

BINNU EAST AND WEST ROADS, UPGRADING

**420. Hon TOM STEPHENS to the Minister for Transport:**

I refer to the construction by Main Roads of the Binnu East and West Roads which commenced in 1998-99.

- (1) Why were those roads upgraded so quickly when they were listed as only a category C priority in Main Roads' 1997 Roads 2020 strategy and when many of the priority A and B roads in the same report remain unattended to?
- (2) Can the minister confirm that the Binnu East Road extends out to his farming property?

**Hon M.J. CRIDDLE replied:**

- (1)-(2) The Binnu East and West Roads have been on the list for upgrading for something like 30 years. If members go back 30 years to the contributory bitumen scheme, they will find the roads were started then. They were extended out about three miles a year, if I recall correctly. The progress of those upgrades ceased after the completion of the contributory bitumen scheme. The previous minister included those two roads in the Transform WA project established two years ago and funded them at \$1m a year for each road. I am sure Hon Kim Chance would be interested to know that the local people supported the project and got involved by using their own equipment to cart the gravel there. They now have two of the best roads in the district that support the local agricultural industry. Something like 20 000 to 30 000 tonnes of product comes from the Binnu West Road and 60 000 tonnes from the Binnu East Road. The establishment of those roads has been of major assistance to the agricultural industry. They are also school bus routes and will be part of a link that goes from Kalbarri, through Binnu and out through Balla to Tenindewa.

Hon Ken Travers: That is a popular road.

Hon M.J. CRIDDLE: I am trying to explain to members that the roads are part of a network that will feed people into the wheatbelt, an area that needs this sort of infrastructure for its future wellbeing. It also assists with a heavy transport corridor that will link with roads to Tenindewa, Mullewa, out through Mt Magnet and down the goldfields highway to the eastern States. Members want to get efficiencies into the transport industry and that is the way to do it.

Hon Tom Stephens: What category road is it?

Hon M.J. CRIDDLE: It is a very important road and it will be very important well into the future. It was part of a plan to get a road network in place to benefit heavy haulage, school buses, the tourist industry and so on. A vibrant tourist industry exists there, based on the wildflowers in the area. Any member who wants to go there should look at the start of the road from Kalbarri down to Port Gregory; it has been an absolutely outstanding success. The average traffic has been something like 350 cars a day since the road opened. The other day I was requested to construct a passing lane at the southern end. It has been an outstanding success.

Hon Bob Thomas: What is the maintenance?

Hon M.J. CRIDDLE: Members opposite do not understand anything about the necessity of infrastructure in the bush and inter-country areas so it can develop. That is what the Government intends to do and that is what it will continue to do.