cardwell in Queensland. On 23 March 2009, in my electorate, a school bus was destroyed in a level crossing incident at Moorine Rock. Thankfully, no injuries or deaths occurred in that particular incident. Most recently, in February this year, two young people lost their lives near Young in New South Wales.

Although it is fair to say that these accidents and incidents are reasonably rare, they are terrible and traumatic for not only the families who are left behind, but also the communities, the first responders and the people who are involved with the train. They leave an indelible mark on so many people's lives. I think we would all agree that the loss of even one life is too much when we are discussing road safety. I know that every member of Parliament discusses road safety on a regular basis in their electorates and with their communities. It is with this in mind and in that context that I raise this matter in Parliament today. I do it because I received a letter earlier in the year from Ms Lara Jensen. She is the sister of Christian Jensen, who so tragically lost his life in 2000 at the Yarramony crossing close to Jennacubbine. She was writing on behalf of seven families—the three who were impacted in that particular incident and others who had all lost family members at passive level crossings in regional Western Australia and in New South Wales. It is quite a long letter. She has obviously been dealing with this for a long time, but there is a section of it I will read into *Hansard*. She is very eloquent in the way that she advocates on behalf of herself and these families. She has been doing it for a long time, so members can sense the passion that comes through when she is making the case for change. It states —

My brother Christian Jensen and his two friends Jess Broad and Hilary Smith were killed at the Yarramony level crossing near Jennacubbine in the Northam Shire on July 8, 2000. Lack of signage and rumble strips as well as poor train lighting and overgrown vegetation all contributed to the triple fatality. My brother was an experienced, careful, and conscientious bush driver who was not speeding or under the influence of alcohol or drugs—he and his two friends simply did not see that train.

...

... tragically, just seven years prior and only 20km away in the WA farming locality of Grass Valley, —

Also in the Shire of Northam —

the Dempster family lost their daughter Amanda when she was hit by the Prospector Train bound for Kalgoorlie at a passive level crossing on the family farm. This horrific tragedy followed a 20-year battle with Westrail by the Dempster family to install flashing lights at the railway crossing. Three months after Amanda's death, flashing lights were installed at the crossing where she was killed—much too little, much too late.

... our families are all both utterly disappointed and completely frustrated that in the 21 years that have surpassed since my brother and his friends were killed, and the 28 years since Amanda Dempster lost her life—there has been only minimal progress made to improve lighting on trains and signage at level crossings despite the recommendations of three State Coroners (NSW, WA, and Victoria) over several decades.

For members' benefit, this issue has been well canvassed in Parliaments around the nation, yet there has been little progress to address the issues we know exist. As members could surmise from the time line that I am talking about, governments of both persuasions have been in power in all those Parliaments over the period since Amanda Dempster lost her life; so, collectively, I would say that we, in the parliamentary sense, and those who have had the opportunity to make a difference much earlier than now, have let these families down.

When Jess wrote to me earlier this year, I gave her the undertaking that we would support the renewed efforts of the families to work with governments both at a state and federal level for positive change. Jess points out in her letter that some of the issues they would like to see addressed have, in fact, been around since 1968.

Following a spate of serious crashes at railway level crossings in that period, a state government report entitled *Report on railway crossing protection in Western Australia* was released, which recommended that all engines and guard vans be fitted with rotating beacons. It was never actioned and 53 years on freight trains remain the largest, most dangerous and poorly lit vehicles we have on land. The installation of crossing lights, which are the lights that are located at the bottom of the train that illuminate opposite sides of the track, are the only mandatory change that has been introduced to train illumination in WA in more than five decades. That, to me, particularly as someone who lives in a community in which freight goes back and forwards on the main line, in and out of the state, is remarkable given that significant freight is transported all around our state. There are other networks, including our grain network, on which that has an impact. These crossings are not used frequently. We are not talking about crossings like those in the Perth metropolitan area that see huge numbers of vehicles every day and that are typically active and protected. Therefore, on that basis, it is very difficult sometimes to make the case, from a Treasury perspective, to find the funds to change or upgrade those passive crossings. But to Lara and the families' great credit, they have continued to say that we need to look beyond the financial implications and look to how we can work collaboratively with industry and all tiers of government to try to make some positive change.

