

SWAN RIVER CROSSINGS PROJECT — FREMANTLE

Statement by Minister for Transport

MS R. SAFFIOTI (West Swan — Minister for Transport) [9.04 am]: I rise to provide an important update on the Swan River Crossings project. The Swan River Crossings project was initiated in response to the deteriorating condition of the current Fremantle Traffic Bridge, which opened in 1939 as a temporary structure. Over its 84-year history, the bridge has been extensively strengthened and maintained at significant cost to extend its life, but it is clear that a long-term solution is now required. Since 2019, the government has consulted extensively with the community and stakeholders to develop a new crossing solution, with various concepts developed from feedback received. The divergent, sometimes contradictory, feedback from stakeholders and the community has made it difficult to achieve a solution that meets the vast range of views. In August 2022, the most recent concept was released to mixed feedback, with a reluctance for change in the area with respect to road connections, the foreshore and southern riverbank. However, the community continued to support wider and safer pedestrian and cyclist paths, improved river safety with higher and wider bridge clearances, and improvements to areas surrounding the bridge. Recognising the need to progress a solution and the current pressures in the construction market, the project was subject to an in-depth review and options analysis. Subsequently, the scope of the project has been revised. A new iconic extradosed traffic bridge will now be built on the same alignment as the current bridge. A new rail bridge has been deferred pending work underway by Westport.

The new bridge will maintain two traffic lanes in each direction and feature new wider shared paths either side up to four metres wide, connecting into existing paths for people walking and riding. Replacing the bridge in the same position as the existing bridge reflects community and stakeholder desires for a smaller construction footprint, with minimal impact to the southern escarpment and the existing Queen Victoria Street and Canning Highway intersection. As the bridge is being built along the same alignment, it is expected the old bridge will need to be closed for up to 12 months. This is not expected to occur until late 2025, and lessons learnt from the construction of the new Fitzroy River Bridge will help guide works and ensure that any closure is kept to a minimum. The design is now the subject of a development application that has considered all concerns over the past three years to provide an acceptable solution that can address current transport concerns. I thank the project team for their work and the community and stakeholders throughout the development of this project and, of course, the federal government for its continued support. I encourage the community to have its say on the new concept when comments open in the development application process this year.