

## **FITZROY RIVER BRIDGE**

*Statement by Minister for Transport*

**MS R. SAFFIOTI (West Swan — Minister for Transport)** [12.02 pm]: I rise to update the house on the extraordinary progress of the construction of the new Fitzroy River Bridge.

In January's floods following ex-tropical cyclone Ellie, the original Fitzroy River Bridge sustained significant damage. It was enough damage that it was deemed a total replacement was required. Main Roads Western Australia swung into action, fast-tracking the procurement process and then working with alliance partners Georgiou, BMD, and BG&E Resources on actioning ways to speed up the build. This means that in just over five months on site, Main Roads and the Fitzroy Bridge Alliance have completed the substantive works in the river channel, and the entire bridge deck has now been installed. With the entire deck installed, works have commenced on deck surfacing and safety barriers, as well as construction of bridge approaches, which were also severely damaged in the floods. Although there is still a lot of work to do, we are now confident that the new bridge can open in some capacity before the end of the year, more than six months ahead of schedule.

Moving traffic from the temporary low-level crossing to the new bridge will be a major milestone. It will not only permanently reconnect East Kimberley and West Kimberley, but also provide assurance to freight operators and the tourism industry, which rely on the critical route in Western Australia's north. Main Roads will continue to keep the local community and freight industry updated on the progress of the works. I commend and thank the project teams from Main Roads and the alliance, together with local community partners, stakeholders and flood response agencies for delivering this complex task so quickly. I also thank all our suppliers, which prioritised work for the bridge so it could be delivered so quickly. They include Mainline Demolition; pile casing supplier, ABFI Steel Group; and our steel I-beam supplier, Civmec. I give a special thank you also to BHP, which provided the drainage for the low-level crossing.

Importantly, this project is being constructed in partnership with the local community and has achieved some great outcomes. Over 130 locals have been employed on the project, a quarter of total construction hours are attributable to Aboriginal people, and 19 Aboriginal-owned businesses have been awarded contracts associated with this job, with more than \$14 million already spent.

We are working closely with other state government agencies to identify ongoing opportunities for locals who have developed skills and business capacity as a result of this project. I thank the federal government for its support of this project and look forward to sharing an anticipated opening date for the bridge as soon as possible.