The State Coroner in 2001, Mr Alastair Hope, called for immediate action to install some form of external auxiliary lighting on locomotives, which would provide an external warning to motor vehicle drivers and would be an addition, not an alternative, to the ditch lighting that we have currently. Those measures were never implemented. That was after the coronial inquiry into the death of Christian, Jess and Hillary.

Also, the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Transport and Regional Services conducted an inquiry in 2003—again, after this incident and a number of others around the nation. It released a report in 2004 that recommended all locomotives should be fitted with rotating beacon lights to help to make them more visible and reduce level crossing incidents. The federal government at the time responded to all the recommendations but said that it did not support that particular recommendation. Again, it came back to cost. It said it would not pursue that course of action without a cost-benefit analysis and, as far as I am aware, no subsequent or further action was taken.

The Australian Rail Track Corporation points out that there are 23 500 railway level crossings in Australia. I am not talking about just Western Australia, but across the nation. Twenty-one per cent of them are active. By "active", I mean that they have boom gates or flashing lights to alert people to when a train is approaching. The remaining 79 per cent are passive and a vast majority of them are marked with a Stop or Give Way sign, denoting that there is a railway crossing and that people need to pay attention. The ARTC statistics show that—I could not quite tell whether this was just on its rail network because it does not cover the entire nation—there are around 1 000 near hits between vehicles and trains at level crossings annually. Think about how big these trains are—it takes an enormous amount of time for them to stop when the emergency brake is hit. It takes about two kilometres for a fully laden freight train to stop once the emergency brake has been hit. The driver simply has no option to take any other effective action when someone in a light vehicle or truck does not see the train, goes over a crossing or is stuck on a crossing. That is why we see these near misses and deaths.

It sounds ridiculous that someone could not see something as enormous as a train, but perhaps I can explain just how easy it is. I mentioned that at harvest time and seeding both at dark or after dusk—a number of these incidents occur during the day—there are headers and vehicles out in the paddocks. When driving at night in the wheatbelt in particular—that is probably the best experience that I can explain—there will be lights dotted all over the place,

so another travelling light may go unnoticed. If we add that to the light on the front of a locomotive, it is easy to understand how some people would miss it.

Also I am the first to admit that at passive crossings—it might not be the case with the Yarramony Road crossing—there is a degree of, probably, complacency in some areas. If someone goes over these passive crossings on a regular basis and they are close to home—we know that most accidents occur close to home whether people are on the road or crossing a railway line—there is a combination of awareness, but also the fact that quite clearly, if there is not something alerting people to an approaching train, the outcome can be enormously tragic. If it is dark—there is no street lighting on a vast majority of these roads—you can quite often be travelling parallel to a fully laden train and not even know. That is the fact of it, because they are not required to have lighting down the carriages. They have reflective strips. I do not know whether anybody has seen them, but I will use CBH's grain bins as an example. They are typically pretty dusty and dirty and most of them, unfortunately, have graffiti all over them. You are very unlikely to see the reflective strips behind the locomotive unless there is something shining on them. One argument of this group is that rail carriages should have permanent lighting strips much like we see on trucks on the roads so that the entire train can be seen as it is moving through the environment.

I received an email to my office in September, which was one of a number I received when Lara and others started to advocate on this matter again. This email came from a gentleman in Mandurah. He was writing in response to a letter that he had seen in *The West Australian*. He wrote —

Jo Jackson King's letter ... regarding poor freight-train lighting in rural areas really hit home for me. I can understand how her mother didn't see the train until it was close and a serious accident resulted.

I have travelled many miles through rural WA in my work for an insurance company. I have experienced how dangerous freight trains can be at unlit level crossings. Reflective strips along rolling stock are ineffective unless wagons are clean (I never saw clean wagons) and your headlights are directed right at them; that was how I nearly came to grief twice, once in heavy rain and once in heavy fog. I was just metres away when I realised a train was even ahead.

