

RAILWAY (FORRESTFIELD–AIRPORT LINK) BILL 2015

Receipt and First Reading

Bill received from the Assembly; and, on motion by **Hon Jim Chown (Parliamentary Secretary)**, read a first time.

Second Reading

HON JIM CHOWN (Agricultural — Parliamentary Secretary) [2.12 pm]: I move —

That the bill be now read a second time.

Before I commence the second reading of the Railway (Forrestfield–Airport Link) Bill 2015, I am required by section 18A of the Transport Co-ordination Act 1966 to table a report by the director general of Transport on the planned construction of the new railway line to Forrestfield, and by section 96(2) of the Public Works Act 1902 to table a map showing the course to be taken by, and the middle line of, the railway. I table this report and map.

[See papers 3328 and 3329.]

Hon JIM CHOWN: The purpose of this bill is to implement the legislative authority for the construction of the railway to Forrestfield. The Public Transport Authority began planning for the Forrestfield–Airport Link project in 2008 and was guided by the need to cater for Perth’s future consolidated domestic and international airport terminals; future demand created by planned redevelopment of the land vacated by the current domestic terminal and surrounding area; the need for a train station at Forrestfield, given the considerable future population to the east of the airport; and, in the longer term, the potential for future connection of the Forrestfield end of the new rail line to the broader rail network to the south. The government provided \$12 million for the project in the 2014–15 budget and another \$57 million has been allocated for further planning, design and procurement for activities in 2015–16.

The case to extend the suburban rail network with construction of the Forrestfield rail line is detailed in the project definition plan, prepared by the Public Transport Authority and endorsed by cabinet in August 2014. The PDP found that in providing a rail link to the foothills for the first time, the Forrestfield line will also improve the public transport options to and from the airport and will help relieve pressure on existing roads. The improved transport options also provide a reliable alternative for airport workers and passengers. The chosen Forrestfield–Airport Link route provides the best solution to service the future consolidated airport precinct and the development potential of the surrounding areas. The new line will branch east off the Midland line, just past Bayswater station, and feed down the Tonkin Highway reserve, mostly underground. There will be three stations, named Airport West, Consolidated Airport and Forrestfield, with a total of 3 000 parking bays. Twin bored tunnels will provide an underground journey, significantly reducing the impact to above-ground structures and communities. Importantly, this will allow the railway to connect to the eastern suburbs by tunnelling beneath the Perth Airport estate, which has long been a physical divide to efficient public transport options. The new rail line allows for extra rail capacity on the Midland line between Bayswater and Perth stations, where demand is expected to exceed current supply in the near future.

The Forrestfield–Airport Link is also an opportunity to integrate Transwa services to the airport, providing tourists and residents access to over 200 regional WA towns. Construction of the Forrestfield line will commence in 2016 and trains will run on the line in 2020. Project funding includes additional railcars as part of the C-series procurement by the Public Transport Authority. The project will provide improved bus feeder networks in the Belmont–Redcliffe area to the Airport West station, and for the surrounding eastern suburbs to Forrestfield station. To that end, project funding also allows for the purchase of an additional 26 buses for the Transperth bus fleet. This project is much more than a train to the airport and much more than just an extension of the rail network. The new rail line will provide a viable alternative to traditional car travel between the eastern suburbs and Perth. It will alleviate road traffic, ease congestion and reduce travel times for many people living and working in Perth’s eastern suburbs.

By 2021, the Forrestfield rail line is expected to generate 20 000 boardings on the suburban rail network every day, increasing to 29 000 daily by 2031. The infrastructure will accommodate significant growth beyond 2031, ensuring that the new rail line provides the state with long-term infrastructure that will continue to meet the needs of commuters across the suburban rail network into the future. The new rail line will also contribute to boosting employment as well as residential and economic growth by promoting new and existing centres at Airport West and Forrestfield stations. The project is currently in its formal procurement phase. Evaluation of expressions of interest received is nearing completion and a request for proposal will be issued to the short-listed respondents in June this year. A contract will likely be awarded by mid-2016, with construction commencing in late 2016. The total estimated capital cost of the project is \$2 billion.

The new rail line will ensure that Perth has a more balanced and sustainable suburban public transport system. In the same way the Mandurah and Joondalup rail lines have underpinned urban development in Perth's southern and northern corridors, the Forrestfield line will help drive growth by opening up multiple opportunities in the eastern corridor and beyond. It will enhance the communities it will serve and contribute to the sustainability of the wider metropolitan area well into the future. This bill will implement the legislative authority to construct the Forrestfield rail line.

Pursuant to standing order 126(1), I advise that this bill is not a uniform legislation bill. It does not ratify or give effect to an intergovernmental or multilateral agreement to which the government of this state is a party; nor does this bill, by reason of its subject matter, introduce a uniform scheme or uniform laws throughout the commonwealth.

I commend the bill to the house and table the explanatory memorandum.

[See paper 3330.]

Debate adjourned, pursuant to standing orders.