

AGRICULTURAL SUPPLY CHAIN IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Statement by Minister for Transport

MS R. SAFFIOTI (West Swan — Minister for Transport) [1.18 pm]: I rise to inform the house that our program to get more grain moving on rail has reached a major milestone. The \$200 million agricultural supply chain improvement program is a joint federal and state government investment aimed at increasing the efficiency and capacity of our grain freight network. As part of the ASCI program, 11 rail sidings at major CBH grain bins are being upgraded across the wheatbelt, midwest, great southern and goldfields–Esperance regions.

On 24 February, we marked a major milestone, as works began on the first siding upgrade at Brookton, which is being constructed by Western Australian company Multiplant. The Brookton rail siding extension will allow 3 000-tonne grain trains to be loaded without interrupting traffic on the main line. The investment is backed by CBH Group, which is investing in rapid-loading bins and elevators. Once these works are complete, longer trains will be able to run more often right across our network. Rail siding upgrades are also set to begin this month at Broomehill, followed by Moora and Cranbrook.

With WA's recent run of record-breaking grain harvests, it is more important than ever to optimise the efficiency of our agricultural freight transport supply chains to manage the increase in product. These upgrades, in addition to a \$60 million upgrade of the Midland main line in the midwest region and \$72 million for investigation and recommissioning of tier 3 lines in the Narrogin–Wickepin–Kulin area, will help us move grain more efficiently. This will mean we will be able to get more grain to international markets when prices are at their highest.

As well as an economic boost, the ability to transport more grain by rail will improve community safety and decrease environmental emissions and road maintenance by reducing the need for road freight. I thank CBH and Arc Infrastructure for their collaboration on this transformational project and look forward to seeing it come to fruition.