

**METROPOLITAN REGION SCHEME (BEELIAR WETLANDS) BILL 2021**

*Second Reading*

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

**MR R.S. LOVE (Moore — Deputy Leader of the Opposition)** [2.56 pm]: I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Metropolitan Region Scheme (Beeliar Wetlands) Bill 2021. In doing so, I will say that I listened with some interest to the contribution from the member for Cottesloe who, in his role as shadow Minister for Planning, is the lead speaker on this issue for the opposition alliance.

This bill was initially introduced in the previous Parliament in 2018. It is a fairly simple amendment to the metropolitan region scheme to revoke the road reserve that would have been used for the Roe 8 extension. It was a key election commitment from both sides of politics in 2017. The Labor Party went to the election with the intention of removing Roe 8 from its forward planning. At the same time, there is federal funding of \$1.2 billion still on the table that will not come to Western Australia if this legislation proceeds. That is a very heavy price to pay financially for the legislation to proceed through this house. The Beeliar wetlands is an A-class reserve that sits in a very traffic dense part of our state. At the moment, Leach Highway carries a lot of the load up and down that area.

I will go back in time a little bit to 2014–15, when Infrastructure Australia was doing its brief for the Perth Freight Link and looking at the cost benefits of this particular project. I note that at that stage it was part of a wider project. It is not mentioned here, but it is talking about the Kewdale to Fremantle section. At the same time, we were proposing to build the section from Muchea to Kewdale. There would have been an uninterrupted traffic path from Muchea all the way to the end of Roe 8, and, over time, into Fremantle port. That was the plan, but this particular section of the project from Fremantle port back to Leach Highway and Kewdale was looked at on its own by Infrastructure Australia. The business case in Infrastructure Australia's report outlines that there were very strong links between the project and the state's priorities at that stage. At that stage, Fremantle port was expected to be in operation for the foreseeable future. There was no plan to move from Fremantle. The government has changed that plan and is looking to eventually move the port from Fremantle to a larger expanded harbour in the Cockburn area.

Madam Acting Speaker, I am having trouble hearing myself here, if you do not mind toning the chat down.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms A.E. Kent)**: Sorry. Members!

**Mr D.A. Templeman**: We are doing a critique.

**Mr R.S. LOVE**: That is good, but I actually cannot think very clearly when I can hear so much chatter in the chamber. Thank you for your protection, Acting Speaker. I look forward to receiving more protection from you, especially from members who are not actually in their seats when they are talking!

Getting back to the reasons Roe 8 was being looked at, container traffic into the port is very heavy. There is already a very heavy traffic load in that area. Leach Highway is a heavily congested road. The member for Cottesloe seemed to cause some level of outrage by simply pointing out that today there was a very serious traffic accident on Leach Highway. It is not news that there are traffic accidents on Leach Highway. It is a very congested and very busy road. Today a truck, swerving to avoid a pedestrian, hit a bus that was carrying school students. It was a busy time of the day; it was 8.13 this morning. I would imagine that an accident is something of a nightmare for any professional truck driver who is trying to do the right thing. In trying to avoid an accident, the truck driver ended up hitting a bus. I can only imagine the trauma that that poor driver has gone through, not to mention anyone who was injured in the accident. It was reported last week that another horrific accident occurred on Leach Highway. It was a head-on accident that resulted in five people being rushed to hospital and someone, sadly, lost their life. This is a dangerous and very busy road.

When the case was initially put for Roe 8, a note in Infrastructure Australia's "2014–2015 Assessment Brief" stated —

There is currently heavy congestion —

That was in 2014, which was seven years ago. Think of all the growth we have seen in Western Australia in the last seven years. Seven years ago, this is what was said —

There is currently heavy congestion and significant delays to freight journeys with Level of Service below D —

That is an Infrastructure Australia rating —

for many sections of the route. Impacts of this include inefficient freight movements which limits productivity and economic growth, higher than average crash rates involving heavy vehicles and dis-amenity for the nearby community.

These are not my words; this was in Infrastructure Australia's assessment brief. Anyone could find it on the web. It goes on to say —

The Business Case uses quantitative data to assess the problem including historical and projected growth in freight movements at Fremantle Port Inner Harbour, historical growth in heavy vehicle traffic volumes at key locations ... percentage of heavy vehicle crashes along key freight corridors, intersection overall Level of Service, maximum peak period queue lengths, reliability of travel speeds and modelled future traffic volumes. For example, within the PM peak, travel time variability means that more than 80% of trips have travel times greater than 20% more or less than the average for the PM peak.

In the mornings, it is even worse —

The problems are expected to persist and worsen into the future driven by economic and population growth ...

We heard today about the housing shortages that Western Australians are experiencing. There is a lot of growth, especially in the southern areas. Since this assessment was written, another seat has been added to the Parliament of Western Australia, and that seat is in the southern suburbs. We know there is significant growth in those areas.

This assessment was not just about the intermingling of heavy traffic going to the port, although that was part of it; the government is trying to take container traffic off the road by subsidising rail freight. To some extent, that apparently is showing some reductions in effort. From reading this report, it really is saying that the road is busy. It goes on to say that the proposed solution, the building of Roe 8, continues to have economic merit if the outer harbour is developed.

Even if the outer harbour were developed, according to this report, the modelling showed there was economic merit—I suppose that means “benefit”—to develop this route. That showed there was a real benefit for the development of Roe 8, regardless of whether the port is moved. They are not my words; those words are in this report. It is quite a prescient report when I think about the growth, especially in those southern areas, and the addition of another lower house seat. There is significant growth in the southern suburbs. The benefit–cost ratio stated for the project by the proponent at that time was 2.5:1—quite a significant benefit–cost ratio was being thought of at that point.

