

Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Acting Speaker; Mr Matt Birney; Mrs Cheryl Edwardes; Mr David Templeman; Mr Paul Omodei; Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Speaker; Mr Tony McRae

WESTERN AUSTRALIA'S TRANSPORT SYSTEM

Motion

MS K. HODSON-THOMAS (Carine) [4.28 pm]: I move -

That this House condemns the Gallop Labor Government for its failure to properly maintain and expand Western Australia's transport system.

I will raise a number of matters that relate particularly to transport issues. Over the past few weeks I have been in constant receipt of e-mails from a user of the northern suburbs railway line. He is a regular user of the Joondalup railway line into the city. He catches the train from the Glendalough station. It has been interesting reading his e-mails outlining the problems he has encountered on the Joondalup line. I will refer to some of those e-mails today. Recently the new railcar sets arrived in the northern suburbs and the Clarkson station opened. Propaganda on the Mitchell Freeway states "They're called train passengers" and "Tomorrow, catch the train". The chap to whom I have referred catches the train regularly. He has been very good. I understand that he has worked with the Public Transport Authority and that he has been in contact with the minister's office and me. I commend the employee from the PTA who has been corresponding with the commuter to try to rectify some of the matters that the commuter has raised in e-mails to the PTA and to me.

On 6 October he wrote about the trains on the Joondalup line. His e-mail states -

... after two working days with the new schedule for the Joondalup line, I must say I am bitterly disappointed with the service. The four car trains have been replaced with three car trains ...

Instead of having four-car trains, three-car trains operate on that line. I have had numerous conversations with people who catch trains from Glendalough station. Their biggest concern has always been that although it is only a short trip into the city - because the station is so close to the city - by the time the railcars get to the station, they are jam-packed, which makes it difficult for commuters to get into the railcars. That has always been a concern, which is why the new rolling stock is important. Each commuter - who is now called a rail passenger; remember "Tomorrow, catch the train" - should have the opportunity of getting on a train. I am not suggesting that trains cannot be full of passengers, but commuters should at least be able to get on the trains. The commuter who has been corresponding with the PTA said that four-car sets used to travel on the Joondalup line but they have now been reduced to three-car sets. That must be a problem. That development has reduced the capacity of the number of commuters who are able to travel on the trains by 25 per cent.

On 5 and 6 October the commuter arrived at the Glendalough station at about 7.10 am, which is very early in the morning. One would think he would be able to get on a train at that time of the morning on both mornings. However, he said he was unable to board a train until 7.45 am. He stood at the station for 35 minutes. I imagine that he would have started to get irate at that stage. He watched as express trains passed by the station. He was able to get on the train only at 7.45 am. He says in his e-mail -

I feel that 35 to 40 minutes wait is unacceptable given we were promised a better service when the new trains arrived.

We all thought a better service would be provided. He continues -

The evening service yesterday was worse ... I was of the understanding the new schedule and new trains were to all alleviate the dreadfully over crowded situation on the Joondalup line. I am disturbed that with two more stations opening at Clarkson and Greenwood what the future will bring for us on the "end of the line" stations.

Those end-of-the-line stations include Glendalough and Leederville. As I said, the PTA has responded to the commuter and has endeavoured to work through those issues. It is very good that someone is prepared to constructively advise the PTA how to provide a better service. We all want to see a better service for all commuters. It is not good enough to reduce the rail capacity by 25 per cent and to expect a passenger to wait for between 35 and 40 minutes for a train at 7.10 in the morning.

On 7 October the commuter sent another e-mail to the PTA. He says that he was running late and arrived at the station at 7.20 that morning. After his experiences on the two previous days he was exceedingly rude and aggressive because he wanted to get on the train. I cannot say that I blame him.

Mr A.D. McRae: What time did it arrive?

Ms K. HODSON-THOMAS: At 7.20 am. He says in his e-mail that he may have ruffled some passengers' feathers. I imagine that he would be upset having been late for work on the past two days. Remember that he got to the train station at 7.10 am and had to wait 35 minutes to get a train. Members can imagine that on the

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third day he did not want to be late for work again. I would not want to be late for a third time either. The train arrived and it was jam-packed. He had to push his way in to get on the train. It was the third day in which he was running late.

Mr A.D. McRae: I don't think that is an excuse.

Ms K. HODSON-THOMAS: Maybe the member does not think it is an excuse, but maybe it is not an excuse for the Government to reduce the passenger capacity by 25 per cent by operating a three-car set rather than a four-car set. I will not name the commuter or the PTA staff member with whom he has been corresponding. I am happy to provide the information to the minister, but I do not want to do it in Parliament. The commuter has been constructive by trying to get the programming and scheduling right so that, as a commuter from Glendalough station, he can get to work on time.

Mr A.D. McRae: I don't deny his right to make a complaint, but it does not give him an excuse to be rude and aggressive to other passengers.

Ms K. HODSON-THOMAS: It does not; the member is quite right. Nobody should be rude and aggressive. However, having said that, the commuter admitted to it. We must commend somebody who admits to being rude and aggressive for wanting to get on a train so that he would not be late to work for the third day in a row. He just wanted to be let on the train.

The commuter refers to the evening of 5 October when -

... there was an announcement, albeit garbled, earlier in the afternoon but after that I heard no other announcement. I was informed by a fellow passenger sometime around 4.45pm to 5.00pm that delays would be extensive.

Given the massive queues on Tuesday and Wednesday morning at Glendalough and Leederville stations, couldn't the almost empty four car express carriages be put on the all stop stations and the new three sets transferred to them until more equipment arrives in December or January.

He has been having ongoing correspondence with the PTA since 5 October. The PTA has been trying to improve the service and has actively encouraged the commuter to continue to advise it what has been going on. As I understand it, a couple of PTA personnel went to the Glendalough station on a Friday. The commuter was a bit concerned that the PTA decided to do that on a Friday as Fridays tends to be a quieter day for commuters because often people take a Friday off to have a long weekend. He was trying to inform the PTA that perhaps it would be better off surveying passengers at the Glendalough station during the week so that the PTA would have a true opportunity of understanding the timetable problems that commuters at Glendalough were having.

On 13 October the commuter had another wonderful experience when he tried to validate his ticket on the validating machine at Glendalough station and the machine swallowed his ticket. Of course, the train arrived while that was happening and the commuter missed it. He writes -

I went upstairs to be to see the guard but as usual there was no-one in the booth. As I was looking in the booth window another guy also came over to the booth ...

The other chap said that the machine had swallowed his ticket also. The commuter says that a number of passengers tried to validate their tickets that day but were unsuccessful. That means lost revenue and inconvenience and frustration to commuters. An issue that people often raise with me is that they are often not carrying sufficient change to buy tickets and would like to use a note. I agree with them. Parking station ticket machines these days allow patrons the opportunity to use notes, so why can that service and facility not be available at railway stations? There may well be security problems or all sorts of things, but we live in a modern world and we need to modernise the system. This chap was talking about the fact that he could not validate his tickets. He provided that information to the Public Transport Authority, as I said. He also talked about issues he had with security staff there. I do not intend to raise those, but it is quite clear that commuters, who are obviously very frustrated, are expecting to be provided with some updates or information from security personnel, who are often unable to provide it. The commuters feel let down by the system, which should be customer friendly. We see the propaganda on the Mitchell Freeway, saying "They're called train passengers" and "Tomorrow, catch the train". If an efficient, effective and quick service is not provided, it will not attract those prospective passengers.

Another issue the man raised about the new railcars was the matter of braking. Apparently there have been a number of problems with the braking systems, and the trains have not been able to brake in time at the stations. That is clearly an issue on which the minister might like to enlarge in responding to this motion. He also stated something about the airconditioning systems, and that is also a problem. The minister is shaking her head. Does

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she not believe that to be the case? Perhaps she might enlighten us. Information about the problems with the braking and airconditioning systems has been provided to me -

Mr R.C. Kucera: Have those issues been raised by only that one person?

Ms K. HODSON-THOMAS: No, they have been raised by a number of people, but I am happy to provide to the minister the e-mails sent to the Public Transport Authority by the person I have been quoting. I do not want to focus only on the Joondalup line, but if we are seeing these sorts of teething problems that is clearly an issue.

There are also problems with the *Prospector*. I am sure the members for Merredin, Eyre and Kalgoorlie will go into greater detail about the problems with the *Prospector* and the problems their communities have encountered.

Mr M.W. Trenorden: The fare from Toodyay has increased by 57 per cent, and from Northam it has increased by 130 per cent.

Ms K. HODSON-THOMAS: I am not talking about only the fare increase, but also the problems with the *Prospector*.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr D.A. Templeman): Order! Members, the member for Carine has the floor. Other members will have an opportunity to engage in the debate, including the member for Eyre.

Ms K. HODSON-THOMAS: We are talking about all these problems, including those with the *Prospector*. We also know that the transport executive and licensing information system has not been working very well. I had my own experience with TRELIS the other day in contacting the Department for Planning and Infrastructure. I had a licensing matter I wanted to deal with for my young son.

Mr J.J.M. Bowler: What does that have to do with the motion?

Ms K. HODSON-THOMAS: It is a transport issue. I am talking about the fact that there are problems with the transport system in this State. The Department of Planning and Infrastructure is a major agency; it is where everybody goes to license their vehicles, boats and trailers. It is a very important agency, and there is a very important minister on the government front bench.

Mr R.F. Johnson: I will tell the member about my experience with TRELIS. About a month ago my young son received a new driver's licence, although he was not due for a renewal. All the details were correct - his name, date of birth and everything else - but the trouble was that there was a picture of a woman on it. He could not believe it.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The member for Carine did invite her colleague to interject, and accepted that interjection. However, she is now indicating to me very clearly that she wishes to continue her speech.

Ms K. HODSON-THOMAS: Thank you very much, Mr Acting Speaker; you do your job so well!

That is a very interesting issue. Imagine receiving a driver's licence with all the correct details but with some other person's photograph on it.

Mr A.D. McRae: Was he driving one of the floats at the mardi gras?

Ms K. HODSON-THOMAS: I hardly think that that remark is appropriate. We should not be making light of the fact that somebody has actually received a licence in the mail with the wrong photograph on it. It is a serious issue. We use our licences for identity purposes. We need to show them if we are pulled up by a police officer. I was talking about the TRELIS system. The other day I telephoned the Department for Planning and Infrastructure. There is always talk about improving customer service, but I was advised by a voice at the other end of the telephone to try again later because the department was very busy. However, I decided to try again straightaway; I redialled the number and luckily I got through. Many people may not have tried the system again, and may experience that treatment constantly when they try the number. There is certainly a lot of frustration among staff at the Department for Planning and Infrastructure. I felt the frustration of the operator at the other end of the line as I was talking to her. I feel a great deal of empathy for people working in the agency and trying to deal with a system that is actually failing the community.

