

NARROWS BRIDGE DUPLICATION, OPENING

273. Hon TOM STEPHENS to the Minister for Transport:

I refer to the report in today's *The West Australian* in which the minister claimed that the opening of the Narrows Bridge duplication was on schedule. Can the minister advise which schedule he referred to? In particular, is the minister saying that the bridge will be fully operational by February 2001, as previously announced?

Hon M.J. CRIDDLE replied:

The Government is indicating that the first span of the bridge will meet the northern side of the river by the end of November to the beginning of December and the span will be complete in the month of December. We expect the bridge to be opened to traffic towards the end of January and into February and the completion of the interchanges and the entire Narrows Bridge project to be completed in April-May.

This is one of the very best projects that we will see in Perth in the near future. It demonstrates the fact that the Government is prepared to implement projects that will lead to a free flow of traffic in Perth, and this project complements what we have done with the Graham Farmer Freeway. It will also be complemented by extensions to the Kwinana Freeway with the bridges being built down there. There will be a seamless operation of about 115 kilometres from Safety Bay Road right through to Hodges Drive, which will also go out on the Graham Farmer Freeway to the Great Eastern Highway. The people of Perth will have a great road network into the future, and it is one aspect on which they have complimented this Government, beginning with the Graham Farmer Freeway, which is an outstanding project.