

KALAMUNDA ZIG ZAG RAILWAY

Statement

HON CHARLES SMITH (East Metropolitan) [10.03 pm]: I have the tourism project Hon Robin Scott is looking for. I rise to say a few words on and throw my support behind a proposal by retired engineer John Edmonds to reopen the historical Kalamunda Zig Zag railway. The word “Kalamunda” is taken from two Noongar words, “kala” meaning home and “munda” meaning forest, and it was on timber that Kalamunda’s wealth was built initially. The original train hauled lumber from Kalamunda to Midland to meet Perth’s growing railway network during the latter stages of the nineteenth century. I understand that the McGowan Labor government wants to make Western Australia the “road trip state”. Kalamunda is ideally placed to profit from visitors, but, unfortunately, is failing to attract a steady stream of visitors and desperately needs an economic boost.

The proposal I have seen, which indeed was hand-delivered by my good self to the Minister for Tourism, brings with it the enormous advantage that much of the rail track bed still exists. The new railway infrastructure would only need to be brought up to contemporary standards to provide a new picturesque tourist service in the Swan Valley and up into the Swan hills. We could use modern steam trains that emit no hot embers or sparks. If we are really clever, like this government is, we could use battery or battery–diesel hybrid trains. The Perth hills is a wonderful emerging food and wine region ripe for the economic development that a new tourist attraction could deliver. This project would be fantastic for not just Kalamunda but also WA, and it would bring in a hell of a lot of tourists.