I know that the member for Kalgoorlie wants to raise the issue of the *Prospector*. I know that a number of my colleagues on this side of the House would like to talk about transport issues in their electorates. However, I want to comment on the number of requests I receive about bus service cuts all over the metropolitan area. I am sure the minister responds to the ministerials I send to her about this matter. In the main, I write to her when I see a matter that is unjust or when I feel a service should be provided for a community, particularly the seniors.

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Seniors who end up having to give away their drivers' licences and can no longer drive are dependent on public transport. They rely on bus services. Many of them have been faced with cuts to regular services or changes in the routes. Now, instead of walking 400 metres down the road, they must now walk much further. The optimum walk to a bus service for a public transport commuter, as I understand, is 400 metres. That is the catchment. Within that area, it is reasonable for people to walk. Somebody who is healthy like me can walk much further than 400 metres. Seniors want to be active and mobile, and out and about. Often they have to be out to go to hospitals, visit their doctors, see family members or for many other reasons, or in the course of the voluntary work they do. Then they find their bus services are being cut. It is simply not good enough for the Government to invest all that money in the southern railway link and slash bus services in the metropolitan area.

I raise another fairly important issue about transport south of the river. A woman wrote to me about the termination of the south of the river bus services at the Murdoch Park 'n' Ride bus station. I understand that, until a few months ago, commuters could travel into the city on one bus. However, they are now required at the bus station to transfer from one bus to another that takes them into the city. This process could be in preparation for the new railway link, to educate commuters to get off the bus and transfer to the train. The resident said that she had environmental concerns with the bus station because bus fumes affect commuters while they wait to connect to another bus. I can understand that. Many people find diesel and other fumes from buses offensive. They have an enormous impact on their health and wellbeing.

I raise those issues regarding the railway service particularly because the member for Kingsley and I know intimately the railway that runs through our electorates along the Mitchell Freeway reservation. It offers a great service, and it is great to see that railway operating. However, there have always been problems with the car parks, which is why the new Greenwood station will be operational shortly.

Mrs C.L. Edwardes: December.

Ms K. HODSON-THOMAS: I thought it was October, but it is December. Another car park will be built. The need for car parking facilities has been an issue for a long time. The problems associated with car parking have an impact on the community. Rather than catch connecting buses, people drive to stations and use the car parks, and that is why bus services sometimes diminish. Bus services should run more frequently so that people will be encouraged to catch buses to the train stations in the knowledge that the bus service will connect with the train service they want. That is important.

When and if, in 2006, the southern rail link to Mandurah is built, which I doubt very much will eventuate, it will not be your commuters, Mr Acting Speaker (Mr D.A. Templeman), who will feel the impact of full railcars; it will be the passengers in the inner suburbs. However, passengers at Canning Bridge will not really use the rail link; they will be encouraged to stay on the bus and join the general traffic. Commuters in the inner suburbs will be severely impacted on due to the insufficient number of railcars. It will be interesting to see when the new rolling stock comes on line. I understand that a few more rail cars are due to be delivered in the middle of 2005, some six months away, and that should ease the situation.

MR M.J. BIRNEY (Kalgoorlie) [4.53 pm]: I have a few very brief words about what can only be described as the actions of a hapless minister and a hopeless Government. I refer to a comedy of errors that has developed in my electorate with the *Prospector* train. It might be appropriate to take members back a couple of years to the former Government's proposal to build a new *Prospector* to undertake the journey between Perth and Kalgoorlie. I remember as a young fellow travelling on the *Prospector* between Perth and Kalgoorlie on many occasions. It was always an enjoyable event until the train broke down. The old *Prospector* train has been breaking down for many a long year. That is why Richard Court and Hon Murray Criddle, the former Minister for Transport, decided enough was enough and that a series of events would be implemented that would ultimately see a new *Prospector* operating between Kalgoorlie and Perth.

I am pleased to say that the present Labor Government took up the coalition's initiative to build the new *Prospector*, and that process has been taking place for some time. The community of Kalgoorlie waited with great anticipation for the new *Prospector*. We all travelled on the old train for many years, and when Richard Court announced the new train and later when the incoming Government indicated it would meet that commitment, the community of Kalgoorlie-Boulder and the wheatbelt were very excited.

The new train was due to arrive in September 2003. As members can imagine, when September 2003 ticked over, everybody in Kalgoorlie asked where the train was. We received a raft of excuses from the Government about why the train had not materialised on the tracks between Kalgoorlie and Boulder. September, October, November and December went by and our patience began to run out, to the point at which I and others publicly began to ask questions along the lines of where was the train we had been promised with great fanfare by the

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Labor Party. An article in the *Kalgoorlie Miner* of 10 March 2004 quotes Ms MacTiernan, the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, along the following lines -

The delay in starting it is because we are absolutely adamant that until we are 100 per cent confident it is safe, there will not be a passenger on it.

I thought that was wise; we need to get these things right. We had allowed the Government an additional six months or so beyond the September 2003 date. What happened when the train finally got there on 28 June 2004, seven or eight months late? We accepted that, although it was late; it had arrived.

Mr R.F. Johnson: Better late than never.

Mr M.J. BIRNEY: That is right. The Government told the community that commencement of the train service would be late but that was because it wanted to get everything right and that is why we had to wait another eight months. Members might be amused or perhaps even somewhat concerned to learn that since coming into commission, the train for which we waited eight months so that the Government could “get it right” has broken down 11 times.

Mr R.F. Johnson: How many times?

Mr M.J. BIRNEY: Eleven times.

Ms K. Hodson-Thomas: The teething problems haven't been solved.

Mr M.J. BIRNEY: No; the Government has not even come close to fixing them. We expected it in September 2003 but it was not ready because the Government said it would get it right for us and we said that was okay. I will demonstrate how gracious a fellow I am. The *Kalgoorlie Miner* reported my good friend the member for Eyre as saying the following -

We (the Government) have spent this money and are disappointed everything is not right straight away. But it is better to iron out teething problems than to leave passengers stranded if you rush it.

What do members expect the opposition member in the same town would say about it? Would members not expect him to claim it was a disgrace because, despite all its promises, the Labor Party had buggered up the arrival of the new *Prospector*? Not this statesman-like fellow.

Mr R.F. Johnson: You are too charitable.

Mr M.J. BIRNEY: Exactly. An article in the *Kalgoorlie Miner* states -

Kalgoorlie MLA Matt Birney agreed a delay was better than rushing the train into service.

It quotes me as saying -

The community is better off waiting to get it right rather than experiencing problems once it is in service.

I am sure members will agree that that is an entirely charitable response. I have now run out of charity. Apart from providing those charitable comments to the Labor Party, I took it at face value. I thought that the eight-month delay would mean that once we got the train it would be a magnificent train and that it would work and do all the things that the Labor Party had promised with great fanfare. I certainly did not think it would break down 11 times! It is just as well we did not flog off the old *Prospector* for scrap metal because seven of the 11 times we have had to bring it back into service! We had to crank it up, fill it with coal and get it back on the track because the Labor Party's \$50 million disaster keeps breaking down. We had to wheel out the old girl and she made the journey beautifully, unlike the Labor Party's new \$50 million flash promise to the people of Kalgoorlie.

For whatever reason, four of the 11 times the train broke down buses were brought in to take my constituents to their destination. The good old reliable bus was back! I am sure the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure would not have been terribly happy about that.

Firstly, the *Prospector* was the initiative of the former Liberal Government. Secondly, I was prepared to be charitable and wait an additional eight months - an extraordinary time I am sure members would agree - for the Labor Party “to get it right”. It did not get it right. In fact, it got it horribly wrong to the point that the *Prospector* - the Labor Party's \$50 million shining beacon - is out of service again until the middle of next week! I am not sure whether this breakdown is No 11 or No 12. It may well be No 12. We will call it No 12; it does not really make much difference. I have made the point. This has been a comedy of errors overseen by a hapless Minister for Planning and Infrastructure who has absolutely no clue about what is going on in her own department, let alone what is happening with the *Prospector*.

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MRS C.L. EDWARDES (Kingsley) [5.01 pm]: I will raise a couple of issues about buses and bus connections. The member for Carine mentioned connections between trains and buses and better coordinating timetables. Members have received a number of complaints whereby commuters are either moving up an escalator only to see their bus leave or moving down an escalator to see their train leave. If a person is elderly - elderly people are among the major users of our public transport system - or a mother with young children and/or a pram, it is particularly difficult to make the connection between buses and trains. A person may have to wait an additional 20 minutes, which, admittedly, is not long during peak periods. However, it can be particularly long for an elderly person or a young mother with young children. If a person happens to be travelling to Glendalough or the new Greenwood train station, he will discover that there are no toilets. I would have thought that, given the fact we had this debate during the late 1980s and early 1990s, when all the new train stations were designed, at least they would have new toilet facilities. A senior or mother with young children knows there is no waiting when a toilet is needed. As such, the needs of those two groups of people, let alone those with disabilities, are not properly served by some connecting services. They are not properly or adequately served by the train stations.

The services themselves are another issue. Suburbs in the northern metropolitan area, particularly east of Wanneroo Road, are growing at a fast rate. There are serious problems with the services in those suburbs connecting with Wanneroo Road. A new lifestyle village for people aged over 55 has been built recently in Kingsley, directly opposite the Kingsway City Shopping Centre. The residents can get to the shopping centre but they need to catch either three buses or two buses and a train to get to the Joondalup Health Campus. It takes them more than an hour. That is just ridiculous. Trying to get some change in the connections or in one or other of the services has proved to be very difficult. The difficulty does not seem to be with Path Transit, which operates the particular services, but with the controls that the department has over the provider. We need to ensure that people will not be isolated by the mere fact of their location. The retirement village is opposite the shopping centre and near Waldecks. It should not be a spot in which people are isolated from the Joondalup Health Campus. The residents find that it is a major issue for them.

There is another problem for people who want to get to the Kingsway City Shopping Centre from suburbs in my electorate. They cannot do that very easily. They have asked for some deviations on bus routes, even if it is only a few times a week, so they can travel to the shopping centre and on to either the Warwick shops, the Warwick train station or the Whitfords train station. It would be simple to do that. When looking at a map showing the bus routes, it would not be hard to start with a blank sheet of paper and suggest that now the Kingsway City Shopping Centre has been built, the bus service that has been in existence for 20 years should be deviated to meet the needs of the growing community. Somewhere along the line people's needs are being forgotten when either new suburbs, shopping centres or developments are put in place. Consideration of people's needs comes far too late. It is often very much forgotten about in an established area because there is already a bus service. The fact that a person might want to live in Kingsley but travel to Hillarys via Hepburn Avenue seems to escape most people who are making the planning decisions. A person might want to live along the route and travel to the Kingsway City Shopping Centre. People might want to have bus stops much closer to the lifestyle village. It does not take too much nous to realise that some of the residents of the lifestyle village cannot walk far to a bus stop. It must be considered how they would like to travel. The solution is simple: conduct a survey. Write to people and ask what they would like, what they are missing, where they would like to go and how services can be provided. I have recently done that. I received an enormous response from people who are seriously disadvantaged in their access from suburbs in my electorate to the growing shopping centres in the region or places of necessity such as the Joondalup Health Campus.