I can't work out why freight trains aren't lit up like road trains to give motorists half a chance of seeing them, especially because they are more than a kilometre long. Rail companies need to act immediately to address this serious safety issue before more people are needlessly killed. I know the technology exists now to do so, the road train industry is proof of that.

Merrilea Broad, who is Jess Broad's mum, wrote to *The West Australian* on 1 September. I want to share that with members. She is a parent who has been living with loss for so long. She wrote —

My daughter Jess Broad was killed in an accident along with Christian Jensen and Hilary Smith at an unlit crossing near Jennacubbine on the July 8, 2000.

Following the accident, all three families fought hard for improved train lighting and the bolstering of safety measures at all passive level crossings.

The culmination of this hard-fought battle led to my invitation to Canberra in 2003 to put forward a submission to the Standing Committee for Transport and Regional Services for the report on train illumination.

The recommendations from the standing committee report were passed in Federal Parliament in 2004 and were the catalyst for the Rail Safety National Law which all States now adhere to. Despite the enactment of the Rail Safety National Law in every State from 2012 to 2015, no legislation has been introduced to improve train lighting or ensure safety improvements are made to passive level crossings around Australia.

Peter Mackin's letter (21/8) illustrates the deep and permanent impact on families following these horrific accidents. It is totally unacceptable that 55 years on (from his family's loss), passive level crossings still lack the essential basics and train lighting remains inadequate because government agencies and rail companies have done little to address safety concerns spanning decades.

Our lives are worth the negligible costs of rotating beacons on locomotives and lights on wagons that should be mandatory under the Rail Safety National Law.

If these highly profitable rail companies had made improvements 55 years ago with the simple technology available, our children would still be here today.

Our lives do matter, and so do the lives of train drivers. Rail companies are falling well short of their duty of care to their own employees as well as the general public. I am fed up with the complacency and the bureaucratic rhetoric and want positive action to make these essential changes mandatory as soon as possible.

That is from Merrilea Broad and she is in Leonora. As I said before, a passive rail crossing is marked only with a Stop or a Give Way sign, and it relies on the motorist detecting the approach or presence of a train by direct

observation. A majority of these passive crossings are in regional WA, and the geographic isolation and those very low volumes of traffic that I have spoken about means that they are rarely considered appropriate for safety upgrades on a cost–benefit analysis.

The families behind the campaign, many of whom are watching online today, have asked for three simple yet effective changes to improve safety at passive rail crossings and safety in general. The first is that flashing amber lights be installed across the front of train roofs to increase visibility and LED lights be installed on the side of carriages so that the entire length of the train is illuminated. The second is the provision of ultra high frequency—UHF—radiocommunications on channel 40 to trains so that train drivers can alert truck drivers of their arrival or potential dangers as they are travelling along. Thirdly, they are calling for the installation of solar-powered flashing red lights activated by a low-powered, dedicated frequency radio transmitter with a one-kilometre range on top of the level crossing warning posts that automatically flash when a train is within one kilometre of a passive crossing. When we first started talking about it, they said that they wanted the range to be five kilometres. On further consideration and discussion, they decided that a range of five kilometres would mean that people might have to wait at a passive crossing for up to four minutes, which might make people quite agitated and mean that they shoot over the crossing, which would not be the outcome that the families want. Therefore, we are asking for a five-kilometre range with one kilometre for activation. The member for Moore is telling me that the radio transmitter would have a five-kilometre range but would start flashing within one kilometre. I thank him for that clarification.

It is worth noting—maybe the Minister for Transport would be able to illuminate us on this—the difference between road and rail safety requirements. Trucks are required to have conspicuity, I think it is called, which means that people can see the full outline of the truck while it is travelling at night as it has lighting requirements that are regulated.

Dr D.J. Honey: In every plane, yes.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: People can see it in every dimension; that is right, member for Cottesloe. This is not required. I can perhaps understand why—the trains are on a set track, while trucks are moving and interacting more regularly—but I certainly think that with the number of accidents that we are talking about, it would be worth going down this pathway, for a reasonably small cost, I would think.