From my reading of the report, I cannot find an actual final figure for that ratio, but it certainly goes on to say —

After accounting for these factors, —

These include the growth in traffic in that area and acknowledgement that an outer harbour could potentially be built at some point, but not as quickly as it was spoken about here. It was envisaged that at some point there might be a shift to an outer harbour. It says that even so, there is still positive economic merit in building the road. It says —

After accounting for these factors, Infrastructure Australia still has a high degree of confidence that the BCR is greater than 1.0:1 for the project.

In other words, there is a benefit, if members look at the benefit–cost ratio, in developing this road. That is what Infrastructure Australia said way back in 2014–15. The assessment brief was completed in 2015. There is some further clarification about that benefit–cost ratio with a slight reduction at a later stage. It is still a positive project, according to Infrastructure Australia. If anyone is interested in having a look at the “2014–2015 Assessment Brief”, they are more than welcome to do so. Members will then know exactly what was behind the original development of this program.

In the second reading speech given by the minister in this place during the introduction of this bill, I think she acknowledged that there is a problem with freight in that area at the moment, and the government has made a commitment to increase the volume of freight on rail. I think the minister said that the percentage of freight on rail has increased to approximately 20 per cent, which means that 80 per cent is still not going on rail. As the port gets busier and busier, that is going to continue to cause problems.

The minister outlined in her second reading speech that the Westport Taskforce has recommended a new port in Kwinana and work is actively underway to deliver on this recommendation, as is work to plan the road and rail connections to this new port. This development will not require Roe 8 and Roe 9 road reservations; instead, work is underway to plan the Thomas and Anketell Road east–west corridor. The government is not actively looking at Roe 8 and Roe 9, but that does not mean that Roe 8 would not be useful in the development of a good traffic management system around an expanded Kwinana port. Obviously, the government is not looking at Roe 8 because it has made a political decision that that program will not go ahead; therefore, a political decision not to further investigate the value of that Roe 8 reservation would follow. But it would be very interesting to know from the minister whether, theoretically, if it still existed, the Roe 8 proposal would be superior or inferior in providing for the long-term transport needs of the new Kwinana port, as well as the existing Fremantle port. I imagine that use of the Fremantle port will have to continue for quite some time into the future, certainly for the length of this government and maybe another few into the future. We know that the development of that road would have been of value for the traffic management of that area. We know that Leach Highway is a very dangerous road that has a high traffic accident rate and the local community would benefit if people did not have to travel on such a dangerous road.

I turn to one other issue that I would like the minister to address, and maybe she has at some point in the media or her speech, but I have not seen it. I am unsure why this amendment to the metropolitan region scheme needs an act of Parliament to enable it to occur. Why could this not just be initiated as an amendment to the scheme and the zoning of the area be changed through the normal channels, rather than being done under this legislation? I just wonder why we need an act of Parliament to do that. In fact, does changing the scheme through an act of Parliament mean that a future government might find it simpler, rather than more difficult, to go back to the Roe 8 project, because presumably another act of Parliament could simply override the previous act? I wonder whether the minister could explain that to me, because I am not the planning spokesperson, but it occurs to me that we could have done this through a normal rezoning. Why does it need a specific act of Parliament?

**Mr W.J. Johnston:** Read the second reading speech!

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** I have read the second reading speech. Is it simply a political statement or does it provide extra protections over those provided by a normal scheme amendment? The second reading speech states that any future zonings would just go through the normal processes. My reading of the second reading speech and the explanatory memorandum is that they would occur as a normal rezoning under the act. I wonder whether the minister could explain that a little bit. I am sorry if my asking a question upsets the Minister for Energy, but I think it is a perfectly valid point to raise for the minister to address. I am sure that she would be happy to do that. I will wrap up my contribution at this point. Hopefully, the minister will be able to address the issues that I have raised.

**MRS L.M. O'MALLEY (Bicton)** [3.14 pm]: It is a great privilege once again to add my contribution to legislation that will this time conclude forever the debate in this house on Roe 8. Before I do so, I thought I might correct the record a little off the back of the member for Cottesloe's second reading contribution on the Metropolitan Region Scheme (Beeliar Wetlands) Bill 2021. I will begin with comments relating to Roe 9, the second iteration, which was proposed to be a tunnel. As a starting point, it still never reached its planned destination. I think that is a very important point to make. Another point is that it would not have been able to carry placard loads. Placard loads are loads on trucks that carry dangerous goods, for want of a lengthier description.

The second point I would like to make is on the member's comments about "a few random plants" that were popped into the site after we came to government. This is the actual document, which is certainly more than a reference to a few plants popped in randomly. It is the *Rehabilitating Roe 8: Rehabilitation management plan*, a 10-year management plan. I was the chair of the Rehabilitating Roe 8 Working Group on behalf of the Minister for Planning. I will read a little bit of my chair's foreword. This was tabled in 2018.

**Mr W.J. Johnston:** You don't expect us to read it, do you?

**Mrs L.M. O'MALLEY:** Of course; yes!

It is with great pleasure that I table the Rehabilitation Management Plan for the Roe 8 Corridor.

The Rehabilitating Roe 8 Working Group, formed in May 2017, has worked with environmental and community engagement consultants to prepare the plan to rehabilitate the 18 hectares of land, which stretches from the Kwinana Freeway, past Bibra Lake to Stock Road.

