

GREAT NORTHERN HIGHWAY — BINDI BINDI CURVES

75. Hon BRIAN ELLIS to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Transport:

Many of my constituents have long campaigned for an upgrade of Great Northern Highway through the notorious Bindi Bindi curves. I can attest to that, having campaigned for the straightening of this section of Great Northern Highway while serving on the Shire of Moora some 20 years ago. Can the parliamentary secretary please update the house on how this project is progressing?

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order, members! I am waiting to call the parliamentary secretary, but I am not going to call him until members are ready to hear his answer.

Hon JIM CHOWN replied:

I thank the honourable member for his question. I agree that the Bindi Bindi curves realignment is a very important project. I am happy to stand here today and say that, as of this morning, it is open to general traffic. This is a significant upgrade of Great Northern Highway.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon JIM CHOWN: In fact, if other members in the house, especially those opposite, had driven that road as regularly as Hon Brian Ellis and I have done in our lifetimes, they would understand the challenges involved.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Parliamentary secretary, you are required to give an answer, not a statement.

Hon JIM CHOWN: Thank you, Mr President.

Hon Ken Travers interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! And you are required to listen!

Hon JIM CHOWN: The Bindi Bindi curves upgrade was a joint venture exercise by both the commonwealth and state governments in an 80–20 ratio. About 1 200 vehicles use it every day, 45 per cent of which have heavy vehicle configurations. The road is now straight, wide and long. It is eight and a half to nine metres wide, as opposed to the old road, which was 6.2 metres wide. I take this opportunity to thank all the residents of Miling and the surrounding areas, and the Shires of Moora and Dalwallinu for their input into the Great Northern Highway upgrade at the Bindi Bindi curves.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Are you still providing your answer?

Hon JIM CHOWN: Yes.

The PRESIDENT: I am sure you are coming to the end.

Hon JIM CHOWN: I am coming to a conclusion, Mr President. I will be happy to update the house about further upgrades to Great Northern Highway and the \$420 million that we will spend there over the next four years.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order, members! When Hon Ken Travers has finished conducting his own debate across the chamber, we will move on to the next question.