Ms M.M. Quirk: They will be able to catch the train from Greenwood.

Mrs C.L. EDWARDES: They cannot get there! That is the whole point. No buses travel down Hepburn Avenue.

Ms M.M. Quirk: I think the member will find that there are.

Mrs C.L. EDWARDES: There is none at present and none is planned; nothing has been made public. If the Government is keeping it as a wonderful election announcement, let us know. The Government should let the people know that when the Greenwood train station is opened there will be a bus route along Hepburn Avenue. To date, all the letters from the minister state that there will be no bus service to the station or to Hillarys. If a person wants to catch a train, it is very simple: go to Warwick or catch a bus and go to Whitfords. Some people cannot walk to a bus stop. As such, there is a deal of concern that their needs are not being taken into account adequately. Members know the difficulties; they are working with new suburbs, as is the member for Wanneroo. They are trying to help people to get to the Kingsway City Shopping Centre and other places. The member for Girrawheen knows what the difficulties are in trying to meet those needs.

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Ms M.M. Quirk: I am pleased the member raised that issue. The minister has been most receptive and sympathetic. She has responded favourably and has put on additional bus services in my electorate.

Mrs C.L. EDWARDES: Those bus services meet the needs of only a small number of people and they will be in existence for a short time only, when they will be reviewed, and rightly so, because the growth in those areas will increase and new streets will have to be taken into account.

I now refer to Wanneroo Road, which after 13 deaths a few years ago, was upgraded when we were in government. Substantial sections of that road are yet to be completed, most notably the dualling of the section from Wallawa Street, Wanneroo, to just south of Halls Road, Neerabup. A dual carriageway in that section would allow for growth of traffic on Wanneroo Road. The growth of residential areas east of Wanneroo Road also indicates that that section will need to be upgraded. That upgrade would also help the road cope with the expanding residential traffic from the area north of Clarkson and Merriwa. The section of road I have just referred to between Wanneroo townsite and Hester Avenue - the old Quinns Road - is the most important section, owing to the volume of vehicles. It is less than 10 kilometres in length and I am sure the expected cost could be managed within the current transport budget. The dualling of that section of the road would also reduce the increases in traffic conflict between heavy vehicles and passenger transport vehicles that are expected with the growth of the Flynn Drive industrial park. Members who are familiar with the area will know that that project is proceeding at a fast pace. North of Hester Avenue, a number of sections of Wanneroo Road have dual carriageway. These sections need to be joined and extended to Pipidinny Road, further north to Wanneroo Road where it enters the Yanchep National Park. This would be welcomed by the local community because of the changing dual and single-lane traffic conditions which have been the cause of many unreported near misses. This was also considered by members of the local community to be a contributing factor in the recent death of a well-respected market gardener. When I am driving that way at night-time I sometimes have difficulty with the lights when I am moving from dual to single lane and back again. Those sections of the road that have not been done should be dualled. This would provide an enormous boost for the people in that community. Upgrading Wanneroo Road would be of great assistance in providing an alternative route when housing expands through to Eglinton, and it could be done in conjunction with the coastal link from Lancelin to Cervantes. Despite numerous petitions and requests for action by local residents, no substantial funds have been spent on further upgrading Wanneroo Road. Nothing is contained in the budgetary forward estimates for those improvements.

I also want to mention Marmion Avenue, which is a developer contribution road. The local authority, the City of Wanneroo, pays for a standard road with one lane in each direction, and the local land developer pays for or contributes to the dual carriageway. During the 1980s the former City of Wanneroo forward funded sections of Marmion Avenue to Whitford Avenue. However, a payment dispute with the developer caused long delays with the continuation of that roadway. The City of Wanneroo was also financially disadvantaged by the collapse of the developer for Merriwa and Mindarie, which caused long delays for developer contributions for those sections of Marmion Avenue. With such a history, the City of Wanneroo is not very keen to make any moves to forward fund improvements to Marmion Avenue, beyond what is currently planned and in keeping with developer contributions. Added to the chequered history of the Marmion Avenue development is the fact that, until both ends are fixed, there will be no final alignment through the Alkimos district. An enormous number of petitions and requests have been made by not only the Tokyu Corporation, but also the community, because the extension of Marmion Avenue needs to be done through to Two Rocks. I understand that planning approval was recently denied for Tokyu to proceed with a residential development owing to the lack of the Marmion Avenue connection. This means that an aged care facility will be postponed for the third time. There is concern that the proponents could lose their allocated bed numbers if something is not done soon. I ask the minister to explain why that cannot proceed. LandCorp is a major benefactor and one of the major landholders in that area, and I wonder why that project cannot be brought forward.

The Leader of the Opposition recently called on the Premier to intervene in the community consultation period for the extension of the Mitchell Freeway, which he refused to do. It is imperative that full community consultation take place. Members of the community were also up in arms in the 1980s when the first of those plans was proposed. The then member for Wanneroo, Jackie Watkins, took up the issue on behalf of the community and promised that the Labor Government of the day would tunnel that road. The local residents feel very peeved with the current Government's proposal. They were led to believe that the road would be sunk. The Connolly residents had great expectations and many families bought into the area. Many business people in Joondalup Business Park have built two-storey buildings to promote their businesses to the community. It is very important that this period of community consultation be extended to take those people's concerns into account. The fact that people purchased homes and made investments in that area should be recognised.

I also raise another issue that has a great impact on people travelling on freeways and highways south of the river. I refer to the Fremantle eastern bypass, which has been planned for some 30 years and is crucial to divert

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the growing levels of freight traffic from the Fremantle port. The Government's refusal to complete the Fremantle eastern bypass will have major adverse health, road safety and environmental effects on southern suburbs residents. Those who travel regularly on those roads are aware of the increasing number of trucks and truck movements. It is not funny to be travelling on those roads in a small sedan, which can be caught behind a truck, with other trucks beside and behind. Truck drivers do not realise how close they get. I understand that Dr Milos Nedved, Associate Professor of Occupational Health and Safety at Edith Cowan University, Assistant Director of the World Safety Organisation national office and also a member of the Western Australian national executive of the Safety Institute of Australia, has advised that the increased use of trucks on Leach Highway will result in damage to the environment and to residents' health if the Fremantle eastern bypass is not built. That is particularly important. I know the Government will not reconsider this matter because it has often said so, but I ask it to reconsider. The Government has started to sell the land previously reserved for the bypass and this is something that we, when in government, will work to reverse. It is unacceptable that that bypass has been planned for some 30 years. We are absolutely and totally committed to completing Roe Highway stage 8 and the Fremantle eastern bypass. If that means restoring the bypass to the metropolitan region scheme and resuming the land, we will do that.

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah) [5.19 pm]: I am pleased to join the debate tonight on the motion moved by the member for Carine. As I have said in this House many a time, I respect her greatly.

What an interesting motion it is. It demonstrates the gall of those opposite, because the history of the Liberal Party in government in supporting, encouraging and nurturing public transport could be written on a postage stamp size piece of paper. We need only look at the history of railway infrastructure for public transport in Western Australia and the contribution that those opposite have made to public transport, particularly rail public transport, in the past few decades. We need only look as far as the Fremantle line. When those opposite were in government, they closed the Fremantle line. Despite a huge public backlash and huge public opposition, they closed that line. When Labor was returned to government, it reopened it. Those opposite opposed the extension of the rail network to the northern suburbs. It was the Labor Government that, on being elected, electrified that system and extended it into the northern suburbs. It also electrified the whole system on the Midland and Armadale lines. The Labor Party has continued to be committed to public transport infrastructure.

Of course, the proposal for a southern suburbs rail link has a long history. However, the Labor Party has steadfastly argued in all sorts of forums, particularly to those people who live in the southern corridor, that a southern suburbs railway is an important part of the infrastructure to service that growing region. That region from south of Melville down to Mandurah now boasts a population of almost 400 000 people, and it will continue to grow. When those opposite raise public transport concerns, as they have a right to do - indeed, as every member in this place has a right to do - we must never forget their history and their record on public transport.

In the time that I have this evening, I will raise a number of issues relating to the public transport infrastructure needs of, and service delivery to, my region. I will raise a couple of issues that I believe are particularly pertinent to the people whom I represent in Mandurah and, indeed, those people who live in the southern suburbs corridor. When we talk about public transport, in particular bus transport, it is interesting to note what the situation was a little over four years ago. I will paint a bit of a picture of what occurred in Mandurah under the previous Court Liberal Government. At that time, we had only four internal bus routes within the city of Mandurah to service the localities to the north, south and east of Mandurah. That is what occurred under the previous Government. On those four internal routes, there were usually about two bus services in the morning and up to two in the afternoon. That is all there were. We had route 107, as it was known then, which was the Mandurah to Perth route and return. Again, it was an infrequent service. There was no service on Sundays, and the service was limited on Saturdays. That was the picture under the previous Government.

Since we have been in government and since Hon Alannah MacTiernan has been the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, in less than four years there has been a huge change. I want more buses and I want the train in that area; there is no doubt about that, and I will go on about it. However, I will highlight the change that has occurred in just over three and a half years. First of all, there are six internal bus routes in Mandurah now. That is very important. One of the key routes was installed only two and a half years ago as a result of constant lobbying from me, from the Mandurah Senior College, which is co-located with the university campus, and from the residents of Meadow Springs, including the large cohort of seniors who live in the Royal Australian Air Force Association estate, about the need for a bus service through that area. The minister listened, and we now have a service that leaves the bus station, goes through the locality of Greenfields along Bortolo Drive, past the Mandurah Senior College, the co-located education campus, through the locality of Meadow Springs and into the RAAFA estate. I know that that was a badly needed service. Now I am working on making sure that we improve that service even more. There has been a re-routing within the areas of Coodanup and Greenfields,

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because those areas have a higher number of people who depend now, and will in the future, on public transport infrastructure, particularly a bus service. Again, more buses have been added to that service. It is not enough; I want more buses on those services. We must make them more frequent in the lead-up to the opening of the southern suburbs rail link in December 2006. The member for Carine can be assured that if she and I are both still members of this House, I will look forward to welcoming her on the platform at Mandurah station in December 2006. She will be warmly welcomed. That event will probably be one of the most important and monumental in the city's history. It will probably rival the other great Labor Government achievement for Mandurah, which of course was the Dawesville Channel. The previous Labor Government committed to and constructed that channel, which is now delivering huge benefits to the estuary and, indeed, to the residents of and visitors to the Peel region. The member for Carine will be very warmly welcomed there, along with, I believe, thousands of other people. I just hope that we have enough buses to transport everybody into this site so that we can all have a wonderful celebration.