Lara has been no slouch in her advocacy and in raising this matter with key stakeholders. She has written to the federal leader of the Nationals and the appropriate federal minister, Hon Barnaby Joyce, and acknowledges that this requires leadership at a federal level, as well. She is certainly continuing to make that advocacy, as are we.

Dr D.J. Honey: Member, just a second on that visibility all the way along, if you don't mind an interjection. In my early career, when I was a forensic scientist, I was at Port Hedland and attended an accident. Two workers who were coming out of Port Hedland drove straight into the side of an ore train. They were wide awake, no alcohol, it was the start of their day, but it was early dusk. They clearly just did not see the train and drove straight into the side of it, and a middle-aged man and a young guy aged about 19 were killed.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: It is tragic.

Dr D.J. Honey: It is tragic. I think that visibility all the way along is important.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: All the way along the lines. Lara has raised this with Arc Infrastructure and Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd, because their rail carriages are not lit, and a number of other companies, as well. We in the opposition have done the same. We have raised it with key stakeholders and also directly with our federal colleagues, and we will continue to do so, because I think it will require collaboration between industry and government to come to some sort of solution.

To add our support, at our recent state conference, the Nationals WA unanimously agreed to those three key issues being a part of our policy platform. I am the member for the area from which this issue has originated, and this correspondence has come through me and the member for Moore. The unanimous support of our party has given me confidence that we have its backing to pursue this and to escalate it through our policy networks to our federal colleagues in another avenue, as well.

Today, we are asking the state government for its assistance in this very important matter. These families have waited so long for action. Amanda Dempster's family has waited 28 years, but others have been affected for much longer. I would very much like to think that this can be the starting point for a positive discussion on how we can all work together to address these concerns. As I said earlier, if we look at the time line of the period when these incidents have occurred, we see that governments of both persuasions have had the opportunity and have not acted. This has now been raised again by the families. It was triggered because a couple in New South Wales were recently killed, and Lara's family reached out to their family and spoke with them and said that this is something that we need to address now at a national level, but with our state governments and the federal government working together. We understand that there are roles for the federal government and we understand that there will be a role for industry, and that is why we will continue to advocate with those stakeholders, as well.

We understand that one of the impediments of upgrading rail crossings is the cost of doing so. I do not think it needs to be done overnight, but it requires a plan and a steady approach to make those improvements over time so that these families have some certainty. At this point, communities or individual families have to lobby for safer passive crossings, either on their properties or in their community, on a case-by-case basis or when a number of fatalities occur at a crossing, which then triggers a safety response. We would all agree that that is not the right way to go about it.

To the Minister for Transport, this is very much an opportunity for us all to see this as a first step towards addressing a historical wrong. Lara and the families that have been left behind have lived with this pain for over 20 years. There has to be a way that we can work with the state government, industry and the commonwealth to address these matters so that we are not back here in another 20 years having the same conversation. I raise this issue in the great hope that these families' pleas for assistance do not fall on deaf ears. I will continue to do my bit to advocate to our federal colleagues. I will do the same with those stakeholders on whom this will directly impact, with their above-rail and below-rail infrastructure. It will remain on the opposition's agenda until we see some action.

I do not think we need a further inquiry. I have a file full of outcomes from here in Western Australia and New South Wales, Victoria and the commonwealth. There is a whole raft of evidence that says some fairly simple things can be done to improve safety. The one that I could not find and which I know exists is a trial that was done sometime in the 2000s about strobe lighting. I think I was working in the office of Hon Max Trenorden, the local member and Leader of the National Party at the time. An incident had occurred in the Shire of Northam, in his electorate. A trial was carried out that involved putting a strobe light on the front of a train to see whether a moving light on the front of a train would make a difference. To my knowledge, nothing came of that. I could not find the outcome of that inquiry. As I said, there have been parliamentary committees and inquiries and coronial inquiries, and evidence has been presented. I feel that there is enough evidence for us to say these are sensible solutions that we can work towards, and some funding just needs to be applied. In a perfect world, we would see a fund created to upgrade passive crossings, and also to assist industry to transition to improve safety, with investment from both the state and federal governments and industry. In a perfect world, we would see changes to the regulatory regime that sends a very strong message to industry, not only for the safety of road users but also its own workforce, that we need to see lighting on not only locos, but also carriages. In a perfect world, everyone would cooperate to make this happen. I know that we do not live in a perfect world, but I hope we have an opportunity to try to find a way to work together so that these families are the last ones who have to suffer the pain that they have and nobody else has to experience the grief that they have carried.

