

SMART FREEWAYS INITIATIVE

646. Mrs L.M. O'MALLEY to the Minister for Transport:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's efforts to support local jobs and local businesses through its unprecedented investment in transport infrastructure as the state recovers from the economic impact of COVID-19. Can the minister update the house on what the smart freeways project has meant for commuters and whether this would have been possible unless a decision was made to not proceed with the flawed and uneconomical Perth Freight Link?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:

I thank the member for Bicton for that question. Of course, the member for Bicton has been fighting for her community from day one. What an excellent member for Bicton she is. The feedback on the smart freeways has been excellent and it has delivered results. The only reason that we got to do the smart freeways project is that we redirected funds from the Perth Freight Link project. Across the southern suburbs—I see the member for Baldivis in the Speaker's gallery—we have delivered significant road improvements.

Ms L. Mettam interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Vasse, I call you to order for the second time.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The member for Vasse is the only person in Western Australia who believes that the smart freeways project has not delivered results. The opposition flies around the community like a ball of negativity about every project, including the smart freeways project. Let me refer to some of the projects that are delivering results, such as the Murdoch Drive connection and the Manning Road on-ramp, member for South Perth. Otherwise known as the John McGrath on-ramp.

Mr P.A. Katsambanis interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I am thinking about it, member.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members! We do not want to wake up the member for South Perth!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: We already have the John McGrath clubrooms in South Perth. There are only so many things that can be called John McGrath in one area, but we are still considering the on-ramp.

Mr P.A. Katsambanis: The only thing left is the train station.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Potentially.

Mr B.S. Wyatt: Whatever John wants, the minister gives!

Mr P.C. Tinley: She is a river to her people.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I am not sure what that meant, member.

Moving on. The freeway widening has delivered results. The Karel Avenue project and the High Street project are underway. The projects across the southern suburbs are delivering results. I thank the Western Australian community for its patience in delivering these road projects. We know there has been a lot of traffic management, deviation and detours, but I thank the community. We have underway the Metronet project in the middle of the freeway. Those who have driven past have seen the new piers being built for the new North Lake Road–Armada Road bridge, which will decongest that area. Someone said to me the other day, “I couldn't believe I was driving past Cockburn because I didn't have to stop.” That is the type of feedback that I am getting. The feedback has been incredible: from letters to the editor to comments on Twitter. One comment was, “It took me 20 minutes from door to desk via the smart freeway from Cockburn to the city. I am a convert.” That was by a journalist from a news outlet that does not normally praise the government. I will not mention the organisation. That journalist tweeted about their record travel time getting to the city. We are getting positive feedback across the social media platforms. Of course, that is backed up by the statistics. The stats show that between 8.00 am and 9.00 am on Tuesday, 8 September, it took 10.8 minutes to travel from Roe Highway to the Narrows Bridge, compared with 20 minutes previously—a halving of travel time. The savings were there across the whole morning. That is yet another example of the type of project that, since we won government and stopped the flawed projects and redirected the funds, are delivering results across the southern and northern suburbs and across regional Western Australia. We will continue to deliver road projects that are worthwhile and deliver results. Already we have seen the complete transformation of transport in the southern suburbs and we will continue to roll out projects like this across the state.