Mr R.C. Kucera: Another momentous thing will happen, because the member for Dawesville has promised to supply the champagne.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Indeed, he has. He might need a big magnum to do that!

The contrast is very stark between what happened in the eight years in which those on the other side were in government and what we have been able to achieve in less than four years in government. However, I am the first to say that we still need to make improvements. I have said in this House a number of times in a number of other speeches that the population of Mandurah is changing. I will throw in one little statistic. In the Dudley Park locality, for example, 17 per cent - this is quite an amazing statistic - of the population, which is about 2 500 people, are over 75. That is just seniors over 75, let alone those who are over the seniors age of 60, as recognised in statistics. We need to make sure that those people who choose to live in inner-city Mandurah are serviced by a very efficient and effective transport system, particularly one that links them with the transit station, which will be the railway station in December 2006.

I have been working with the City of Mandurah, which is a very progressive city, LandCorp, which will have an interest in the land use for the transport precinct site, and representatives from New MetroRail and the Public Transport Authority on a central area transit system for the corridor between the transit station in Mandurah and the Mandurah central business district. Mandurah is famous for its boardwalk, foreshore precinct and tourism and recreational facilities in the centre of town, or the foreshore area. We are working with the local authority and those key government agencies to ensure that a CAT system is put in place to service older citizens in particular, but also visitors and tourists to Mandurah. A lot of wonderful seniors live in my electorate. Of course, this is Seniors Week. As I have said, a higher number of seniors live in my electorate than in many other regions in Western Australia. Many seniors come into my office and explain the issues they have with the current bus system and how it needs to be improved. They believe that the CAT system will meet their needs. There is a clear rectangle of activity between the CBD and that growth corridor along Pinjarra Road up to the Mandurah Forum Shopping Centre. A large number of elderly citizens live in that area. The older housing stock in central Mandurah in particular is disappearing before our eyes and we are seeing higher density living, particularly units and townhouses, that are housing and will in the future house more baby boomers and people in the seniors cohort.

I have written to the minister highlighting the importance of this CAT system and the need for it to be in place in the lead-up to the completion of the railway. We need to continue to build a culture of public transport within the city of Mandurah. There are some geographical implications of the growth that is occurring. One problem is with what I call the island south of the Mandurah Estuary Bridge. The island is in the member for Dawesville's electorate. It is a fast-growing area. However, it has some specific problems because of its geographical nature. It is a narrow island serviced by one main road. More than 20 000 people live on the island, so we must ensure that those people have an effective public transport system to take more cars off the roads. The Peel deviation will do that to the east, but it will not deal with the local traffic in that area, which will continue to grow. I have also asked that Mandurah be considered for the TravelSmart program, which is an intensive program. It is being run in the metropolitan area. It aims to increase and improve patronage on Transperth services and, indeed, the rail network. In the lead-up to the completion of the railway, we must work on a number of levels to ensure that that patronage is increased. I believe that the TravelSmart program is one program that will assist us in making sure that public transport is the best mobility option for the people in Mandurah.

I also want to highlight an issue that Nuala Keating, the Australian Labor Party candidate for Murray, has raised with me. It relates to the need for a Transperth connection between Pinjarra and Mandurah.

Ms M.M. Quirk: She is an excellent candidate, isn't she?

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Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: She is a very good candidate indeed.

I have made the minister aware of the growth that is occurring in the eastern corridor between Mandurah and Pinjarra. As the member for Murray-Wellington will be aware, the outer Peel region is experiencing not only a sea change to the seaside areas, but also a bush change in some respects. Localities such as Pinjarra, Dwellingup, Waroona, Harvey and those communities along the South Western Highway are experiencing growth. Those people must have access to public transport. A number of people in localities such as North Pinjarra, or Carcoola as it is known, need to access bigger regional centres, including Pinjarra, for a variety of reasons. We must ensure that those people are connected to a public transport system. I applaud Nuala Keating for highlighting that issue.

Ms K. Hodson-Thomas: I agree with you.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I thank the member for Carine. We are also seeing land sales in developments such as Riverlands Ramble, as I think it is called, and Ravenswood in that corridor between Mandurah and Pinjarra. Riverlands Ramble is expected to have about 1 200 lots and a number of lots in Ravenswood are still to come on stream.

Mr J.L. Bradshaw: There are about 1 400 lots there.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Yes. Three or four thousand people will be living along the Pinjarra Road connection between Pinjarra and Mandurah, and those people deserve access to a rapid transport system. Many of them will want to use the rapid transit rail system as well as the *Australind*, which services the South Western Highway corridor.

I have been arguing long and hard for improved services within the city of Mandurah. Last night I spoke to some young people who go to the Mandurah Senior College. I was absent from the House because I hosted my Peel schools fest, which is attended by all the schools in the region, including those from Pinjarra. The students from Pinjarra Primary School, under Tim Cope, who is a very clever and wonderful teacher, were fantastic. Last night the students who were helping backstage wanted to talk to me about some of the problems they were having with connections. That is the key issue in Mandurah at the moment. We need to ensure that the people who are dropped off at the bus station can get to their connecting bus as quickly as possible. At the moment there is no doubt that there are gaps in connections. It has been mentioned to me by elderly citizens and the young people who accosted me after the show last night, including Cheri Hodgson, Danni Wigham and Adele Harbeck. I am pleased that they highlighted their problems with the connections, because they are students at the Mandurah Senior College. At the moment buses service the college, but these students are asking for more frequent bus services so that they can get to their homes quicker after school finishes. Mandurah Senior College has a flexible timetable, but many students also need to get to casual employment. I have taken that matter on board.

In comparing and contrasting the approach to transport by the Gallop Government and, indeed, the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, my area has seen a massive improvement. We have a long way to go. I want to make sure that this minister, future ministers and future Governments - if I am still in this place in the future - understand the importance of the public transport infrastructure to the people of the area and that the southern suburbs railway, despite the negativity from some members opposite, will be an absolutely critical piece of infrastructure socially, environmentally and economically. The benefits will be huge for the people of Mandurah and the Peel region. I wish that those opposite and some of the detractors, many of whom live in places such as Cottesloe and Mosman Park, who are critical of the project would realise just how important that project will be. It is interesting that the carping Leader of the Opposition has slid into this Chamber and begun carping when he has not listened to the rest of the debate. Maybe he needs to understand that he does not know what is occurring in Mandurah.

MR P.D. OMODEI (Warren-Blackwood) [5.40 pm]: I will make a contribution to this debate, although my voice is croaky. The motion before us says that this House condemns the Gallop Labor Party for its failure to properly maintain and expand Western Australia's transport system. The member for Mandurah has just said that the difference between the Opposition and the Government's role on these matters has been stark. I will reflect for a moment on the member's electorate of Mandurah. What has the Labor Government done for Mandurah since it has been in government? A railway line is being built. However, I cannot see any railway lines there yet. Obviously the railway line has been proposed for some time. Under the previous coalition Government, a railway would have been built to Mandurah, albeit via a different route. In my view it was premature to build a railway line to Mandurah. I also support the Dawesville cut. The member for Mandurah must be reminded that the cultural centre, the new hospital, the Halls Head Middle School, the senior college, the

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marina and a number of other major projects in Mandurah were completed under the previous coalition Government. It is not a picture of fancy things that are going to happen; they were built.

Suddenly the member for Mandurah has been a convert to the Peel deviation. A couple of years ago he did not want to know about it. Suddenly he has realised that a lot of people cannot move on the weekend because there is so much traffic in Mandurah. I travel through Mandurah all the time. When I first came to Perth as a member of Parliament 15 years ago, there was just one set of lights in Mandurah. There are now seven or eight sets of lights. That is the legacy that has been left for the people of Mandurah. If the member for Mandurah wanted to represent his people, he should have proposed the construction of the Peel deviation before the railway line was constructed. That is what Mandurah needs so that people can live a reasonable lifestyle.

I could go on about the Government's holier-than-thou attitude, its rewriting of history and the stark difference between the former Government and this Government. What would Perth be like today if it were not for the Graham Farmer Freeway and its interchanges? What would Perth be like today without the southern freeway? It is about time that government members acknowledged some of the achievements of the previous Government. Every Government will make a contribution to the future of Western Australia. Let us not be nonsensical about it.

I have travelled from the southern areas into Perth and I have lived with my son in Hillarys at various times since I have been a member of Parliament. I have seen the fantastic northern railway line that the Government spruiks about all the time. When I have travelled on the Mitchell Freeway, even as early as 7.30 in the morning, there has been a traffic jam 15 kilometres from the CBD. If the railway line were so fantastic, what are all those people doing on the freeway?

Ms K. Hodson-Thomas: They cannot get a train.

Mr P.D. OMODEI: They cannot get a train. When I travel down there and I am in a traffic jam in the "parking lot", I look to my right in the morning and see the train with three carriages go past with people standing in it like sardines. If it is such a viable enterprise, why are there not eight carriages on the trains? It is because it is part of the Australian culture for people to get into their cars and travel to their destination. I have used the public transport system. I am a country boy; I am not used to travelling on public transport, but I thought I would try it. I sometimes stay with my son in East Fremantle. When I caught the bus from Canning Highway, it took me an hour and a half to get to Parliament House, and I had to walk up the hill too.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Is that your excuse?

Mr P.D. OMODEI: That is my excuse. I am so fat because I like to drive my car. Who revamped Perth's central area transport system? The coalition Government. Who revamped the whole bus transport system in the metropolitan area? The coalition Government. What has the Labor Party done? Sweet bugger all. It does a lot of talking. At the same time it has removed about \$200 million in road funding. If members want to compare achievements, they should look at the Old Coast Road dual carriageway. It is 60 kilometres of dual carriageway from Bunbury. That is an achievement. Members opposite should talk to the truck drivers and people who commute to Bunbury or Perth. The previous Government allocated a further \$60 million to the South Western Highway. Now it has just two little passing lanes, which is one of this minister's achievements. They look nice. I would hate to see the Indonesians march on Perth given the amount of time it took Main Roads to build that road. It is unbelievable. Why is it not a dual carriageway? As soon as it gets to the creek, it stops because obviously it would cost too much to build a bridge.

This minister will allow an extra truck every 10 minutes to go through to Bridgetown in addition to the traffic that passes through it currently. If those trucks travel on that road, what will happen to Hester's Hill? Mr Acting Speaker, you are an ex-Bunbury boy and know how long the hill is. There are about three hills. There will be no traffic movement down those hills if the minister's proposal goes ahead. There is no doubt that it would put people's lives at risk.

