

**PUBLIC TRANSPORT — FORRESTFIELD**

*Grievance*

**MR N.W. MORTON (Forrestfield)** [9.50 am]: My grievance is to the Minister for Transport and relates to bus routes, the frequency of buses and public transport in general within the Forrestfield electorate. During the election campaign many of my constituents raised concerns about the lack of public transport in pockets of my electorate. The following three examples readily spring to mind. Mr Frank Holmes, who lives in Apricot Street in Forrestfield in my electorate, contacted me last year to tell me about an elderly couple that he saw waiting at a bus stop on his street. They had been waiting for over two hours in the sweltering sun. Obviously, the sun is rather warm during Perth's summer. In the long run he ended up driving the elderly couple to their appointment, which I think happened to be in the city. I commend Mr Holmes for his good deed.

I also refer to Mr Ken Finch, who has contacted me at least twice to discuss poor bus routes and their frequency throughout the Maida Vale and High Wycombe areas. Indeed, I will be meeting with Mr Finch. I would summarise his feelings as being frustrated.

I also wish to mention the story of a teenage girl whose dad contacted me late last year to tell me how worried he was about his young daughter waiting for hours on end in the dark, particularly on weekends, while trying to get home. Unfortunately, this gentleman did not provide me with his details but his concerns are relevant nonetheless.

I understand that Forrestfield, Maida Vale and Wattle Grove have traditionally been poorly served by public transport. Even though the Public Transport Authority does a good job trying to service my electorate—this grievance is not aimed at having a dig at the PTA; it is about seeing what can be done to address the real concerns of my constituents about public transport—I would like to ask the minister what he is doing to improve public transport for the constituents in my electorate.

I wish to convey two further examples of inefficiency within the Forrestfield electorate. As the minister is very much aware, a large number of fly in, fly out workers live in the electorate of Forrestfield. It generally takes 15 minutes to drive from Forrestfield to the domestic airport. However, this short journey can take up to 90 minutes by bus. The second example I would like to use affected me personally, albeit for my benefit and not so much for my staff. One of my staff members catches the bus to and from work. He usually catches the 5.05 pm bus home. The bus stop is just outside my office, which makes it very convenient for him. On the particular day that I am referring to he went to catch the bus at 5.05 pm but missed it by about 30 seconds and saw it heading down Kalamunda Road into the sunset. He came back to my office rather disheartened. I asked him what his issue was. He said that the next bus was not until 6.34 pm. I smiled; he did not. I got an extra hour and a half's overtime out of him. He was not overly happy about that. That highlights the obvious issues with the frequency of bus services within the area. Given that this is a peak period, I am concerned that there is such a wait between services. This obviously causes issues for ordinary working folk travelling between work and home, particularly via public transport within my electorate.

**Mr M.P. Murray:** You don't want to miss one in Collie; you'd have to wait a week.

**Mr N.W. MORTON:** I am not talking about Collie.

Lastly, during the election campaign, the minister heard calls from my electorate for better public transport. I am happy to say that the Liberal Party promised to build a train station out to the airport, but, more importantly, for my constituents, this plan also included a station out to the Forrestfield–High Wycombe area, which will also service suburbs such as Wattle Grove and suburbs such as Gooseberry Hill, Kalamunda and Lesmurdie in the hills catchment area. With this in mind, I would like to know what has been done since this announcement and what the people of my eastern suburbs electorate can expect when this much-needed public transport infrastructure is completed.

**MR T.R. BUSWELL (Vasse — Minister for Transport)** [9.55 am]: I thank the member for Forrestfield for raising this grievance. Having visited Forrestfield a significant number of times in the past 18 months or so, more often than not at the member's invitation, I have a much better understanding now than perhaps previously about some of the unique challenges in the area. It is a very interesting area. A lot of people who live in Perth might not necessarily visit that area.

The badge worn by the member for Belmont is catching the light so when she nods, she sends signals to me like a lighthouse.