The 'Rehabilitating Roe 8' project arose out of the community capacity stimulated during opposition to the construction of Roe 8 and the newly elected State Labor Government's commitment to rehabilitation of the cleared areas. Essentially, Rehabilitating Roe 8 aims to restore local native vegetation and fauna habitat to the cleared areas along the proposed Roe 8 alignment ...

This will allow it to be implemented by the appropriate land use manager and shared with the hundreds of people who contributed to its formulation.

Importantly, this 10-year plan gives equal weight to the ecological and community needs of the Corridor.

It has been drafted with input from the general community, the scientific community, various levels of government and community groups, making it a unique collaboration for a once-in-Australia opportunity to rehabilitate cleared land.

I think that pretty much answers the point about "a few random plants".

The third point I make is on the member's attempt to rewrite history. The name of the Roe project kind of gives away its purpose. It was called the Perth Freight Link.

**Ms R. Saffioti:** It's very cryptic.

**Mrs L.M. O'MALLEY:** It is very cryptic; it is very confusing, which is perhaps why the member was struggling to grapple with the purpose of the project. I think it is pretty clear in itself.

This is a really good point—the wetlands definition and the area defined within the bill. I hope the member is listening somewhere. This is a really important point to understand. I will read the definition on Wikipedia—good old wiki—which states —

The **Beeliar Wetlands** is a wetland located in the southwest portion of Western Australia. It is made up of two chains of lakes and wetlands that run parallel to the west coast of Western Australia ...

The lakes in this chain are mostly saline and often described as “seasonal” because they often dry up during summer months.

Approximately 13.03 hectares are mapped as conservation category wetland, which is the highest protection of wetlands, and the total area of wetland is 21.34 hectares. The total area of this bill, which includes bush buffers, is 34 hectares.

This is the fifth time I have spoken in the Parliament on this issue. The other four times have been in my inaugural speech after winning the seat of Bicton for the first time in 2017; in my contributions to the second and third reading debates, when the bill was first introduced in 2019; and again in a matter of public interest debate in the same year. I am grateful beyond words to know that with the passage of the Metropolitan Region Scheme (Beeliar Wetlands) Bill 2021, this will be the last time that I will do so. This bill will rezone 34 hectares in the MRS from a primary regional roads reserve and urban zone to a parks and recreation reservation. The 34 hectares are a key part of the Roe 8 reserve and are now classified as an A-class reserve offering the area a high degree of protection, but this legislation, when passed, will do so much more. With the passing of the Beeliar wetlands bill in both houses, we will finally be able to honour not only the commitment that we have made in two consecutive elections, but also, more importantly, the commitment of hundreds of women, men and children who have fought for years to protect in perpetuity this place of local, national and international significance. The purpose of this bill is to reserve and zone certain land in the metropolitan region scheme to protect several significant areas of wetland that make up Beeliar Regional Park—that is, the Beeliar wetlands. The intent, however, is much wider and deeper and carries far more significance than the few pages that make up this bill. The passing of the Beeliar wetlands bill 2021 will put an end to Roe 8, thus protecting forever the Beeliar wetlands, and, with that, the communities of my electorate from stage 2 of the previous Liberal–National government’s hopelessly flawed Perth Freight Link.

The metropolitan region scheme is a large planning scheme that applies to the Perth metropolitan area. It includes a scheme text and a set of maps. The scheme text sets out the planning rules that apply to zones and reserves. The zones and reserves, which broadly identify what the land can be used for, are depicted on maps. Zones, maps and reserves are vital for the identification and specification of land and its use, such as those in clause 4 of this bill. The metropolitan region scheme is amended by clause 4(1) reserving the land shaded dark green on the plan as “Parks and Recreation”, and by clause 4(2) zoning the land shaded red brown on the plan as “Urban”. Those who will not support this bill simply cannot move past 1963, the year of adoption of the Hepburn and Stephenson plan from which the MRS was derived. The Hepburn and Stephenson plan would lay out the blueprint for much of the development of Perth and continues as the legal framework of land use through the MRS. My point in raising this historical reference is not to debate the merits or deficiencies of continuing to follow a plan that is more than 60 years old, but to highlight the absurdity of those who, with an almost religious zeal, praise the Hepburn and Stephenson plan as the Holy Bible of Perth and Fremantle road planning. It is a plan that they would have us believe must not be questioned, a plan that is only ever to be challenged by those who they consider to be ignorant or foolhardy. The McGowan government recognises the importance of taking into account the changing needs of our city. We are not stuck in 1960s thinking. I therefore call on the member for Cottesloe and his colleagues to get out there and start campaigning for another crossing point of the Swan River at the northern termination of Stock Road to delivered increased freight traffic movement north through the western suburbs. It is in the plan, so it must be a good idea.

For those who live, recreate and care deeply for the Beeliar wetlands, the area is so very much more than hard lines and shadings on a map; it is an integral part of their lives. This includes Jo Rich, whom I met on the Roe 8 protest lines in the summer before the 2017 state election. Jo is representative of the many hundreds of ordinary people who went to extraordinary lengths throughout that summer, and the decades before, to stop Roe 8. Jo understood the significance of the Beeliar wetlands and the importance of taking action to protect them on both the protest lines at Beeliar and in the battleground seat of Bicton. Sadly, Jo lost her personal battle with cancer recently, so she will not see the passage of this legislation. I am proud to have campaigned beside her through two elections and I thank Jo and all like her for their tireless efforts to protect the Beeliar wetlands. We are finally getting on with the job that we committed to do in 2017, and again in 2021. We will protect those vitally important remnant wetlands. We will ensure that not only is Roe 8 dead, but also the spectre of a future Perth Freight Link is exorcised, and the voters of WA agree.