Let us talk about the stark difference between the Government and the Opposition. For how long have members talked about building the ring-road around Albany? The pressure applied by the Liberal Party's candidate for Albany, Andrew Partington, who has been working assiduously on this issue, has helped the Government to finally come to the party. I am talking about heavy trucks travelling to and from the port increasing from 1.7 million tonnes to 4.7 million tonnes by 2011. It has been well known since when we were in government that the ring-road is desperately needed. It was the job of this Government to complete that ring-road. In August, the Opposition announced funding of \$7.9 million for the first stage of that project. Now the Labor Party has come to the party. I hope like hell that the Labor Party builds it. It seems to be very good at talking and very good at doing little.

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Chester Park Road is another road on which Andrew Partington has been working hard. The passing lanes on Chester Park Road and the section of road through the Stirling Ranges to Ongerup and five-mile corner and the shearing shed corner is seven or eight kilometres from Ongerup. About 20 accidents have occurred along that ripply road. I get letters about that part of the road from people who are not my constituents and even though it is not my portfolio. People are very concerned about that road. There is no doubt that an increase in woodchip traffic would exacerbate that situation.

I will talk about my own electorate. The minister seems to think that I am fair game for some of her smart comments in all debates. I do not mind that. No doubt the railway line between Manjimup and Bunbury must be deteriorating because the chip train travels at just 10 kilometres an hour in some cases. I understand a proposal has been put to the Government to construct a loading facility at Greenbushes and that chip freight will be trucked from Diamond, which is five or six kilometres south of Manjimup, as far as Greenbushes. The State Government owns the railway line. The Government has leased it for 49 years to Australian Railroad Group Pty Ltd, which is a private railway company. The company is saying that that section of the railway is no longer viable. That has occurred because of the decrease in the amount of product that comes from the woodchip mill. The company wants to send that freight by road. I repeat that the railway line belongs to the State of Western Australia. If the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure in this Gallop Labor Government is not prepared to upgrade that railway line, a truck will travel through the centre of Bridgetown every three minutes. Anyone who has travelled through Bridgetown knows that Hampton Street is very narrow and that about two-thirds of the way from the south heading north there is a hump and a curve. The road is dangerous now.

I have not condemned the Government; all I have said is that I want the minister to make some statements about the future of that road and the railway line. I believe that both the railway line and the South Western Highway need urgent upgrading. It is well known that we do not have as many doctors in the south west as we would like, and we are working on that. I know that members, even on the Labor Party side, are working on it, because we need those doctors. At the moment, if there is no doctor at the Warren District Hospital, patients must go to Bridgetown or Bunbury. The drive to Bunbury takes an hour and a half, on a dangerous road, because of the number of heavy trucks using it.

The minister can make smart comments about the member for Warren-Blackwood; I can cop it, but in the end it is the responsibility of the Government of the day to govern for all people. I can recall the Premier, who sits opposite me in this Parliament, saying upon being elected to government that he would govern for all Western Australians. That is not what is happening at the moment. The people of the lower south west, particularly in my electorate, are being treated like poor relations and lepers. The only reason I can find for this treatment is that we supported the timber industry at one stage. What a terrible thing! It was one of the foundation industries of Western Australia, and we supported it. This Government decimated it. It is not a reflection on the Chair, Mr Acting Speaker (Mr A.J. Dean), but as the member for Bunbury you would know the importance of the timber industry to the south west of Western Australia. It has been devastated. I challenge any member in this House to drive down the main street of Manjimup, and along Rose and Giblett Streets, and see how many vacant shops there are. They should then go to the industrial area and see how many vacant premises there are. That is the measure for judging how this Government has served the people of that electorate. I have fought very hard for those people, and this Government has let them down. I know that the Minister for Community Development is a very compassionate person, and she should be aware that we have very real family issues in that area that have resulted from the problems of the timber industry. I know all the Labor Party people like to think that they have saved all the old-growth forest. I remind members that it was the Labor Party that built the Diamond chip-mill in 1975. The Labor Party built the railway line to Manjimup for the woodchip industry, which produces 850 000 tonnes of chips a year. We should not pretend that Labor Party members have seen the light on that road to Damascus, because the Labor Party was there. Each year 680 000 tonnes of first and second-grade jarrah timber, and more than two million tonnes of third-grade and salvage timber, was cut under Labor. The proposal always was that, by the year 2000, 300 000 cubic metres would be cut. The Regional Forest Agreement calls for 286 000, which was pretty close. Those decisions were based on science.

This Government pretends that it is the champion of transport in Western Australia. It should talk to Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd, the largest agricultural company in Western Australia, about its attitude to the current minister. It should talk to every property developer and planner in Western Australia, and ask them what their attitude is to the current Minister for Planning and Infrastructure. It will not receive a pretty response. The Government is trying to ram down the throats of the people of Western Australia the idea that everything is happy in that fairy-dairy land of transport. It is not. The difference is stark.

Let us give some credit where credit is due. Let us give the previous Government its due for the infrastructure it put in place. The Ministers for Transport in the previous Government presided over a huge amount of road infrastructure construction in regional Western Australia. That is just a statement of fact; those roads exist. The

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previous Government was a can-do Government. It delivered real projects in Western Australia. I think one of its downfalls was that it never spent enough time telling the people of Western Australia about its achievements and what it was doing. It was too busy getting on with the business. The stark contrast - to use the words of the member for Mandurah - is that the present Government tells the community of Western Australia what it will do, but has not yet delivered the goods. Nobody in Western Australia says there should be no southern rail project; it is a question of when it should have been done. I reserve the right as a properly elected member of Parliament to be parochial about my district. I think my people from Northcliffe all the way to Windy Harbour, Walpole, Pemberton and Manjimup should be entitled to travel on safe roads. That is particularly the case if services will not be provided by the Government at hospitals at Pemberton and Manjimup. I remind members that a brand-new hospital was opened in Pemberton by the current Government. Will it claim credit for that as well? What is all this nonsense about claiming credit? It should be acknowledged that infrastructure is being developed in Western Australia and that all Governments make a contribution, rather than pretend, as is the case too often with members opposite, that government members are the champions of everything that happens in Western Australia. The fact is that the State of Western Australia will grow and prosper no matter who is in government. In fact, we would be better off with a bit less government for a while - we would probably grow and prosper at a greater rate. Members opposite should not give me that nonsense about the stark difference between the Labor Government and the coalition. If Perth had not been provided with the southern freeway and the Northbridge tunnel and all its interchanges, it would be an absolute brothel. I am pleased you are here, Mr Acting Speaker (Mr A.J. Dean), because as a country member, you would be as concerned about road infrastructure in the country as anybody else in regional Western Australia.

The common comment heard around regional Western Australia, whether at the pub, football club or golf club, is that the Gallop Labor Government does not give a damn about people in regional Western Australia. That claim is borne out by the facts. One need only look at the health, education and road systems. Industry has depended upon the support of government and scientific study, as occurred in the timber industry. People say such things around Western Australia about the Government. If members opposite talk to anyone in the south west about transport infrastructure, they will be asked why the Government does not complete the dual carriageway on the coast road. That is what people want. It would make the trip to Perth quicker for people who must travel for business or health reasons or to transport goods. The Peel deviation is an important project. Again, as a member representing Warren-Blackwood in the State's lower south west, I acknowledge the importance of the Peel deviation. I do not say that we should build the South Western Highway to Manjimup to the exclusion of everything else. We need both rail and road - I say get the projects completed.

The Government has been negligent in the way it has treated people in regional Western Australia. I hope the minister will take the time to make an announcement about the future of that railway line in the south west; that is, that the Government will upgrade the line. The member for the South West Region Hon Adele Farina and the local Labor Party candidate for the area are squatting on that railway line, saying that the minister will not close it. Of course the minister could not close that railway. If she did, the public backlash would be immense. Where would the minister be if she were promoting a \$2 billion railway to Mandurah and she closed a very small railway line to Manjimup? It would not happen. Commit the money and let the people in the lower south west know that the Government is serious about rail transport. Keep the heavy freight on rail and fix the roads. Fix the South Western Highway. With the first fatality on that road, the first call the minister will receive will be from me. This Government has been negligent for ignoring the importance of that road, particularly from Manjimup to Bunbury. People use that road on an ever-increasing basis to go to Bunbury to have their children and to access other health care. I do not want any smart remarks from the minister; I want a statement of the minister's intention for the South Western Highway and for that railway line to the Diamond Mill.

MS A.J. MacTIERNAN (Armadale - Minister for Planning and Infrastructure) [6.00 pm]: The member for Carine has expressed concern about this Government's lack of investment in public transport infrastructure. She obviously is doing very deep irony because, as we know, the performance of the previous Government on public transport was absolutely woeful.

Mr P.D. Omodei: That is rot.

Ms A.J. MacTIERNAN: I listened in absolute silence to members opposite for an hour and a half of debate, and I want the opportunity to respond to each and every one of the Opposition's claims, which have been absolutely outrageous in their audacity. The member for Carine complained that the Government has not spent enough on public transport. I will point out what was done by the previous Government during its eight years in office.

Ms K. Hodson-Thomas: I'll only be five minutes.

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Ms A.J. MacTIERNAN: That is interesting. Will the Hansard reporter note that the member for Carine, who moved this motion, who spoke for approximately half an hour and who was heard in absolute silence, has now left the Chamber.

Mr D.F. Barron-Sullivan: She will be back in a moment. She has just gone out for a minute.

Ms A.J. MacTIERNAN: I do not intend therefore, to address any of the issues she has raised.

Point of Order

Mr P.D. OMODEI: The member is reflecting on the member for Carine. The member for Carine wanted to go to the toilet. The minister was not in the House during the whole debate so the minister is abusing parliamentary privilege to get a message on the *Hansard* that is not true.

The SPEAKER: Order! Points of order should not be abused either. That might be the member's point of view, but it is not a point of order.

Debate Resumed

[Quorum formed.]

Ms A.J. MacTIERNAN: In the absence of the member for Carine I will move on to the points made by the member for Kalgoorlie, who has complained about the number of times the new *Prospector* has broken down. He said his capacity for charity had reached an end. The technology used in the train on the Kalgoorlie line is not technology over which the Government had any choice. When the Government took office, that technology had already been chosen.

Mr M.J. Birney: Is it our fault?

Ms A.J. MacTIERNAN: I am explaining the reality. The member can choose to ignore it or he can listen, as I listened to him in absolute silence. I demand that I be given the same opportunity.

Mr M.J. Birney interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! Interjections are disorderly and the minister has asked that members show her the same courtesy that she showed them. I do not think that is unreasonable. If members interject, I will call them to order.

Ms A.J. MacTIERNAN: When the Government took office, the tender process was under way. The technology had been chosen and tenders had gone out on that basis. We had to decide whether we should start that whole tender process again.

