



# Fremantle faces shift of freight to Kwinana

PETER KERR and DANIEL HATCH

Fremantle will be effectively phased out as a working port, with almost all its freight activity shifted to Kwinana, and a major upmarket housing development built on the site, possibly along the lines of the controversial North Port Quay development.

They are among the bold plans of incoming transport minister Simon O'Brien, who yesterday confirmed to *The West Australian* that as well as the major reshuffle of the historic port's operations, the \$850 million rail line to Ellenbrook will begin during the first term of government, as promised during the election campaign.

"Planning will commence very soon for a strategic renewal of our container shipping facilities away from North Quay to new facilities at James Point," Mr O'Brien said.

Mr O'Brien said the government would be looking to redevelop the land at North Fremantle freed-up by the move, possibly in conjunction with the developers of the North Port Quay proposal because of the synergies between the two projects.

"Whether we ultimately have a sea bed reclamation of the type that's been proposed by the North Port Quay developers remains to be seen," he said. Quay spokesman Greg Poland said the consortium welcomed the opportunity to take the concept to the approvals stage.

Also beating down the new minister's door will be the Len Buckeridge-led James Point Consortium which has its own plans to build a port near Kwinana. The private port, stalled by the Carpenter Government while it developed its own plans for an island port, was given approval by the Court government. Consortium spokesman Hans Moonen said yesterday a meeting with Mr O'Brien had already been sought to discuss whether the new Kwinana port could be a private development or a joint venture with the government.

But Fremantle mayor Peter Tagliaferri said the new government was planning to relocate a multi-billion-dollar asset to Kwinana without having done any studies to support it.

"It's not that simple, they've got leases in place with the stevedores until 2017 and (the equivalent of) 10 per cent of the gross domestic product of the country in cargo coming through that port each year," he said.

Fremantle Society president Ian Alexander said while the port was still important for jobs and the local economy it was also important that the role of Fremantle as a port for more than a century was recognised and people did not want to see it become a "boutique port" for cruise ships.

Mr O'Brien said he would seek to consult widely over the plans.

"There's a lot of sensitivity about change, but I respect Fremantle as one of the great trade centres and historical centres," he said.

He also confirmed the \$850 rail link to Ellenbrook would not be derailed by the Nationals' demands that more money be spent in the regions.

"It's a commitment we gave to commence that project in the first term of government and we will honour that," he said.



# Funding off track

By **LUCY RICKARD**

OPPOSITION transport spokesman Ken Travers is demanding Transport Minister Simon O'Brien release the results of the feasibility study for construction of the Ellenbrook rail line after revelations last week that it had been completed.

In the lead-up to last year's election, both major parties made a commitment to build a rail line to Ellenbrook, but Mr Travers said he believed money earmarked for the rail line has been shifted elsewhere within the transport portfolio.

A feasibility study into the rail line by the Public Transport Authority (PTA) has been in the works for months, and Mr Travers said he was under the impression the study has been completed and handed back to the State Government.

Mr Travers said the State Government had allocated \$550 million to the Roe Highway extension, and he believed the project was not costed in their election promises.

"They would have had to find other transport projects to pull that money from," he said.

"I suspect the Ellenbrook railway is the one that was dropped.

"But can I prove that? No."

Mr O'Brien said last week that since assuming government last year, he found that no planning had been undertaken for

the railway line, and no money allocated to the project by the previous Labor Government.

Mr O'Brien said the PTA had been instructed to undertake the feasibility study and the results of this would be considered as part of the existing, broader review of Perth's public transport network.

Mr Travers said his main concern was for the people of Ellenbrook.

He said after a visit to the area last week that congestion was a major problem for drivers.

He also said the Roe Highway stage eight extension should not have been given priority, and that the funds would be much better spent on a project where cars would be removed from roads and not simply redirected, as they would be on Roe Highway.

Mr Travers said it was important for people to understand that the State Government was trying to redirect funding and attention from the Ellenbrook rail line into other projects.

"There is no reason to be holding up the railway line to Ellenbrook," he said.

"There are detailed election costings of how to fund these projects.

"This is a stand-alone election commitment, and not a small project."



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