

GOLDFIELDS HIGHWAY

**228. Ms M. BEARD to the Minister for Transport:**

I have a supplementary question. Is there an expected completion date for these important works?

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:**

As I said, we have secured funding along the way and we continue to work at providing state funding and trying to achieve federal funding. We are working with local Aboriginal people. It is about the success on the ground of training local people. I think we originally trained about 18 people at the TAFE. Some of them have gone off to other projects because they have been trained in road construction and have been able to secure jobs elsewhere. When I visited Wiluna, I was struck by the many mining operations in that area. We need to make sure that we have better Aboriginal engagement and provide more opportunities for Aboriginal people. I have said in this place many, many times that sometimes that means a road is not constructed as fast as possible, but it means that local people are trained and empowered. The key point for me is maintenance. We do not want to just go in, build the road and disappear. It is about making sure that the local people actually own the road, in every sense, and are also empowered to be there and can protect and maintain the road into the future.