Mr M.J. Birney interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, member for Kalgoorlie!

Ms A.J. MacTIERNAN: We decided to go with that arrangement because, if we had started the whole process again, it would have been very costly to the State and would have led to very long delays. We were left with this technology. We worked as well as we could to make it work. As the member has acknowledged, we made every endeavour to ensure that the train was fit for service by the time that it commenced operation. It is true, as the member said, that since 28 June on 11 occasions the *Prospector* did not undertake the journey because of concerns about its operational fitness. That is out of a total of 324 services. That means that the new train has run successfully on 96.6 per cent of scheduled services. That, on any industry parameter, is an acceptable level of service. The new train has never failed to complete a journey once it has started. Indeed, when we go to Kalgoorlie we hear very positive reports about the *Prospector*. It is true that on 11 out of 324 occasions the train has not been operational, which means that 96 per cent of the time the train has completed the journey. We say that on any industry standard that is an adequate rate of service, particularly for a new -

Mr M.J. Birney: Do you think that closing down 11 times is adequate?

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Kalgoorlie to order for the third time.

Ms A.J. MacTIERNAN: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The member for Kingsley expressed some concern about toilets at stations. We have said that every station other than Canning Bridge in the New MetroRail project will have toilets in situ. The member has called for the upgrade of Wanneroo Road. Our assessments are that at the moment there is spare capacity on Wanneroo Road. She has asked what is happening with Marmion Avenue. As we have indicated, we are prepared to support a pre-funding arrangement with the Tokyu Corporation. We are currently working, and I think working well, to

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resolve the alignment of Marmion Avenue. We would expect Marmion Avenue to be under construction some time next year.

We could not quite see the point that the member for Kingsley was making about the extension of Mitchell Freeway. The configuration of the road has not changed since its original planning in 1980. The proposal has always been that for around 500 metres between Hodges Drive and Shenton Avenue the road would be subject to fill. A road cannot behave like a big dipper. It must have a reasonably straight elevation. For that reason at both ends the road is cut into the natural lie of the land, but at that point for 500 metres it is elevated. That has always been the design.

The subdivision in Connolly was created in 1987. At that time it was well and truly known that was to be the configuration. We are also very confident that the whole subdivision design has been to turn away from the freeway. A slipway is situated between the freeway and the subdivision. All the housing in the subdivision faces inwards and not outwards towards the freeway. In any event, we were able to plant up that portion of the freeway so that the wall could be totally concealed or camouflaged by vegetation and plantings. If we were to reduce the elevation of the road at this point to ground level, it would require a massive change to the engineering design of the other two kilometres of the project because it would have to be sunk a further six metres at either end. That would require 18-metre baffles on either side, which means we would lose approximately 36 metres of vegetation from the side of the road in all the other parts of the extension between Shenton Avenue and Hodges Drive. That seems to be a very poor trade-off to me. We are working our way through the issues. The Opposition, of course, has not made any coherent statement on what its position would be. The Opposition has not been honest in acknowledging that this was the profile of the road that was in existence during its term of government. We have said concerning the overpass or underpass that we do not need to make a decision until approximately March next year. We are happy to continue consultation with the community on that while the process is under way. We are very mindful that the community wants the Government to get on with the road and that if we were to undertake a fundamental redesign of the road with the environmental approvals it would undoubtedly require, it would take us an additional 12 to 18 months and put back the road project. I do not believe that is in the interests of the community.

The member spoke about the Fremantle eastern bypass and the traffic flows on Leach Highway. Again, she is operating from an ideological point of view and not from fact. The facts are that since Roe Highway stages 4, 5 and 6 were opened, all of which have been completed under this Government, traffic levels on Leach Highway have dropped very significantly. When Roe Highway stage 7 is completed, that will continue. The Government has a six-point plan in place. If the previous Government had any intention of building the Fremantle eastern bypass, it had eight years in which to do it. All it did was put the Fremantle eastern bypass into the metropolitan region scheme and sit on the issue. The previous Government did not deal with problems. A line on a map does not solve a traffic problem. It put a line on a map to represent a route that it had no intention of constructing, as demonstrated by its eight years in government. It knew that the Labor Party was committed to removing it and had done so in its previous term of government. If the previous Government had really wanted to build it, it would have, but it did not. The previous Government was never going to build the road; this is all puffery and hot air. The Opposition has to accept the fact that this is not an acceptable solution, and move on. It is important to understand that in the 30 years since the road was planned we have seen a movement to the south of the major thrust of industrial and port activity. Indeed, points well south of Roe Highway will experience the major growth in industrial and port activity. Therefore, the road that was designed 30 years ago before that was contemplated does not provide the best solution for the transport issues that are currently confronting us.

As the member for Carine has come back into the Chamber we can perhaps address some of those issues. The member for Carine has rather extraordinarily claimed today that there has been a 25 per cent reduction in capacity on the trains. The member did make that statement?

Ms K. Hodson-Thomas: I said there was a 25 per cent reduction in the number of rail carriages to Glendalough train station. Instead of having four-car trains there are now three-car trains.

Ms A.J. MacTIERNAN: There is a problem with that. If the member calculates the number of cars in any one train, she will not get the right answer because - guess what - we have increased the number of trains.

Ms K. Hodson-Thomas: There has been a reduction of trains on that section.

Ms A.J. MacTIERNAN: There has been an increase in the number of trains. Prior to this Government commencing its new service, the capacity on the northern line was 16 200 passengers. It has increased to 19 350. It has increased significantly. We started off in that first week with five new three-car sets. We now have six new three-car sets on the service, and more new three-car sets will come into operation over the next month. They will replace two-car sets, not four-car sets.

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Ms K. Hodson-Thomas: When I made those claims - I hope the minister will bear with this interjection - they were made about the Glendalough station. That service has diminished. I am not talking about the entire Joondalup line. I was talking about commuters who catch the train at Glendalough.

Ms A.J. MacTIERNAN: I ask the member to read what she said in *Hansard*, because that is not what she said. The member for Carine said that there has been a 25 per cent reduction on the northern line, which is absolute rubbish. As I have demonstrated, there has been an increase in excess of 25 per cent. It is true that we had to get some of the configurations right and that during the first week people wanted to travel on the three-car sets, not the old four-car sets. People crowded onto those trains while some of the four-car and two-car sets - the old trains - travelled virtually empty. We have reconfigured the stocking patterns of some of those trains to ensure that some stations closer to town receive sufficient patronage. That has been adjusted; we have added another 300-passenger capacity to the Glendalough station. Overall, there has been a tremendous increase in the capacity of the northern suburbs line. In the first week we had to get the patterns right. The member for Carine is unbelievable. She comes in here with an e-mail -

Ms K. Hodson-Thomas interjected.

Ms A.J. MacTIERNAN: I am going to go on.

Ms K. Hodson-Thomas: You are so gracious. I did it, and I was gracious about it. I said that the community member had been dealing with the Public Transport Authority in a constructive way. The minister comes in here and tries to -

The SPEAKER: I indicated earlier that I would call members to order. There was an acceptable level of interjections. However, I warn the member for Carine that the minister was good enough to listen to her in silence and I suggest she do the same for the minister.

Ms A.J. MacTIERNAN: I listened closely to what the member for Carine said. The fundamental premise and lead story of her diatribe about the transport system, which is supposedly in chaos, was based on one person travelling from Glendalough station in the first week of the operation of the new service. I ask the member for Carine: how balanced was her representation of what is happening on the northern suburbs line? We know that her prime research engine is the "Rumour File". We do not have high expectations of the member for Carine. That is what she based her claims on. However, she came into this House without updating her claims and without trying to find out any further information. She based her claims on what happened in that first week at one particular railway station, and from that she extrapolated that there has been a major problem and that the system has experienced a major failure. There has not been a major failure. This is an incredibly positive story.

Ms K. Hodson-Thomas: Just like the transport executive and licensing information system. It's just like everything you have overseen.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Carine to order for the first time.

Ms A.J. MacTIERNAN: It is interesting to have overseen something. I can just imagine the member for Carine as a minister. She would roll herself into a little ball and not do anything, because when one does something there are always problems. One cannot do anything about the introduction of new infrastructure or new services without there being some difficulty. The member does not have the guts to let us do something, accept that there will be problems and that those problems will be managed. She would not do anything. That was the philosophy of the previous Minister for Transport. That is why nothing was done; that is why there was no expansion of the rail network.

I will go through some of the salient facts. In eight years not one centimetre of rail was laid. In those eight years there was a total acquisition of four railcars. Those opposite did nothing, with such incredible style and flamboyance. They are really good; no-one does nothing as well as the members of the Opposition!

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call to order the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and the member for Carine for the second time.

Ms A.J. MacTIERNAN: We could all do nothing really well. If we did nothing we would not create problems. The staff of the Public Transport Authority have been going out on the rail network working out where the particular problems are, where we have an excess or shortage of capacity, and adjusting the train configurations accordingly. That is perfectly reasonable; it is an incredibly sensible thing to do. In that first week we were going through a big adjustment period. I am really proud of the fact that we have already got six new three-car sets, compared to the total production by those opposite during eight years of government of four two-car sets. We have already got six three-car sets, and each week we will be rolling out more and more of those services.

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The next absolutely unbelievable whinge from the member for Carine was about the ticketing machines and the fact that people must use coins. When we first came into government we made a decision to completely revamp that system. The member for Carine knows that as well as anyone. She comes into the Parliament every day complaining that we are spending \$30 million putting in place a new ticketing system so people will not have to use coins and now, as a great insight, she is saying, "Oh, people will have to put money in these machines." I have told her that we are building SmartRider, but she says, "Yes, but I don't like SmartRider because I actually think it is outrageous that you are spending \$30 million." Give us a break! We are doing it. We have let the contract and the system is being built.

Ms K. Hodson-Thomas: You made an announcement in 2001 and here we are in 2004 and it is still not on line.

The SPEAKER: Order, member!

Ms A.J. MacTIERNAN: It is unbelievable. In eight years, not one railway station, not one centimetre of line, not one new rail service! In seven years of government, no new buses!

Mr J.J.M. Bowler: They were going to build a new *Prospector*.

Ms A.J. MacTIERNAN: Yes. We have let the contract. The SmartRider system is being built.

Mr P.D. Omodei interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, member for Warren-Blackwood!

Ms A.J. MacTIERNAN: The system is already being trialled at Stirling station and we will start rolling it out next year. When a system like that is being put in place involving very complex technology we must get it right. That sort of thing cannot be done overnight. We have done the hard yards, we have done the work, we have let the contract and the system is under construction as we speak.

Mr P.D. Omodei: It is a bit like your Government's overcharging on licences.

The SPEAKER: Order, member for Warren-Blackwood!