I am deeply grateful to represent the electorate of Bicton in this house and I am proud to be a member of a government that keeps its word. I stand in this house today in no small part because of the rejection not once, but twice by the voters of Bicton and beyond, of the disastrous, divisive and notably incomplete road project known as the Perth Freight Link. With its origins in the Beeliar wetlands, Roe 8 would lead to Roe 9, which in turn would lead to the destruction of

many homes and businesses in my community. This would later be proposed to move to other communities adjacent to mine as Roe 9 morphed from a road to a tunnel, yet all the while never actually reaching the port of Fremantle.

The potential impact of the Perth Freight Link influenced and changed the course of many lives, including mine, and was a major factor in my decision to stand up for my communities, initially as ward councillor at the City of Melville representing the suburbs of Melville, Willagee and Palmyra, and on to my role here as the member for Bicton. It changed the lives of the people in Moody Glen, Palmyra, when in early 2014 their homes were targeted as part of the Perth Freight Link. Local families, including the Smirkes, Irvings, Hoffmans and others, were told that their homes would be acquired to make way for a freight freeway. It is important to note that their homes were not part of a road reserve and they were not gazetted for any future road change. Their homes were and, thanks to the McGowan government, continue to be their forever homes in happy family streets that have formed close-knit communities. They were the homes in which families looked on, first in confusion and later in horror and anger, as letters arrived from a heartless Barnett-led Liberal–National government telling them that their homes would be compulsorily acquired. I recall these families expressing their lack of understanding to me of what the seemingly benign and sanitised term “compulsory acquisition” meant. These letters advised the Smirkes, Irvings, Hoffmans and many others in my local community that the life they had chosen, the life that they had known, would end with their homes being purchased by the government and that those homes were to be destroyed in favour of a road that would end around two kilometres short of its destination. It was a road to nowhere that would be built where much-loved family homes once stood. I recall vividly in the midst of this shock the young daughter of one these families attempting to reassure her mum with an eight-year-old’s optimism that maybe everyone in their much-loved street of Moody Glen could all move together to a new street. In the years that followed the announcement of Roe 9, the plans morphed into a tunnel, thereby shifting the dangers from Moody Glen, Palmyra, and surrounds to other communities, but that made it no more acceptable or sensible. Shifting this road project from one community to another was not then, nor will it ever be, an acceptable or sensible solution.

I am always horrified by the ease at which opposition members dismissed the clearing of around 40 hectares of banksia woodland and bush habitats prior to the 2017 election. On becoming the chair of the Rehabilitating Roe 8 Working Group after coming to government, I was confronted by the many impacts of the loss of the large, old established trees and banksia woodlands destroyed during that dreadful summer. Vital habitat for the endangered Carnaby’s black cockatoo, red-tailed black-cockatoos and other birdlife was immediately lost as the bulldozers moved through. Habitat loss saw these majestic birds migrate into Bicton to strip the Cape Lilac trees to avoid starvation.

The human impact of the communities near the cleared site of Roe 8 must not be underestimated either. I acknowledge the work of those communities in healing the deep emotional scars of that time. I am angry beyond words at the arrogance and disrespect shown for people and place by opposition members who speak against this bill. I pity them for the utter lack of humanity shown in their contributions. I thank those members who raised the issue of the safety and health impacts of trucks on our roads. It is an incredibly important consideration.

The movement of freight efficiently and safely around the state to our ports is a priority of this government. As the member for Bicton, I will keep working towards a time when freight movement ceases on our local roads altogether. Our commitment to the Westport Taskforce’s recommendation for a new port in Kwinana will be an important catalyst. I reject entirely the member for Cottesloe’s assertion that the building of a new road will somehow magically make another road safer.

In the short term, we are delivering on our commitment to increase the volume of freight on rail. The percentage of freight on rail has increased under the McGowan government to approximately 20 per cent, and we will continue to work to increase this percentage even further. We are also working with industry to provide additional train paths for container freight and facilitating the development of intermodal terminals. The intermodal network plan will provide for new and existing precincts to transfer freight efficiently from road to rail, further improving rail’s competitiveness.

We are a trading state, and we need to make sure that we can facilitate strong trade growth into the future. The Westport Taskforce’s recommendation for a new port in Kwinana will ensure that we have this strong future. As part of this, the work to plan the road and rail connections to this new port east–west via Anketell Road and Thomas Road is well underway and does not require the Roe 8 road reservation.

As to health, it is clear that a future port in Kwinana is the safest option for the communities of the electorate of Bicton. In my submission to a City of Melville electors meeting in 2014, I referred to the impact of heavy vehicle emissions on the health of some of the most vulnerable in our community.

[Member’s time extended.]

**Mrs L.M. O’MALLEY:** I said that there are 32 primary schools, nine secondary schools, three tertiary schools and 26 day care centres located along the routes of the Perth Freight Link, being stage 1, Roe 8, and the stage 2 options that were put forward. These 70 places of education and early childhood care are located within two kilometres

of the Roe 8–Roe 9 routes. Several are within 50 metres of the edge of the road reserve. One day care centre in Bibra Lake is at ground zero—on the very edge of the road reserve.