I repeat the request that Lara and the group have made towards what they see as a solution. I am very open-minded; if other things can be added or if there is a better way of doing it, I think they would welcome that engagement. Their three priorities are: firstly, flashing amber lights across the front of train roofs be installed to increase visibility and LED lights be installed on the side of carriages so the entire train is illuminated; secondly, UHF radiocommunications systems be available on trains so that train drivers may alert truck drivers of their arrival or other potential dangers on the track; and, thirdly, solar-powered flashing red lights be installed, which are automatically activated by a lower powered dedicated frequency radio transmitter within a five-kilometre range on top of level crossing warning posts when a train is within one kilometre of a passive crossing.

I thank the minister in advance for her consideration of this very important matter. I know that road and rail safety has been one of her priorities since she has had the portfolio. I genuinely look forward to having a discussion about this with her and the community members who have raised this with us.

MS R. SAFFIOTI (West Swan — Minister for Transport) [4.35 pm]: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the points she raised during her speech on road and rail safety. Many families have been impacted by deaths and tragic accidents on roads. I do not want to dwell on that too much because of what has recently happened to my family. I do want to acknowledge the deaths and impact this would have had on those families in the wheatbelt—the Jensen family, the Smith family, the Broad family and the Dempster family. I am sorry; I did not think I would get so upset.

I can understand the emotional toll that deaths have on families, particularly when young people are involved. We have all either experienced it or know people who have experienced it. It is a tragedy. I can understand the pain that these families have experienced over the past 20 to 25 years. No-one can ever replace the sons, daughters, brothers and sisters who are lost on our roads. It is something that we should try to eliminate where we can. As I said, many families have experienced it. It is an absolute tragedy that victims' parents and families will never get over. We understand the emotional toll that it has on not only their direct families, but also the extended families and the communities in which they live. As I said, we have felt it personally over the last few weeks. I know that many families across regional WA and in the suburbs have experienced enormous pain. I want to acknowledge the impact and the tragedy that many of these families would have felt. I apologise for getting upset; it is still a bit raw for me, but it is also very raw for those families. I acknowledge the pain that they have gone through.

Going forward, we are looking at the issue of rail safety. I thank the Leader of the Opposition for raising this issue. I again want to acknowledge the Jensen, Smith, Broad and Dempster families. I was watching TV on Sunday, which I do not normally do. I came across *Landline*, which showed the story. I saw the story on Sunday. I saw Laurie Jensen, I think, and the beautiful tribute he continues to pay to his daughter. I saw that program on Sunday, and again thought that maybe we could all do better. I acknowledge that.

As we know, railcars, rail carriages and cars do not mix. Unfortunately, people take their lives on our rail tracks and accidents occur throughout the state. Pain and suffering is experienced by train drivers as a result. I know many of them. We have seen some very tragic deaths across the urban network in particular. The pain extends to everybody. When we can, we try to reduce the interaction of trains and the public in a sense—pedestrians and also cars. There is an enormous number of level crossings across regional WA. There are 3 000 level crossings in WA, 1 327 railway crossings on public roads on the government rail network, including 491 actively patrolled level crossings, which can be broken down into 161 active crossings with boom barriers and 330 active crossings with flashing lights. There are a number of railway crossings across the state. Of course, when we can, we install flashing lights and boom gates. The real issue, of course, is with passive level crossings. We understand that there is an enormous number of passive level crossings across the state.

On the issues that were put forward, I want to acknowledge that there have been a number of deaths, including recently in New South Wales, which I think triggered the more recent comments. There is a national rail safety body. In response to some of the comments already made, I understand that the federal transport minister, Barnaby Joyce, has said that the federal government will be looking at this issue.

