

**MIDLAND PUBLIC HOSPITAL — PUBLIC TRANSPORT**

*Grievance*

**MR F.A. ALBAN (Swan Hills)** [9.23 am]: I raise a grievance on public transport access for my electorate of Swan Hills for the St John of God Midland Public Hospital, which opened last year. Positively, since the Liberal–National government was elected in 2008, we have seen Transperth bus services to the area of Ellenbrook—I am speaking broadly and including the nearby suburbs of The Vines and Aveley—increase by approximately 180 per cent. We have seen newer buses more frequently along more routes. I should note that these buses include a connecting service to Bassendean train station on the Midland line of the Transperth rail network. However, these services are often hampered by congestion on Lord Street. In November 2015, this government opened the St John of God Midland Public Hospital—an investment of more than \$360 million in the east metropolitan region’s health services that delivers significant services to those residents living in and near Ellenbrook. I understand that the buses now run between the Midland train station and the new hospital every 15 minutes, leaving the problem of how to efficiently move people from Ellenbrook to the Midland train network. The advent of this investment has accentuated the deficiencies facing a vast proportion of our growing north eastern population. For the new hospital to be of maximum benefit to this population, road and rail access is critical. Again, I acknowledge that we have seen significant investment in our state’s road infrastructure throughout the region that directly benefits in both time and safety those in and around the hub of Ellenbrook. Gnangara Road’s upgrades are progressing and the intersection of Lord Street and Reid Highway has been upgraded and completed.

Since being elected in 2008, I have seen investment of over \$35 million from the state government towards both local government roads—Gnangara Road and the Reid Highway–Lord Street intersection—through a range of upgrades, but the hub of Ellenbrook still lacks essential services and connectivity to those services needs to improve. Although a large amount of services can be provided mostly over the phone and online, one sector often requires face-to-face consultations far more than any other sector—the healthcare sector. For many people, seniors in particular, public transport is their key and often only option. Ellenbrook and its nearby suburbs continue to grow. We have seen investment made in developments such as the new primary school at Annie’s Landing and new residential developments in Ellenbrook, Aveley and The Vines. A new secondary school in North Ellenbrook is also underway. Last year the state government, commonwealth government and Curtin University announced the establishment of a medical school for Midland to be located near the new hospital. It is the first tertiary education campus for Perth’s eastern suburbs. This again supports our request. In short, any initiative improving the public transport link to the existing rail network and Midland will benefit more people from its inception and justify such investment for these communities. The area of Ellenbrook will benefit from improved access and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future with stage 2 of NorthLink WA further improving the area’s access to the greater metropolitan area at total cost of \$1.12 billion.

The minister and I both attended the 2016 WA Transport and Roads Forum at El Caballo Resort. We heard about Labor’s plans for its election in March 2017. Conspicuous by its absence was the Perth–Darwin highway NorthLink project. This project is not included in Labor’s future plans. Should this be the case, it would constitute the ultimate betrayal for the electorates of Swan Hills and West Swan who rely on this very Liberal project to secure an economic hub to Ellenbrook regions’ growing population and improved access to the CBD. This risk would again support our request, as Lord Street is currently Ellenbrook’s main route to the city.

The wider Ellenbrook community would appreciate the re-consideration of a bus rapid transit system to Bassendean to provide a more efficient transfer to our rail system, and, with the City of Swan’s support, the dualling of Lord Street from Gnangara Road to Reid Highway in the long term, further reducing traffic congestion through this important arterial road. This will enable the community to take full advantage of all the good work undertaken by this government in both the areas of road infrastructure and healthcare at the new Midland Public Hospital. This would also be some security against the possibility of a Labor re-election in March with the promise of a magical mystery train line replacing the NorthLink, Perth–Darwin highway project.

**MR D.C. NALDER (Alfred Cove — Minister for Transport)** [9.29 am]: I thank the member for Swan Hills for raising these issues and I acknowledge his efforts in working towards better transport outcomes for his community. The member would be aware that public transport patronage forecasts for the Swan urban growth corridor through to Ellenbrook do not demonstrate sufficient demand to justify the provision of a train line, heavy or light, in the near future. The government has been very clear that the most efficient form of public transport for this corridor will remain buses for at least the next decade, and so we are determined to ensure that the customer experience they receive from using buses is optimal. As the member has briefly mentioned, enormous investment has been made in public transport in Ellenbrook and its surrounding suburbs. In 2010 this government introduced new bus services providing a 10-minute peak frequency between Ellenbrook and Bassendean train station linking residents from Ellenbrook and other suburbs in the Swan urban growth corridor

to Midland and Perth. I am sure they would also appreciate the large investment this government has made in renewing the bus fleet. The number of new, clean, fresh buses that everybody is seeing across the metropolitan area is something this government has been committed to, to ensure the best possible ride for passengers.

Off-peak services operate every 15 minutes. This is the same peak and off-peak frequency as train services on the Midland, Fremantle and Armadale–Thornlie lines. At the same time the local feeder bus network was enhanced significantly. Over subsequent years this network of services has been adjusted to service growing areas, such as the introduction of a new route to Aveley. As recently as August last year, services were extended to Malvern Springs estate and Annie's Landing estate in response to the increase in development. As has been demonstrated in the past, when new residential estates emerge, the public transport network will expand over time to service them. Clearly, both the public transport service coverage and frequency needs of residents through this corridor are being met; however, it is acknowledged that roads such as Lord Street are experiencing heavy traffic loads. This is typical of any corridor that experiences rapid urban development. The state government is investing heavily in transport infrastructure, which will improve access for the Ellenbrook area.

A contract was recently awarded for a \$281 million project to replace signalised intersections on Tonkin Highway at Collier Road, Morley Drive and Benara Road. A separate contract will be awarded later this year to construct the Reid Highway to the Ellenbrook section of NorthLink WA. That is a \$836 million project that will extend to Muchea by 2019. I repeat for the member for Swan Hills: this will essentially create a freeway service for the people of Ellenbrook that will connect all the way through to Kwinana Freeway and further south. This is the first time the people living in that area will be afforded such an efficient road service.

Notwithstanding this significant investment, my department continues to investigate various options for the people of Swan Hills and Ellenbrook, which includes Lord Street and improved bus travel times to Bassendean train station. From Bassendean station there is already a frequent train service to Midland station. As the member mentioned, a direct bus service was introduced to operate between the Midland train station and the hospital.

I acknowledge the concerns the member for Swan Hills has raised on behalf of his community. The government will continue to investigate these opportunities and I appreciate his support of the public transport and road improvements being delivered in his electorate.