Ms A.J. MacTIERNAN: The member for Carine complained about the licensing system and the call centre. We have been improving the performance of the call centre, which went through a difficult period in the first month that the transport executive and licensing information system was introduced. We have acknowledged that. We have got back to a basic answering time of 30 to 40 seconds, which is well within acceptable industry standards. The member for Warren-Blackwood would like us to spend all our money building roads in his area. He is entitled to think that. However, I will now find my list of some of the roads that the Government has built. I ask members to bear with me while I find this incredibly long list of roads that the Labor Party has built since it has been in government.

Mr D.F. Barron-Sullivan: Do you have to hand information about regional road budgets?

Ms A.J. MacTIERNAN: What does the member for Mitchell mean by regional road budgets?

Mr D.F. Barron-Sullivan: For example, would the minister know what is this year's fiscal road budget for the south west region?

Ms A.J. MacTIERNAN: I do not have that information to hand. However, I can tell members that the percentage of the budget that is spent on regional roads has increased under our Government. The Government has started the \$88 million Geraldton southern transport corridor; Roe Highway stages 4 and -

Mr P.D. Omodei: Over how many years? Do not mislead the House!

The SPEAKER: Order, member for Warren-Blackwood!

Ms A.J. MacTIERNAN: Does the member have a problem with the southern transport corridor?

Mr P.D. Omodei: Over how many years will the \$88 million be spent? You give the impression that it will be over one year.

Ms A.J. MacTIERNAN: I cannot believe that the member for Warren-Blackwood can say that. It is a project. It will take around three to four years to construct. We are not claiming that a road-rail network of that complexity will be built in one year, any more than that the Graham Farmer Freeway was built in one year. The Government has started the Geraldton southern transport corridor project. It has committed \$62 million to Roe Highway stages 4 and 5, \$28.7 million to Roe Highway stage 6, \$140 million to the Tonkin Highway extension -

Mr P.D. Omodei: Are they all built?

Ms A.J. MacTIERNAN: They are either completed or currently under construction. The Government has committed \$16 million to the Marble Bar road, \$23 million to stage 1 of the Karratha-Tom Price road,

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\$63.7 million to the Mt Magnet-Leinster road, around \$7 million to stages 1 and 2 of Derby Highway, around \$10 million to the Gascoyne bridge, \$4 million to the Bibbawarra crossing in Carnarvon -

Mr P.D. Omodei: Come on, minister! Main Roads' budget is around \$800 million a year.

The SPEAKER: I do not know how many times I must get to my feet. The member for Warren-Blackwood may not like what the minister is saying. I am sure that she did not like what he said, but she sat there and listened to what he said.

Mr P.D. Omodei: No, she didn't.

The SPEAKER: What the member for Warren-Blackwood cannot do is speak when I am on my feet. The member will not interject any longer.

Ms A.J. MacTIERNAN: I can understand why the member for Warren-Blackwood gets upset, because the reality is that the Government has done a magnificent job in building the road network across this State. I am pleased that tomorrow I will open a number of roads - Derby Highway stage 2, the Cape Leveque road and the Tanami Road. These are major road projects for the north of the State. The coalition ignored the Kimberley and the Pilbara during its entire time in government. We have put emphasis on those roads because those areas were vastly neglected. I will not be deterred. I have listed some of the major projects that the Government either has completed or has under way. A number of other projects are coming up, such as the Perth-Bunbury highway, to which the Government will make a contribution of around \$170 million which hopefully will be matched by the federal Government. There is also Roe Highway stage 7; the Albany ring road; the Tom Price-Karratha road, of which stage 2 is about to kick off; and the Mitchell Freeway extension to the north. That is an amazing array of projects that go the length and breadth of the State. They are major and strategic road projects. They have been thought through and will deliver positive, strategic benefits for their local communities.

There are issues throughout the State. There is an enormous amount of unmet road need. If members on the other side were prepared to support us with the federal coalition Government and to help us get a fair share of resources for this State, we might be able to do more. The reality is that the federal coalition Government has delivered Western Australia the complete insult of 6.9 per cent of the national pie of transport funds. We have been desperately short-changed by the federal coalition. If members opposite want to do something constructive, they should get on to the Government in Canberra and tell it that it is about time Western Australia got a fair share of its own resources.

Notwithstanding that, I believe that we have managed admirably. As I have mentioned, there are resources from one end of the State to the other. Strategic and important roads have been built for our regional communities. Indeed, we would say that any analysis of the facts shows that, on balance, we have favoured regional roads more than metropolitan roads.

In relation to the rail, the member for Warren-Blackwood takes offence at us reminding the Parliament of the claims that he and various members of the coalition made when they were privatising the rail system. Claims were made that in excess of \$400 million would be spent on capital upgrades. We know now that those claims were never enshrined in any contract and amounted to nothing more than puffery.

Mr J.J.M. Bowler: We are now missing out on federal funds that are being spent across Australia.

Ms A.J. MacTIERNAN: That is right. Because our network has been privatised, we are missing out on those funds. We could have put the funds into the Australian Rail Track Corporation.

Mr J.J.M. Bowler: If John Howard wants to give us some money, he can't give it to us.

Ms A.J. MacTIERNAN: That is right. What is more, member for Eyre, we are now paying in excess of \$20 million a year to subsidise that sale process, because the debt that we were left with on the freight network was not covered by the sale. Whereas previously we were able to repay the entire debt with the revenue that was generated, we are now left with a debt and no revenue to service it.

Mr J.J.M. Bowler: It was a good deal, wasn't it! It was a real beauty!

Ms A.J. MacTIERNAN: It was a fabulous deal. We sold the assets at a fire sale and we have been left with a \$20 million a year debt. I just think it is extraordinary that the member for Carine could come into this place and use such pathetic examples to say that we have a crisis with our transport system because in the first week of the introduction of the new rail system, when we introduced six new trains, we did not have the configurations right at each station and some people had to wait at the Glendalough station. I can assure the member that we have balanced that out and increased the capacity. I thought that the member for Carine, as a person from the northern suburbs, would have come into this place and celebrated the fact that, instead of having a capacity of 16 200, we now have a capacity of 19 350, and all of that capacity is being used because people love our rail system.

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MR A.D. McRAE (Riverton) [6.32 pm]: I oppose this motion. I find it extraordinary that the Liberal Party in this place should move a motion to condemn the Gallop Labor Government on transport and our record of success in meeting the extraordinary challenges that have resulted from the amazing economic growth in our State, and the growth in population that it is experiencing, combined with the backlog of urgent infrastructure investment that was left over from the previous Liberal-National Party Government. In the context of all that, I find it extraordinary for the Liberal Party to move such a motion in the time allocated for private members' business, notices of motion - one of the most important vehicles that an Opposition has to raise matters. Indeed, I would go so far as to say that either it is political opportunism at its worst or the coalition is delusional. Having heard the arguments from members opposite, I can only conclude that the Liberal Party is absolutely delusional. I will explain why I believe that is the case.

This is the same Liberal Party that history shows closed the Fremantle rail line. This is the same Liberal Party that opposed the construction of the northern suburbs line. As we heard today, that is the very same railway line that it now says a Labor Government is not sufficiently servicing and resourcing to meet extraordinary demand and support from the people of the northern suburbs. This is the same Liberal Party that opposed the electrification and modernisation program of our urban rail system; it wanted to keep us in the Dark Ages! This Liberal Party not only opposed the northern suburbs railway line being built and opened by a Labor Government, but also, as one of the last acts of the Court and O'Connor Governments, shut down the Fremantle line - one of the major networks in our rail system. We can add all that to this party's record. This is the same Liberal Party that privatised Westrail Freight Pty Ltd, and we have just heard from the minister what an absolute disaster that was. It sold an asset owned by the people of Western Australia, which had a revenue stream because of the extraordinary wealth that comes through the rail system in our regional areas, primarily through the transportation of bulk grains. This Liberal Party sold it to a private operator on a wish and a prayer that the private operator would then make an investment in the infrastructure. There was no obligation in the deed of sale, no contract that would obligate that new owner to undertake that investment and nothing that removed the State's exposure to what is, as the minister explained, an ongoing debt payment on the infrastructure that the State used to own.

Mr J.J.M. Bowler: I have been told that there are 35 speed restrictions on the line between Koolyanobbing and either Kalgoorlie or Esperance, and the track is just falling apart by the day.

Mr A.D. McRAE: It is in decline because of the failure to properly plan an infrastructure investment that was a great asset of the people. We have lost the asset. We took a paltry amount of money for it in a fire sale -

Mr J.J.M. Bowler: The only State to do so.

Mr A.D. McRAE: Yes, the member is absolutely right. We took a paltry amount of money for that valuable and ongoing asset that delivered revenues to the State, and we were left with a declining rail infrastructure. This Liberal Party, this rabble, is unable to answer questions about the plans it had for the infrastructure investment from the new owner. Indeed, we are now the bunnies who are paying for it. However, it gets worse. In spite of the Liberal Party's proclaimed research and investigation of options, its assertions that its members thought deeply about, its promises to build it, its pretend plans to build it and even its publicly funded promotion of its decision to build it, not one metre of rail for the southern railway through the Kenwick deviation was ever built. The Liberal Party has the audacity to come into this Chamber and say that our direct route plan is a failure. There is no question that a range of implications flow from an investment of this scale; that is, an investment in the urban and the regional communities connected to the south for the next 100 years. There are changes to schedules, urban development patterns and the locations and focus within the southern metropolitan region stretching all the way to Mandurah. All those things change as a result of this kind of infrastructure investment. Not one metre of rail line was built by this Liberal Party, which has brought about this motion today. It is a sham. In fact, the Liberal Party and its conservative predecessors prior to the formation of the Liberal Party of Australia have not built one metre of railway in this State for more than 70 years. Members could forget all the other things that I have just outlined about the Liberal Party's performance. If they ever wanted to look at a record, the fact in itself that the Liberal Party and its predecessors have not constructed a metre of railway in this State for more than 70 years exposes the history and the underlying principles of the members on that side of the Chamber who pretend to have some form of commitment to transport and public transport systems in Western Australia. It is not just on rail systems, either urban transport or freight rail, that the Liberal Party has no record of credibility. It is also a complete and utter failure when it comes to roads. Despite all the campaigns that have been planned, including the campaign on the Roe Highway and the Fremantle eastern bypass that members of the Liberal Party and their fellow travellers in the city of Melville are orchestrating through the expenditure of \$300 000, the people in the southern suburbs do not believe them. Of course, there are their fellow travellers and those who are willing them on, but the people who reasonably assess the challenges that exist for my communities and those to the west of my electorate through to the port of Fremantle know these truths: first, the

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plans for Roe Highway and the Fremantle eastern bypass were drawn on a map some 40 years ago. Forty years ago when Roe Highway stage 8 was planned to be extended west of the planned Kwinana Freeway, it was drawn through the Beeliar wetlands. Of course, 40 years ago they were not referred to as the Beeliar wetlands; they were regarded as very smelly swamps and were part of a garbage dump. Indeed, there is horse swamp, north swamp and Bibra Lake. All these interconnected wetlands, which were used as dumping grounds, were part of the landscape that the planners of 40 years ago saw as an appropriate route for the construction of Roe Highway stage 8 west of the Kwinana Freeway. Fast-forward to the present day and what do we see? The first thing we recognise is that in the 10 years prior to the Gallop Government's election in 2001 - that includes the last couple of years of the Lawrence Labor Government and the eight years of the conservative Government - not one metre of bitumen was laid for Roe Highway. It still spilt down into William Street in Beckenham. For 10 long years those people endured the load of Roe Highway spilling into their suburban street. For eight years this mob, which has come into this place and moved a motion of condemnation, did absolutely nothing. In the space of four years we have built and opened stage 4 of Roe Highway to the Kenwick Link, stage 5 of Roe Highway to Nicholson Road and stage 6 of Roe Highway to South Street. We have connected the Canning Vale industrial estate and South Street all the way into Kenwick, Forrestfield and Armadale through our completion of those stages of Roe Highway. That contrasts with the previous Government's eight years of opportunity - a lost opportunity, a failed opportunity, an opportunity ignored and an opportunity denied. When it comes time for members opposite to do something, what is the result? It is a zero result. Their condemnation of the Gallop Government on transport matters is hollow and does not merit support.