I said also that diesel engine exhaust was declared by the World Health Organization to be a group 1 carcinogen, meaning there is no safe level of exposure for humans. Diesel particulates are found in diesel exhausts. They have the ability to cause disease and death, and they disperse well beyond the point of origin. In an Environment Protection Authority Victoria health bulletin published in 2002, diesel particulates were defined as “microscopic particles found in diesel exhaust which are less than one-fifth the thickness of a human hair and are small enough to penetrate deep into the lungs, where they can contribute to a range of health problems”. The elderly and people with emphysema, asthma, and chronic heart and lung disease are especially sensitive to fine-particle pollution. The still-developing lungs of children places them also at a particularly high risk. Most notably, diesel particulates are constant in the environment. The so-called free-flowing freeway that the Perth Freight Link was touted to be would have done nothing to diminish their prevalence. The only way to reduce diesel particulates in the atmosphere is to reduce the number of trucks, or to use an alternate fuel source such as hydrocarbon or electric power. Roe 8 will not achieve this, and I acknowledge and congratulate the Minister for Transport on her commitment to freight on rail and to progressing plans for the new port in Kwinana, because that is the only way to truly protect the safety and health of the communities of the electorate of Bicton and right along the current freight route.

Protection and preservation of native wildlife is just as important. I am always alarmed when I hear opposition members attempt to portray the building of a super highway above a wetland as being somehow beneficial in this respect. I suspect that those members who will speak of the supposed increased protection of wildlife by the removal of Hope Road, Bibra Lake, are ignorant of the existence of two very important facilities on Hope Road, being the Wetlands Centre Cockburn and the Native Animal Rehabilitation Centre, or Native ARC, two facilities that would be lost to Roe 8. I strongly suggest that opposition members familiarise themselves with the area and the assets within it.

To those opposition members who speak of vandalism, they know firsthand about vandalism by a belligerent and arrogant former Liberal–National Premier in the face of certain defeat at the 2017 state election. To commence the clearing of the Beeliar wetlands was environmental vandalism of the highest degree, designed to inflict the most pain to the local community and those who had fought to stop this wanton destruction. By beginning the clearing at the wetland’s end, there can be no doubt of its vandalistic intent.

It is appalling that the opposition attempts to present a convincing argument that building a road through a natural landscape will not have a detrimental impact and will actually enhance it. The absurdity of such a claim appears to be entirely lost on opposition members. Seriously, when have humans ever improved on nature? Never. In the history of human existence, our impact has only ever been detrimental. Yes, we can offset and we can minimise our impact, but to claim that any infrastructure build, particularly one such as this, will improve on nature is ludicrous. It is an absurd proposition.

I also note that opposition members have expressed bewilderment at the McGowan government’s commitment to the protection of the Beeliar wetlands and to a future of sustainable, long-term freight solutions. It is possible that they may be unfamiliar with the concept of honouring a commitment. The Metropolitan Region Scheme (Beeliar Wetlands) Bill 2021 is the culmination of this government’s commitment to protect the Beeliar wetlands, homes and businesses from an unnecessary and nonsensical road project. This government is committed to a long-term, sensible approach to freight movements now and into the future. That includes planning for a new port in Kwinana; progressing the development of intermodal terminals; progressing long-term, sustainable, well-paid skilled jobs; increasing freight on rail; and creating greater efficiencies on the current road network, like the necessary upgrades to the High Street–Stirling Highway intersection.

We know that the Perth Freight Link, which would have begun at Roe 8, is not the answer to future freight movements. I personally made a promise to the people of my electorate, as we did as a government, to stop the Perth Freight Link, protect the Beeliar wetlands, and get the balance right between protection of the environment, homes and human health, and future freight needs. Additionally, a new port in Kwinana will unlock an exciting future for North Fremantle and provide a more certain future for the Sandtrax, Port and Leighton beaches, which are important to the people of Bicton as our closest beaches, and to the primary stakeholders, Port Beach Polar Bears, Beached Whales, Fremantle Surf Life Saving Club and Coast Port Beach. I also acknowledge the future opportunities for the area, which will connect the waves to the wetlands along the Cockburn community corridor.

I thank the minister for bringing this bill forward again, and I commend it to the house.

**MR T.J. HEALY (Southern River — Parliamentary Secretary)** [3.36 pm]: I am very proud to rise again in this forty-first Parliament to speak on a bill that I very proudly was able to speak on in the last Parliament. I certainly endorse the bill, and for those playing at home, I will be voting in favour of the bill.

The Metropolitan Region Scheme (Beeliar Wetlands) Bill 2021 is, as the member for Bicton said, the culmination of several election promises. The last time this bill was debated, there was opposition from those in the naughty

corner of the opposition Liberal benches, because they did not want us to keep our promise from the 2017 election, and they blocked the bill. They stopped the bill from progressing through the democratic halls of the Parliament. They filibustered in this chamber.

**Dr D.J. Honey:** We debated it.

**Mr T.J. HEALY:** The member for Cottesloe and the other opposition members at the time did a horrendous job of delaying every bill and stopping its progress. We are delivering on our election commitments.

There are many arguments here about planning and about the environment. I want to talk about families. This bill will stop the Liberal Party from making Roe Highway a toll road. Members should be aware that the Liberal Party's plan to pay for the Roe Highway extension was to make Roe Highway a toll road.

**Dr D.J. Honey:** That's not true.

**Mr T.J. HEALY:** It is correct. I will quote the member for Riverton in a moment. He discussed that it was designed to be a toll road for freight trucks and cars. The thin edge of the wedge was that the first phase of the toll road was going to be for trucks. I guarantee members that if the Liberal Party had won in 2017, by now it would be talking about the thin edge of the wedge. After it introduced the first toll road in Western Australia, it would have brought in and started the conversation and started testing the waters about extending the toll road to all the families in my electorate. I have to tell the member Cottesloe, the Leader of the Liberal Party—he wears the badge in that regard—Southern River says no to your toll road. Canning Vale says no to your toll road. Huntingdale and Gosnells say no to your toll road. We all say no to your toll road. The families in my electorate cannot afford \$5 or \$7 a go.

