

METRONET — RAILWAY LEVEL CROSSINGS

408. Ms C.M. ROWE to the Minister for Transport:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's record investment in transport infrastructure projects, which are providing a pipeline of work for businesses and workers as the economy recovers from COVID-19. Can the minister update the house on the work underway to remove level crossings on the Armadale line; and can she advise the house as to what the Metronet level crossing removal project will mean for commuters, particularly in my electorate of Belmont?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:

I thank the member for Belmont for that question. Today, we unveiled yet another new infrastructure project that will be delivered by this government. As part of our economic recovery, we are bringing forward infrastructure projects around the state. We looked at the level crossing removal program and thought, "This is one that we want to get on with straightaway", so today we unveiled the planning and conceptual design for the removal of another six level crossings along the Armadale line. Of course, the Denny Avenue project is underway, but removing these six is all about reducing congestion, improving safety and really making sure that we can absolutely do more regeneration around that inner Armadale line. Today the Premier and I, with the members for Victoria Park, Cannington and Belmont, announced the preferred solution for the removal of six level crossings between Victoria Park and Beckenham. As I said, this project will enable the removal of parts of the rail barrier that have separated those suburbs for more than a century and provide elevated rail, together with new modern and safe stations and new facilities that will be a huge catchment for the whole area. It will get rid of the dreaded boom gates and reduce the time that people spend at those boom gates.

Of course, because of the Thornlie–Cockburn Link, another project being delivered by this government, we know that the Armadale line will just get busier and busier, particularly between Beckenham and the city. The boom gates are closed for four to six hours each day. The crossings identified for removal include Mint Street, Oats Street and Welshpool Road—or, as I call them, the Vic Park 3—and William Street, Hamilton Street and Wharf Street. There will be different solutions for each of those level crossings, but in particular Hamilton Street will have a road over rail option. There are a number of constraints. For example, Leach Highway impacts on our ability to build elevated rail all the way through; Welshpool Road is a major east–west connector; and there are high-voltage transmission lines.

Today we announced the concept design. We will be consulting with the community to determine the exact location of the stations, what the stations will look like, what sort of amenity people want at those stations and what can happen underneath the new elevated rail. We have seen the absolute excitement in Melbourne that has come with new elevated rail, which has allowed for lots of community infrastructure underneath the rail line, including basketball courts, table tennis tables and exercise equipment. It basically becomes a new connection and provides more public open space for the community. We will reduce the barrier, improve safety, reduce congestion and provide more public open space for the community. This is an ambitious project, but one that I am so proud to deliver because we know that these types of projects not only help transform and create new development opportunities, but also create jobs for Western Australia. If members look at our infrastructure program, they will see that it is the best infrastructure program in Australia, delivering more jobs than are being delivered anywhere else.