**Mrs M.H. Roberts:** You might be hallucinating. Have you thought about that?

**Mr T.R. BUSWELL:** I would never know, sitting opposite the member for Midland.

Getting back to the topic at hand, there is a lot of housing development in that area. It has traditionally been known for larger lifestyle, or even semi-agricultural, lots. A member of my own ministerial office staff lives in a new housing estate in the area. It is a very interesting part of the Perth metropolitan area, with a dynamic mix of people. The member is right; the public transport service provision to the people living in that area and a bit beyond the member's electorate has not kept pace.

I will start at the end of the member's comments and work backwards. There is no doubt that the airport railway line will fundamentally change the public transport service of that area. During the election we obviously made commitments to have that line delivered by 2018. We are certainly working hard to deliver that. The planning team is working on the project definition plan—the first part of that process. We would expect to have the project definition plan completed by the end of this year. The member may recall that it is exactly the same as the process we went through with the stadium. We then move out of that plan into the various phases of design and construction. That project is going well. The commonwealth has committed a pool of funds—\$500 million over a 10-year period. We have some more work to do with the commonwealth in terms of state funding commitments and potential private sector funding commitments to get that piece of infrastructure funded, but we will work through that as part of our procurement analysis. I am very confident that we will deliver that infrastructure in the manner that we indicated at the time of the election. Importantly, for the member's constituents, it means 2 000 to 3 000 car parking bays, access to a train that will take 25 minutes to get into the city and that will run at 15-minute intervals during the peak, which is the same as the peaks on the Midland line. Associated with that, there will be fundamental change to the way the bus network operates. Clearly, being the destination for buses in that area, passengers will be funnelled into the train station. That work will not happen for a little while but that important planning work is on track.

In relation to the bus services in the member's area, the Liberal government has committed significant funds to increase the size of the bus fleet and, importantly, to provide more funds for those private companies that operate the bus fleets. It is one thing to deliver the vehicle but we have to fund the service kilometres. There has been a significant and ongoing increase in service kilometres so we now have more capacity to improve bus servicing to newer areas. This has been an issue in the electorates of the member for Wanneroo and the member for Swan Hills—areas in which the urban front has grown perhaps more quickly than public transport planning has kept up.

There are some changes I will let the member know about, but the other thing we probably need to get for the member for Forrestfield is some time with our Public Transport Authority planners so that they can understand from a local level the concerns he has on behalf of his constituents, such as Mr Holmes, Mr Finch and the father of the teenage girl. The member can provide that local feedback to the PTA so that we can better understand what we may be able to do. We will arrange that as a consequence of today's meeting, and that may well give the member a chance to more formally engage with the local community and the PTA a chance to see whether there are other things we can do better, because we can.

For the member's information, I have been advised that there are a couple of changes afoot, such as major upgrades to route 229, which runs from Maddington town centre via Kenwick and Cannington station to Westfield Carousel. Those changes will be, in relation to the issue the member raised, full-length trips, but importantly, a 20-minute peak-period service will be introduced on that particular route. That is expected to happen from the middle of July this year. A bit later in the year, in the spring–October time frame, route 294, which runs between Midland station and Westfield Carousel via High Wycombe, Forrestfield and Cannington, will also be changed, with a significant increase in peak-period trips. Although the detailed planning has not been finished, the advice I have is that the aim is to provide two extra morning peak short trips from Forrestfield to Midland, which will reduce that one-hour gap that currently exists; extra morning peak services from High Wycombe the other way to Cannington; and similarly, in the afternoon, extra peak services. However, I noted the member's comments about his staff member, so I will make sure that the route 505 is shifted back to about 5.30 pm, because that is far too early to knock off, if they are going to be working at it, because I am sure they will be working hard in the member's electorate office!

**Mr N.W. Morton:** I'm sure he'd be happy with that!

**Mr T.R. BUSWELL:** Then we will be able to get the extra 30 minutes out of them! I will also make sure that the morning one does not get there any later, so we should be able to sort that out as part of that process!

Although I make light of that individual circumstance, I appreciate the member raising this issue on behalf of his constituents. As I hope he can see, we are already planning some significant changes to the bus routes that service the suburbs the member represents, mainly around peak-period frequency, so that the circumstances the member described of people having to wait an hour at peak time do not continue. That is not an acceptable outcome and it is certainly not an acceptable outcome given the residential and population growth that has occurred around the Forrestfield electorate.