I recall the Liberal Party's shambolic press conference in March 2021 during the election campaign. It was the second election at which the Liberal Party pushed this toll road, and it campaigned in every single electorate. I am not sure why it made this such a huge part of its 2021 election campaign. There were fliers in letterboxes in my electorate and everywhere. The Liberal Party made it the showpiece of its election campaign. The Liberal Party said the same thing: it is not a toll road. How much did the Liberal Party allocate for this project at its shambolic press conference? It was about \$100 million. For the *Hansard* record, the Leader of the Liberal Party is nodding. The Liberal Party was going to get \$1.2 billion from the federal government. If the Liberal Party had been elected, the state government was going to contribute only \$100 million. We often ask: where does the rest of the money come from?

I understand the press conference was at the end of a pretty crazy period. Like I said, the former Liberal member for Churchlands threw his hands up in disgust. He walked away. The Leader of the Liberal Party was a bit confused. There were a lot of numbers. I appreciate the member has a PhD, but it is not a PhD in maths. It was a complicated press conference. I have to tell the member that it certainly helped my election because a number of people were on the fence and were not sure about what to do and in the last dying days of the election the Liberal Party press conference certainly showed which was the safe party and who could be trusted for road infrastructure and a number of things. Members, remember we have stopped the toll road. This bill and its passage through this house and the upper house will not allow the toll road to be proceeded with by a desperate and angry government in the future.

Members should be aware that there was no plan for Roe 9 or 10. By the way, I love Roe Highway. I use it every day. I still remember when Roe 7 was extended to the edge of my electorate. It is a brilliant road. It connects Midland, Forrestfield, Kalamunda and my community. We are building train stations along its route. It is what I use to get to the airport—when I get to go to the airport! When I go to and from home and Parliament I use the freeway and Roe Highway. It is a brilliant piece of road infrastructure.

**Dr A.D. Buti:** I see you going past me.

**Mr T.J. HEALY:** At the speed limit, of course, member for Armadale.

**Dr A.D. Buti:** I am usually a bit slow.

**Mr T.J. HEALY:** I usually drive past the member for Armadale because he is still jogging in! He sees my car as it goes past.

If the Liberal–National government had been re-elected in 2017, it would have had a mandate to extend Roe Highway. That election was about a decision on Roe Highway, and what happened? The Liberal Party lost it, of course. I have *Hansard* here of former member for Riverton Mike Nahan saying that the Liberals knew three months before the election that they would lose the election, but they still started the project. Knowing that the 2017 election was a mandate—an election about whether or not to continue Roe 8 under the Liberals as a toll road—it still started work. Of the scorched-earth policy and the burnt contracts, we said that this contract would not continue. Do not start work. There were court cases. It was all very clear. There was all this naysaying and headshaking and words that were said by the Liberals and the Nats in the previous Parliament, and in this one, about, “How dare you tear up contracts that were signed and sorted”, but that was not the case at all. The people had a chance to give their verdict.

I admit that in 2008, when the previous government was elected, the former member for Riverton Dr Mike Nahan promised Roe 8. It had a mandate to do it in 2008, but it never got around to it. In 2013 it ran on it but it still did not get around to doing it. Because of those delays, the Liberal Party waited eight years, and in the dying days of its government, when a former Premier wanted his name on something, it decided to quickly move ahead with the Roe Highway toll road. There was never a confirmation or a promise to say that the toll road extension was for only this part. If someone was going to drive from Midland to Fremantle on this future fairyland Roe Highway, would there be several toll roads? Would people be required to pay only once when they go on it? Would it be like Westfield Carousel Shopping Centre and people would have two hours? People get free parking for an hour. It would not matter if people went on it twice or three times. I have to use that road two times a day at least. The families in my electorate have to use it multiple times. It was abhorrent. At least this bill helps us to say no to that.

If the members of the Liberal and National Parties had been elected, their plan at the 2008 election was to build Roe 8 and it would have progressed with that. However, Roe 8 and 9 were not funded or costed. I always love to hear the fully funded and fully costed arguments. It was not organised. There was no plan. Let us say Roe 8 would have taken three or four years to build. Roe 9 was unfunded, unplanned and unapproved. Potentially, it would have taken another five years. Even at this most recent election we still did not know whether it would be a bridge over or a tunnel under the river, so Roe 10 would have taken another five years. We are talking about 15 years. Personally, I love Roe Highway. If the Liberal Party had said it would not make it a toll road and it would do it all at once, putting any environmental factors aside, I think the community would have spoken very differently. There has been a ringing endorsement of the views on that. There have been two elections on that matter, but again the Liberal Party knew it was going to lose and it still started the work.

**Mr W.J. Johnston:** There was traffic modelling tabled by the Minister for Transport, Hon Dean Nalder, that showed that 300 trucks a day would go north through Cottesloe on Stirling Highway if you built Roe 8.

**Dr D.J. Honey:** There is more than that now.

**Mr W.J. Johnston:** No, that is additional trucks—300 extra trucks a day. That is a million trucks a year through the electorate of Cottesloe if you built Roe 8.