We are now waiting for the final approvals for stage 7, which will connect Roe Highway to the Kwinana Freeway. With the completion of that link, a major piece of infrastructure that will connect Armadale with the Kwinana Freeway and the suburbs to the south will be complete. As the minister has already said, the fruits of our work in building stages 4, 5 and 6 of Roe Highway have already produced a reduction in the total number of vehicle movements a day on Leach Highway. We do not need Main Roads WA's traffic measures to recognise the truth of that. Every day of the week, people in my electorate tell me that they have noticed and experienced a reduction in the volume of traffic, particularly the freight share of the traffic, on Leach Highway. After 10 years of nothing at all being done, a Labor Government got on with it and did the job. After 10 years during which not one metre of road was built, it is a Labor Government that has built Roe stages 4, 5 and 6, and it is a Labor Government that will get Roe stage 7 built and connected to the freeway.

There has been some controversy about Roe stage 8 and the Fremantle eastern bypass. I accept that this is a highly contentious matter. I accept that people are deeply concerned about traffic management and freight movement through the south metropolitan region. However, those concerns will not be allayed, and the challenge of freight movement will not be resolved, simply by building more roads. Unless we have a comprehensive plan that brings together the different modes of freight movement, shifts some of the load of port operations away from the inner harbour and connects that strategy to overall freight reform, there will be no change to freight movement in the southern suburbs. All there will be is a continual growth in the container movement, through trucks, on Leach Highway. It is only the shifts that we have made in building Roe Highway that have produced a reduction in traffic on Leach Highway. It is only our continued efforts that will result in further changes and improvements.

Roe Highway stage 8 west of Kwinana Freeway will never proceed. It does not matter what this mob opposite would like to believe they can con people into. I say with absolute conviction that even if I did think it was a good idea, which I do not, and even if I did want to proceed with it, I am absolutely convinced, on the basis of the informal advice provided by the Environmental Protection Authority of Western Australia, that there is no prospect of building any form of Roe Highway stage 8 through the Beeliar wetlands. Despite any amount of money that may be thrown at it, there would be no circumstances or configuration that we could design and construct to take Roe Highway through those wetlands. Once that reality is confronted and accepted -

Mr J.L. Bradshaw: Have you not heard of bridges?

Mr A.D. McRAE: We hear the member's puerile interjection suggesting that we should just build a bridge. I will tell the member again. Perhaps he needs to read the advice. It is a public document. The Environmental Protection Authority's informal advice, as it is able to give under the Act, states - I will paraphrase - that it is not possible to imagine any form of engineering or construction design that would enable the environmental values of the Beeliar wetlands to be protected and not seriously and permanently damaged. We need to remember the importance of the Beeliar wetlands to the Swan coastal plain wetlands chain. The Beeliar wetlands form part of the remaining 20 per cent of the total Swan coastal plain wetlands that existed prior to European settlement of this region. When we put those things together with the fact that the EPA has said that there is no way in which we can design and build Roe Highway stage 8 through the Beeliar wetlands that will protect in the long term the environmental values contained in those wetlands, we will understand that it is impossible that a bridge will be

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able to overcome the problem. There is an alternative. As part of the Freight Network Review initiated by the very capable Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, one of the options examined, out of just fewer than 30, for freight network connection, was the extension of Roe Highway west of Kwinana Freeway by moving it south from its current alignment down onto the freight rail line and creating a freight rail corridor that would connect to Stock Road. The member for Murray-Wellington may not be aware, but that is certainly what I have put out in the public domain in the past couple of weeks.

[Leave granted for the member's time to be extended.]

Mr A.D. McRAE: If in future it is proved beyond any shadow of doubt that we must make the investment of many hundreds of millions of dollars for a connection to Stock Road in the west, I have put out into the public domain my values and beliefs and nailed them to the mast by saying that the way to do it is to create a unified freight corridor that extends from the freeway west and connects to Stock Road. The logic of getting to Stock Road is that it is be the best north-south freight distributor in the whole of the south metropolitan region. Once there is a connection to Stock Road, then there would be very good access into the port, up onto High Street, and then onto Stirling Highway in the north, which connects into the inner harbour. Stock Road heading south takes freight into Cockburn and the industrial estates of Henderson and Kwinana. There is logic in it. It was one option assessed during the freight network review process. I very happily say that if in the future a freight connection is needed, therein lies the answer. It is a protect and connect strategy. It would protect forever those Beeliar wetlands. Part of the last remaining 20 per cent of the Swan coastal plain wetlands and part of a whole cohesive chain of wetlands would be protected forever. It would protect and connect. It would connect areas west of the freeway to the major north-south freight route in the southern metropolitan region.

Mr Speaker, I say to you that it is a sensible and logical plan. It is a plan that would enable us to show that, if or when it is necessary as the demand emerges, there are options for Roe Highway beyond bulldozing those Beeliar wetlands. We can no longer accept that the sacrifice of wetlands for Roe Highway is a necessity. It is not, and I have demonstrated that it is not. Roe Highway stage 8 on the current freight rail line is a solution for the future.

I also want to talk briefly about the impact of our work on Leach Highway, South Street and other major freight roads in the south metropolitan region. There is no doubt that Leach Highway was under enormous pressure. It was carrying in the order of 60 000 to 64 000 vehicles a day with a freight share of that total load in the order of 10 to 12 per cent, which is very high by metropolitan standards. Clearly, this is the major freight feeder road for the inner harbour at Fremantle. As I said, subsequent to the opening of stages 4, 5 and 6, we have shown already a reduction in the total vehicle movements and a significant reduction in the freight load on Leach Highway. Those are already demonstrated outcomes and an already demonstrated success. However, there is much more to be done. As part of that process of reform and improvement, the minister and I launched the Leach Highway improvement plan earlier this year. That is a multimillion dollar upgrade plan. I will just quickly refer to some of the initiatives included in that improvement plan. We have installed bus bays on Leach Highway at Rossmoyne Senior High School. Nobody has ever done that. Nobody has ever achieved that. No Government even proposed them; they were always resisted. They were installed because I insisted they be installed for the convenience and safety of commuters and students who use both those very busy busports on either side of Leach Highway. Those bus bays now operate very successfully. Reasons for the resistance to bus bays on busy roads such as Leach Highway, South Street and other roads throughout the metropolitan region is the speed and high volume of vehicles. It is very difficult for buses to pull into a bus bay and then pull out into a heavily loaded stream of traffic travelling at 70 kilometres or 80 kilometres per hour, particularly during peak hours when the public transport is under pressure to be on time and to deliver commuters to where they want to go. The bus bays could be constructed at Rossmoyne because immediately west of the bus bays, traffic lights operate at the Webb Street intersection, which feeds into Rossmoyne. The lights provide an intersector that allows buses to use breaks in traffic to rejoin the traffic flows in the left-hand lane of Leach Highway heading east. Immediately to the east of the bus bays is the connection of Leach Highway and Karel Avenue. Karel Avenue is a significant distributor road. The light signalling sequence also provides breaks in traffic flows that enable the buses to pull out as they head in a westerly direction of Leach Highway and rejoin the traffic flows to take commuters on their way.

In addition, I have been successful in reducing the speed on Leach Highway in Riverton and Shelley from 80 kilometres an hour to 70 kilometres an hour. That might not seem like a great deal to many people. However, the traffic volumes I have referred to on Leach Highway travelled through the suburbs in my electorate at 80 kilometres an hour on the only stretch of Leach Highway with an 80 kilometres an hour speed limit to the south west of Albany Highway. Therefore, members can understand that it was a hot spot for speed. People felt intimidated when driving in heavy traffic that is made up of a high freight component. The reduction in speed and total traffic volumes, the reduction in the freight share of those total traffic volumes and the introduction of

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bus bays have been a part of the range of mechanisms we have used to make those roads safer, to reduce congestion and to give commuters better access.

However, we have not stopped there. We have also installed pelican lights, which have proved to be a boon for everybody. People who have travelled on a road behind a five or 10-tonne commercial vehicle with a high backboard are aware that their forward vision is obstructed and that they cannot see oncoming traffic lights. Similarly, when travelling on Leach Highway, on which there is a significant freight load among the traffic, a driver's vision can be obstructed when heading towards the next lot of traffic signals. The installation of pelican lights is a very successful alternative to installing flashing orange warning lights that signal a change in traffic signals from green to red. The installation of pelican lights was particularly appropriate on Leach Highway in my electorate because of the number of major intersections, including Karel Avenue, Webb Street, Vahland Avenue and a number of other minor street intersections with Leach Highway.

Why is it more appropriate to have a pelican light rather than a flashing orange signal? It is because flashing orange signals in relatively high-speed, high-volume traffic flows tend to cause different responses from different drivers. Orange flashing lights that operate in high-volume traffic tend to cause one group of drivers with a particular approach to those signals to respond by preparing to stop because they believe that the lights are about to turn red. However, another group of drivers will respond by considering they are far enough advanced when they see the orange flashing signals that they believe they must increase their speed to cross the changing light system. I am sure members fall into both those categories. Some members would respond to orange flashing lights by braking and reducing their speed and others would increase their speed but would, of course, like you, Mr Speaker, maintain that speed within the legal speed limits on the particular stretch of road on which they were travelling.

Debate interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.