

**METROPOLITAN REGION SCHEME (FREMANTLE CONTROLLED ACCESS HIGHWAYS) BILL
2001**

Introduction and First Reading

Bill introduced, on motion by Hon J.A. Scott, and read a first time.

Second Reading

HON J.A. SCOTT (South Metropolitan) [9.10 pm]: I move -

That the Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill originally introduced by Hon John Cowdell in 1998 brings to completion a long process of community opposition to the building of a highway through the western suburbs. The highway was first conceived more than 40 years ago before the detrimental impacts of air pollution and traffic domination were properly understood. The plan for a second north-south primary route was formalised in a 1982 amendment to the metropolitan region scheme. The original plans for a north-south route west of the Mitchell Freeway were based on an alignment starting at Stephenson Highway in the north, then proceeding down Davies Road, Claremont, across the Point Resolution-Point Walter bridge, and then down Stock Road to Naval Base. The road was to be a strategic link between the Swanbourne military barracks and the naval base on Garden Island. Also, it would enable goods and people to be transported from the north of the city to the Fremantle port and the Kwinana industrial area. Before it was built, a major shift in thinking had occurred. Dalkeith had become one of the most prestigious areas of the city - far too important for the burden of an additional highway, and, furthermore, the road reserve passed right through the home of Sir Charles Court.

With the declaration of the western suburbs highway reserve, the route was deviated along Servetus Street into Curtin Avenue. There it was proposed to cross the railway to join Stirling Highway in Mosman Park, and then through to Fremantle via a massive six-lane road and bridge that would have torn the heart out of Mosman Park, North Fremantle, East Fremantle and White Gum Valley. At the Wellington Street-Marine Parade intersection, the reserve widened from 90 metres to a massive 300 metres.

Later under the Fremantle strategy, the plan was amended so that the highway was reduced to four lanes. The route remained on Curtin Avenue and Port Beach Road until it joined Stirling Highway via Tydeman Road. From there the highway was to travel over Stirling Bridge and eventually cut a swathe through the suburbs of White Gum Valley and Beaconsfield. This is the section of the western suburbs highway called the eastern bypass and is the subject of this Bill. The eastern bypass plan intersects with the western extension of Roe Highway at Clontarf Hill, which is a centrepiece of the Fremantle City green plan. If built, this intersection would have obliterated this important landmark. From there it was intended to continue farther south through system six area M92 impacting on Mt Brown and Brownman Swamps reserve, which is one of the most important systems of high-conservation-value wetlands remaining in the metropolitan area.

A Labor Government had previously deleted the eastern bypass reservation. At that time, an effort was made to look at alternative solutions to providing more and more roads. The 1992 South West Metropolitan Region Transport Planning Study noted that the current philosophy involved identifying and assessing projects to satisfy demand rather than to manage it. The report stated -

Perth is an example of a twentieth-century, car-dependent city, in which the predominant form of transport has influenced land use patterns. Low density land uses have, in turn, influenced transport; car dependency is seen as both cause and effect.

The SWMRTP study carried out by Travers Morgan with Sinclair Knight Buchanan recognised that community attitudes to major highways had changed and that there were increasing concerns about global pollution levels - greenhouse gases and global warming; regional and local pollution - air and water quality; unnecessary and wasteful energy use; and stress in living environments.

The SWMRTP study noted that the corridor plan failed to meet Metroplan's stated aim of an urban, green, sustainable, healthy, prosperous, economically efficient, socially just and culturally strong city. The consultant said it was his view that the implementation of Metroplan's development strategy would largely result in a continuation of current trends, which is unlikely to achieve Metroplan's stated aims or the committee's vision for the region.

Another study carried out for the Town of Cottesloe by Dr John Roberts of Transport and Environment Studies concluded that -

There is no evident need for increased strategic highway capacity in the Cottesloe corridor, neither today nor in the future, if sensible transport and land use policies are followed, and the *existing* infrastructure is properly exploited.

The SWMRTP study recommended an alternative strategy of integrated planning of land use and all modes of transport. Demand management strategies could be developed for transport networks, land use and transport price aimed at reducing car dependency. Shunning this more modern outlook and ignoring the extensive community consultation and input into the SWMRTP study, the 1993 Court Government reinstated the eastern bypass road reserve. Since the reinstatement of the Fremantle eastern bypass, consistent and strong opposition to the western suburbs highway has resulted in further studies being carried out. A study for the City of Fremantle Council found little justification for duplicating the existing Stock Road heavy transport route to the south.

The coastal highway review group - a group of the city councils affected by the highway - commissioned the Nelson, English, Loxton and Andrews study. This review of the proposed coastal highway found that the data used to justify the highway was flawed. It noted that -

The poor quality of available travel demand forecasting and the dearth of robust design study means that there are only a few matters that can be predicted with any confidence.

It went on to state -

The Stephenson Highway option cannot be justified because at most it will carry only 10,000 vpd and it cannot be made to relieve the Stirling Highway at Claremont. Simply stated, it does nothing to address the real transportation problems in the Study Area.

The NELA study found that only five per cent of freight movements from the inner harbour of Fremantle port moved to the north. This amounts to only 25 truck movements.

A significant proportion of port-related traffic travels east on Leach Highway to the distribution centre of Kewdale. NELA indicated that a significant increase in rail freight was possible with marginal changes to the relative cost of road and rail freight. It said that it should be possible to at least double the rail share and possibly achieve a 25 per cent share.

The western suburbs highway is clearly not a sensible solution for the twenty-first century. Clause 4 of this Bill repeals the Metropolitan Region Scheme (Fremantle) Act 1994 and, if enacted, allows the implementation of planning solutions that are more in line with community aspirations. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Hon E.R.J. Dermer.