**Mr T.J. HEALY:** I certainly agree with the member for Cannington and I endorse that because I quoted that in my speech on this matter on 25 June 2019. I quote the article from *WAtoday* that I quoted a few years ago, because the numbers were all just fudged. There was no planning and no prep. I will quote from *Hansard* of 2019 when I quoted the *WAtoday* article —

“Documents suggest ‘figures fudged —

**Dr D.J. Honey** interjected.

**Mr T.J. HEALY:** I know this is about numbers so I will speak slowly for the member for Cottesloe. The article was titled —

“Documents suggest ‘figures fudged in Roe 8 rush job’”.

**Dr D.J. Honey** interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms A.E. Kent):** Member for Southern River, speak, please.

**Mr T.J. HEALY:** I invite the interjections, Acting Speaker, but thank you for the protection. I quoted the article —

Major discrepancies between Roe 8’s environmental report and its business case have raised concerns that the project is a rush job based on massaged figures that would hang WA taxpayers out to dry.

Email and document exchanges between Main Roads WA and the federal Department of Infrastructure, made publicly available ..., cast doubt over the design and economic viability of the road.

...

“A key part of the viability of this project ... will be its capacity to maximise tolling revenue,” ...

I thank the member for Cannington for referring to the previous *Hansard* debates in the place. I would like to refer to the previous *Hansard* debates. Let me speak for those who cannot speak. Let me echo and invoke the spirits of the former Liberal Party members for Churchlands, Geraldton, Darling Range, Scarborough, Bateman and Riverton, when they spoke and predicted what this Parliament would look like if they wanted to deliver on the Roe 8 election promises from 2017 and what would happen if they took them to the 2021 election.

Members, first of all, I will call upon the words of my good friend the former Liberal member for Nedlands, Bill Marmion, a former Minister for Transport and former Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party. Again I will be quoting from *Hansard* of Tuesday, 25 June 2019 and the second reading debate on the Metropolitan Region Scheme (Beeliar Wetlands) Bill 2018. The former member for Riverton said —



The government said that this decision is popular. Well, we will see about that. This will be the most crucial issue in the south metropolitan area at the next election.

There was not one Liberal Party seat left in the south metropolitan area after the election. The former member for Riverton continues —

... it will be an albatross around the government's neck.

That is, the government's views on Roe 8. He continues —

As a party, we will resist this bill to the hilt. We will resist this bill to the hilt in this house in the second reading ... and ... We will mobilise the community.

I thank the former member for Riverton for mobilising the community.

**Mr D.A.E. Scaife:** What was it—20 per cent?

**Mr T.J. HEALY:** The former member for Riverton not only lost his seat, but also returned the Labor heartland of Riverton to the Labor Party. I thank him for that.

The former member for Riverton went on to say —

Do members know what is going to happen? The member for Jandakot will not be the member for Jandakot after 2021 ...

After a 19.2 per cent swing to the member for Jandakot, Labor now holds that seat by 71.2 per cent of the two-party preferred vote.

The former member for Riverton continued —

If we take into consideration the freight charge, the state will virtually get Roe 8 and 9 for free. It would not have to put down any additional money because any additional money would be paid off ...

That is where the member for Cottesloe's numbers went wrong. The former member for Riverton estimated that about \$350 million would be raised by those toll roads and that it would come from families. It probably would not have come from families in the member for Cottesloe's electorate, but it would have come from families in my electorate.

I have quoted what the former member for Riverton said and we are joined by the wonderful Labor member for Riverton, Dr Jags Krishnan. I will now quote what the former member for Nedlands said —

I am looking forward to members opposite explaining to me why we should not build Roe 8 and 9.

He then said —

I cannot see why anyone who lives in Fremantle, Bicton, Willagee and Cockburn would not strongly support the Roe 8 and 9 project.

In Fremantle, the Liberal Party's primary vote was so low that the result was a two-party preferred vote between Labor and the Greens. There was a swing to Labor of 11.9 per cent in the seat of Bicton, 9.5 per cent in the seat of Willagee and 12 per cent in the seat of Cockburn. Of course, we won Nedlands, as I said.

I would now like to thank the former Liberal member for Bateman for his contribution and service to this chamber. He said in this debate on 25 June 2019 —

The federal member for Tangney has been vociferous about the benefits of Roe 8 and Roe 9. He undertook an analysis of his community and commissioned a poll.

We commissioned a poll too—on 13 March 2021. The fact is that the community did not support the former member for Bateman, who said —

In the City of Melville, 66 per cent supported the construction of Roe 8 ...

He said —

We want the facts out in the community so people can clearly understand the benefits of Roe 8 ...

In the seat of Bateman there was a 14.5 per cent swing to Labor—56.7 per cent held. Dean Nalder, the former member for Bateman, did not even compete in the 2021 election and refused to run against the member for Bicton in the previous election by jumping to the seat of Bateman. The communities of Bicton and Bateman found him and rewarded the Liberal Party by not returning the Liberal Party to that seat in 2021. I welcome the Labor member for Bateman to the chamber.

I will now quote what the former member for Scarborough said in that debate. She said —

... the member for Riverton knows that Roe 8 and Roe 9 is a significant issue for people in his electorate and in the adjacent electorates ...

Overwhelmingly, the constituency of South Metro wants this project to go ahead.

I disagree. Every south metro seat is now held by Labor. They did not endorse the Liberal plan. There was a 16 per cent swing to Labor in Scarborough. The electorate of Scarborough is now held by Labor with a 60 per cent two-party preferred vote. That seat was taken from the former Minister for Transport and former Leader of the Liberal Party. I welcome the Labor member for Scarborough to the chamber.

[Member's time extended.]

