

ELLENBROOK BUS RAPID TRANSIT SYSTEM

301. Mr F.A. ALBAN to the Minister for Transport:

My question to the minister is quite a happy one. Last Thursday I joined the minister to announce the \$49 million Ellenbrook bus rapid transit project committed to in the state budget. Can he inform the house of the transport benefits —

Several members interjected.

Mr F.A. ALBAN: I knew members would be happy for me; thank you. Can the minister please inform the house about the transport benefits of this project on all the communities in my electorate of Swan Hills as well as the adjoining electorate of West Swan where this project will be predominantly constructed?

Mr D.C. NALDER replied:

I would like to thank the member for Swan Hills for his question and continuing advocacy for this project. He recently undertook a grievance in this house on this matter and recently had me up to Ellenbrook for a forum to meet with the community. He has been an active member and I congratulate him on his efforts.

This is a great project for the people in the northern suburbs.

Ms M.M. Quirk: It is not the northern suburbs; it is the eastern suburbs!

Mr D.C. NALDER: North east, if I want to be technically correct! I heard the member for West Swan interjecting on the member for Swan Hills as he raised the question. I thought that it was only recently that the member for West Swan was asking in Parliament what we were doing about upgrading Lord Street. The \$49 million includes not only Western Australia's first dedicated bus transit route, but also an upgrade to Lord Street. That is the very question that I thought the member for West Swan was asking in Parliament recently. She talks about these things, but this government gets on and delivers them.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members! Member for Midland!

Mr D.C. NALDER: We have continually said over the last few years that a bus rapid transit solution is a far better option for the people in the north eastern suburbs at this point in time. We have also said that when eventually a train going to Ellenbrook can be justified, the bus transit route will still be an essential service because it will connect to Midland. We have completed the new Midland Health Campus—a great facility for the people up from Ellenbrook. We are contributing and constructing the new Curtin University campus out at Midland. I would have thought that would be a fantastic opportunity for a lot of young people in Ellenbrook. The opposition talks about delivering a rail line to Ellenbrook that will come into the city, but we understand also all the needs for the people in those suburbs, and that is what we will be getting on and delivering.

Let me tell members, this will be a dedicated transit route, so it is the first dedicated bus road—a bus-only route. It is a design and construct and we will be working on the design. However, it will involve grade separations for the buses and while we wait for the final design, that will either mean bridges over or tunnels underneath the crossroads. This will save people from the Ellenbrook area up to 10 minutes per trip during peak period. Opposition members whinge about this as a bus route. Let me tell members also that the 950 bus route from Morley into the city has saved between three and four minutes, has seen a 39 per cent increase in patronage and has a customer satisfaction of 94 per cent. That is higher than our train services deliver.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! Member for Midland! Member for Victoria Park! I want a quick answer, minister.

Mr D.C. NALDER: This is a great outcome for the people of Ellenbrook. I congratulate the member for Swan Hills on the work he has undertaken to ensure this project becomes a reality.