I have the same notes and comments that ministers before me would have had about the cost of lighting trains and some of the issues involved in rolling out these things, but I will take up the issue of the lighting of trains. There are some discrepancies or issues between how we light up our trucks and our trains. I think it was a fair enough question, to which we need better answers on how visible our trains can be in regional WA, particularly the freight trains and particularly when there is not much else happening out there. It was a fair question about how we could improve the lighting of trains so that we can see them coming. As with everything else, these things do not happen overnight, particularly when we want to improve safety. We have seen that with the regional road safety program, which is being rolled out. We might be able to create a new program. I do not like to use the term “grandfathering”, but perhaps we could have a program to make sure that all new trains and trains across the network have improved lighting. That is something I will take up. As I said, my notes would say what many notes have said before—that the cost would be significant—but I do think there is a question to be asked about the discrepancy between how trucks are lit up on our roads compared with trains. I think that is a fair question. I have not delved into it a lot, but it is something that I will ask both my agencies and, moreover, the federal safety agencies and the federal minister.

The other question was about the ultra high frequency band. Improving communications between truck and train drivers is something that I will also follow up, because, again, it was a fair question about how we can improve communication between the users of our roads and rail lines.

As I have said, there are national standards. The Rail Industry Safety and Standards Board specifies requirements for the colour and lights at the front of trains and the delineators along the sides of trains. Rolling stock is fitted with warning horns to warn of their presence. This is supplemented by flashing white lights at the front of trains. That is the national standard. However, I do understand the push for much better lighting and more visible trains. I understand that trains might have mud on them or might not have been cleaned recently, so some of those things might not be as clear. I will follow up those issues.

On the issue of upgrading existing crossings, my notes outline that since 2010, there has been a level crossing protection funding agreement between Main Roads Western Australia and Arc Infrastructure to upgrade and improve level crossings. Since 2010, the funding agreement has resulted in 63 level crossings being upgraded to active control, with the installation of boom gates at a further 45 level crossings. Arc Infrastructure has advised that 25 level crossings have been upgraded or removed this year. There is a continuing program in partnership between Main Roads and Arc to improve existing level crossings and install boom gates. That is happening at the moment.

We are very keen to work with the commonwealth, including the Office of the National Rail Safety Regulator, to identify the measures we can use to improve rail safety. I will take up the lighting and UHF questions with the federal national safety agencies and the federal minister, because it will have to be a national approach. We will seek to understand what is required now and what improvements can happen over time. No-one expects everything to change overnight with massive programs like this, but where we can make some improvements, where we can improve visibility and where we can save someone’s life, it is imperative that we look at those things. There was a request for solar panels to be installed on top of Stop signs to provide warning bells when trains are within a kilometre of a crossing. We will have a look at that. That may involve a partnership. We might be able to improve some of the passive crossings as well over time. There is an existing program, and we will look at whatever else we can do to try to improve that. I thank the member for raising this issue.

I did not set out to get as upset as I did, but it is a real issue. When your child goes to a twenty-first birthday party, you want them to come home. We particularly do not want to see road safety issues involving children—where parents have to say goodbye to their children. We are doing all we can on road safety. As members know, we are rolling out road safety programs worth over \$250 million across the state. The level crossing removal project is, again, a lot about improving the safety of level crossings in the metropolitan area, where there are thousands of interactions a day. There have been, and continue to be, a lot of near misses, particularly when thousands of cars cross level crossings per day. We have removed the level crossings on Moore Street, Caledonian Avenue, and Denny Avenue in Kelmscott, and we have funded another six level crossing removals throughout the Armadale and Cannington lines. From my perspective, we want to remove level crossings throughout the metropolitan area so that we can stop those incidents from happening, but of course in regional WA, we cannot separate road and rail all the time. We are doing some projects, together with the mining companies, through Port Hedland, again because of some safety issues with all the cars and trucks in the Port Hedland town site. Across regional and rural WA, there is not a lot of interaction with trains, but we want the trains to be visible and we want to make sure that people can stay safe. As I said, we want our kids and our brothers and sisters to come home after they have been out. I thank the member for raising these issues, which I will follow up with the federal minister and the federal safety authorities.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Mr D.R. Michael**.