**Mr T.J. HEALY:** I go further. I thank Liza Harvey for her service. She said —

It was only after the election chaos had died down —

That is, the 2017 election chaos —

that we, as the opposition, started to be contacted by people in that south metropolitan corridor ...

She went on —

There was a lot of voter regret in those south metropolitan areas. As the opposition, we intend to fully capitalise on that voter regret. The people in the south metro area want this project.

I would like to quote what the member for Cottesloe said in his contribution to the 25 June 2019 debate. He said —

We have a government that thinks some things have to be stuck to—that not building Roe 8 is an election commitment it has to stick to—but others are not so important. The government has put its foot on the throat of the Western Australian economy ... The government is sticking to something that will be overwhelmingly unpopular in the community. Our prospects —

In 2021 —

in the southern suburbs are looking brighter and brighter.

The former member for Dawesville interjected on the member for Cottesloe, who replied —

My member opposite here is a keen student of all of this ... he will go through in detail the seats we will be looking at picking up.

**Dr D.J. Honey** interjected.

**Mr T.J. HEALY:** The member for Cottesloe was arrogant back then to say, “We’re going to pick up seats.” The member for Cottesloe finishes by saying —

I encourage members to go onto the Liberal Party website occasionally. There is some fantastic information there for members.

I am not sure whether he was being a bit dodgy on that part, because I do not know whether there is much information on the Liberal and National Parties’ websites.

I would like to thank the member for Vasse for her contribution, who said —

It is a longstanding commitment of the Liberal Party and has been a number one issue for the seats of Jandakot, Riverton and Bateman.

It is. I thank her for all her work in ensuring one of the largest swings towards the Labor Party in the seat of Vasse.

I now refer to the contribution of the former member for Churchlands. I say thanks once again to my former high school teacher, Mr L’Estrange. In that debate he said —

The people in government members’ electorates will have an option at the next election to hold the government accountable ...

He also said —

The outcome that the government is trying to achieve today will be tested at the 2021 election. We will ... —

The Liberal Party —

make this a key aspect of our commitments at the next election. The people in the seats of those ministers and members will hold them to account ...

I welcome the new member for Churchlands to the chamber, after a 12.5 per cent swing to Labor at the election. We won the seat of Churchlands by 408 votes and I endorse the choice the members of that community made.

I now thank the former member for South Perth, who also made a contribution to the 2019 debate. I thank Hon John McGrath for his service to this house. He is a very honourable man and he made a great contribution in this area. He said —

... I think it will become a big election issue in that area at the next election.

I certainly endorse what he said and welcome the new member for South Perth, with a 17.3 per cent swing to Labor. I acknowledge that we were able to build the “John McGrath Manning Road on-ramp” with some of the money that was saved on some of the Roe Highway shovel-ready projects. I am sure that the former member for South Perth would be happy with that.

The former member for Dawesville also commented in the debate. He said —

Of all Liberals in Parliament in 2017, I believe the member for Riverton had one of the smallest swings against him. I would largely say that is because he knows his area best and the impacts something like Roe 8 and Roe 9 would have had on his seat.

The swing against him at the election was much smaller than the swing against any other Liberal member. He continues —

If there was such a mandate for somewhere like the seat of Bicton ... we would have seen the flow-on results of that in the seat of Riverton.

We saw that flow-on in the seats of Riverton and Bateman in the 2021 election. Riverton had an amazing swing. I endorse what was started in 2017 and finished in 2021. The former member for Dawesville, Zak Kirkup said —

If we look at the result in Darling Range ... that seat would be ours by a greater majority.

He then said of the federal election —

We see that all the booths through the Roe 8 and Roe 9 suburbs, had a swing towards the Liberal Party ...

He also said, interestingly enough —

... the federal member for Tangney campaigned on the basis that he would see the Roe 8 and Roe 9 projects funded and people voted in favour of him with an increased majority —

Therefore, we can assume from the federal election that Bateman and Riverton have sent the same message to us in this chamber just now. Again, I thank the former member for Dawesville for his service and I congratulate and welcome the Labor member for Dawesville with a 14 per cent swing to Labor, holding a 63 per cent two-party preferred vote. The former member for Dawesville said further on —

I suggest that when a federal member prosecutes this case together with an outstanding state member ... and people vote for the Liberal Party with a number higher than the average across the rest of the seats, that shows endorsement for the project proceeding.

Ergo, with that endorsement from the last two state elections, I think we should perhaps listen. It might be the first time that I recommend people listen to the former Liberal member for Dawesville when he said —

I suspect that will be the crux of the problem when it comes to the member for Bicton's seat in 628 days' time. I think that is the problem she will have ...

I thank the former member for Darling Range for her service and welcome the Labor member for Darling Range into this chamber. She spoke in this chamber —

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Member for Southern River, it is four o'clock.

**Mr D.R. Michael:** It is almost.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Keep going.

**Mr T.J. HEALY:** I am sure you will interrupt me when the time comes, Acting Speaker.

The member for Darling Range said that Ben Morton puts material in letterboxes, does telephone canvassing and puts out a position. He says loud and proud, “I support Roe 8 and 9 and 61.5 per cent of voters in Tangney voted for the project.” Among the seats in Tangney, in the seat of Jandakot we got 71 per cent at this election; Bicton, 65 per cent; Cannington, in which there is a bit of Tangney, 80 per cent; Bateman, 56 per cent; Riverton, 59 per cent; Victoria Park's new part, 77 per cent; and Southern River, 83.1 per cent.

Debate adjourned, pursuant to standing orders.