

PINJARRA RAIL PRECINCT

Grievance

MRS R.M.J. CLARKE (Murray–Wellington) [9.43 am]: Before I start my grievance, the members for Mandurah, Dawesville and I wish Peel Thunder all the very best in the upcoming West Australian Football League grand final. Yes—go, Thunder! It will be great to join the member for Bicton at the game on Sunday. Let us bring it home, Thunder!

My grievance is to the Minister for Transport; Tourism, Hon Rita Saffioti, MLA, regarding the Pinjarra rail precinct and the decommissioning of the beloved *Australind*. First, I thank the minister for her recent visit to Murray–Wellington and for taking the time to see the Pinjarra rail precinct.

Today, I want to talk about the redevelopment plan for the historic Pinjarra railway precinct. Pinjarra is a town that has a very strong rail history that commenced in 1893, and Pinjarra was a key transport link to and from the south west. As we expect the south west region to experience significant expansion in the coming 20 years, it is crucial that we concentrate on strengthening the economy and developing the tourism industry. There has been a clear vision for Pinjarra, through intensive interactions with the community, companies and the tourism sector, based on practical ways to improve the town's existing landmarks and heritage sites, foster new investments and increase the number of residents and visitors. A major part of this initiative is the redevelopment of the historic Pinjarra rail precinct, which once stood as a central place in the early development of the state.

The Shire of Murray is interested in obtaining all three carriages of the old *Australind* and keeping them intact for a heritage display to preserve the history of this much-loved train at our rail heritage precinct in Pinjarra. The shire and key stakeholders have been working tirelessly and collaboratively to transform the rail precinct into a thriving destination for culture, arts and heritage. The Pinjarra rail heritage master plan they are developing outlines a comprehensive approach that includes the establishment of a heritage railway museum, a visitor centre, a cafe and modern event spaces. The plan also features unique short-stay accommodation options, which will rejuvenate the historical railway barracks and carriages. A team of consultants, backed by extensive experience in developing international heritage rail experiences, has been working hard with the shire and Hotham Valley Railway. Furthermore, with funding support from the Peel Development Commission and Tourism WA, a series of technical studies and due diligence investigations into these major rail projects have been initiated. The shire would fund all relocation costs and ongoing maintenance of the *Australind* carriages.

This project represents more than a milestone for just Pinjarra; it is a big step forward for our entire region. It is not about just fixing up a railway area. We are bringing exciting new opportunities to our community, while also valuing our history. The proposal to transform the three old *Australind* carriages into a thriving tourist destination is a venture that marks a significant chapter in Western Australia's railway history. No other destination is quite like it, as it will hold treasures from a time long past yet crucial to the story of the region. This unique venture can attract travellers, historians and enthusiasts to immerse themselves in a part of Western Australia that has stood still in time, waiting to reveal its stories. Adding to the precinct's historical portfolio, the engine shed, which is believed to be the oldest remaining engine shed in Western Australia, and the carriage shed, believed to be the only surviving carriage shed in Western Australia, make it an essential site for preservation and a unique point of interest for wider audiences.

On behalf of the Shire of Murray and our local community, I would like to ask the minister for this government's support with the redevelopment of the precinct and the procurement of three carriages, which will not be in operation after November, so they can be repurposed as a major tourism attraction in the precinct. By preserving the iconic heritage places in Pinjarra through projects like these, we are building a place in which Pinjarra is not just a thriving centre for business, but also a welcoming home for culture. It is a unique place that beautifully combines the old and the new, inviting everyone to come and enjoy what Pinjarra has to offer.

I also highlight that the *Australind* is an important part of the lives of many people, such as Shannon Winduss from Cookernup. Shannon has travelled on the *Australind* for over 10 years. When Cookernup train station was upgraded, Transwa was very aware of Shannon and her connection to the *Australind*, and it named Cookernup station "Shannon's Shelter". Shannon cherishes a deep connection to the area and the *Australind*. Travellers like Shannon have actively participated in this journey and, united with the entire community, wish to commemorate the final journey as a special occasion. I look forward to being able to celebrate this with Shannon and my community.

Can the minister provide an update on what is planned for the final journeys of the *Australind* so the community can farewell this long-running train throughout my electorate of Murray–Wellington?

MS R. SAFFIOTI (West Swan — Minister for Transport) [9.49 am]: I would like to thank the member for Murray–Wellington for her grievance. I again thank her for her strong advocacy for her community.

As the member outlined, I was down in Pinjarra a few weeks ago on a very full and busy day. The member showed me a number of safety issues on South Western Highway, many of which have now been addressed or progressed. We also met with the council of the Shire of Murray and had a tour of Pinjarra train station and the surrounding area. I thank the member for Murray–Wellington for her strong involvement in the plans and I also thank the shire's

council for its positivity about what can be done. I always find that that shire is particularly positive about the future and very keen to work with the state government, and I very much appreciate our very fruitful conversations.

We had a tour of the district and both the member for Murray–Wellington and the shire outlined the potential for that site. It is a very historic area and one for which there are very ambitious plans. The strong rail history was acknowledged as was how we can turn it into a major tourism precinct for the shire. As we continue to look at tourism opportunities across the state, one of my key objectives is to work with those councils who want to be part of our tourism future to develop tourism destinations and experiences. As I said, the outline is ambitious, but the shire also has practical plans about how this area can be a major destination for Western Australians and international visitors alike. I am very, very excited to continue to work on that.

I know that there are many elements to that plan—the first one of course is in relation to the *Australind* railcars. Again, the shire was very keen to grab a hold of a few of the railcars to be part of a display and to be turned into hospitality venues in that area. Therefore, I am very pleased, member, to announce that we will be able to deliver some of those railcars to the Shire of Murray. The handover will happen in late November for two reasons. First of all, the railcars are at the end of their useful life. Second of all, we will be shutting down the Armadale rail line for a period as we improve and upgrade it. As a result of that, we have a whole system in place, including replacement bus services with new connections to support those people affected, and those trips will be 50 per cent cheaper because of the disruption. We apologise for that disruption.

The final bookable service on the *Australind* will be on Friday, 17 November. We will also be running two special services on 18 and 19 November for invited members of the community—in particular, those regular users such as Shannon, as the member described—to commemorate the last journeys of the *Australind*. I remember seeing the advertising for when the *Australind* was launched. It was a train that thought it was a plane!

Mrs R.M.J. Clarke: I know!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I just think that is hilarious! But it was very modern at the time and there were some big full-page ads of this train emerging, looking like it was about to take off. It has had a long history. Many people along that south west route have fond memories of the train ride. The service was excellent. It was a unique service, but one that I think many members really treasured. Of course, it will come back bigger and better with the new *Australind*, and, again, because it was at the end of its useful life, there were some reliability issues, which I acknowledge. Some patch-up work had to be done in recent years, but now, unfortunately because of the works along the entire Armadale line, including the extension of the rail line to Byford, we are upgrading and elevating a lot of the track, so as a result we will need to decommission the *Australind* railcars.

Member for Collie–Preston, we are also working with the Boyup Brook heritage society to source some *Australind* railcars. There is always a massive demand, and we will also have the old A-series trains soon, so whoever wants an A-series train, please put up their hand because we have quite a few to give away.

Ms J.L. Hanns: Deputy Premier, it is Boyanup, not Boyup Brook.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Boyanup; sorry. Thank you for that correction, member.

As I said, we are going to keep working with the member for Murray–Wellington and the Shire of Murray on the heritage precinct. It is an exciting plan, and I was very pleased to take the time to tour the area. I am very excited about working with the member, and I am very excited to hold the celebrations on the 18 and 19 November as we and some invited guests experience the last journeys of the train that thought it was a plane!

In relation to that, the WAFL grand final is this week, and it will very much be a great grand final between East Fremantle and Peel. Peel, of course, has a lot of Dockers players.

Mrs R.M.J. Clarke: So you would be going for Peel!

Mr P.J. Rundle: South Fremantle should be in there.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: South Fremantle should be there, but, unfortunately, their season was not as good as some previous years. Anyway, we wish both teams all the best, and hopefully a big crowd turns out. It is a busy weekend. There is the Royal Show, the WAFL grand final and the America's Cup celebrations down in Fremantle. On Sunday, there will be a lot of things for people to do.

Mrs R.M.J. Clarke: Public transport.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: But, of course, public transport is free, which will help everyone get to their destinations.