

## TONKIN HIGHWAY — UPGRADE

### *Grievance*

**MR S.J. PRICE (Forrestfield)** [9.53 am]: My grievance is to the Minister for Transport. I thank the minister for taking this grievance and I thank the minister, her staff and Main Roads Western Australia for the work they have undertaken to this point in relation to this grievance.

On 14 November 2019, on behalf of my constituents, I raised concerns with the minister about proposed changes to the intersection of Tonkin Highway and Hale Road. At that time, the minister undertook to have Main Roads reassess those plans. As we all know, early planning by Main Roads indicated that a Tonkin Highway flyover over Hale Road was its preferred solution, with no access to Tonkin Highway from Hale Road. However, in response to stakeholder and community feedback, I requested that the minister ask Main Roads to re-investigate the plan and develop a revised option for that intersection to retain access to Tonkin Highway from Hale Road. On Friday, 8 May 2020, Main Roads released a new concept plan that gives north-facing access to and from Hale Road and provides safe access for pedestrians and children crossing from Wattle Grove to Forrestfield to access Hartfield Park. The park is the recreation area for Wattle Grove residents, because the suburb does not have any recreational facilities, such as sporting fields, as the city does not have any land in the area.

The new proposal is a major improvement on the first concept plan for a flyover, but my community still has questions about the loss of south-facing access. At the time the plans were released and again on an online community forum I held last week, Main Roads indicated that it undertook extensive traffic modelling in the area. Many residents have raised concerns about the quality of that modelling. They are worried about when it took place and what was actually done. There is some concern the modelling may have been done over the Christmas period when traffic flows were low, and may be a conservative estimate of the amount of traffic using that intersection. According to Main Roads, the new plan meets the requirement for 82 per cent of vehicles accessing Tonkin Highway to and from Hale Road. Similar to concerns about the modelling, there is not a lot of detail about the figures. There is no context and we do not know the actual number of vehicle movements associated with the figures. Essentially, the figures show that 18 per cent of the traffic accessing Tonkin Highway at that intersection travels south. We do not know what the numbers are or the what the volume of traffic is, and the community is a little unsure about the impact it will have on local roads, especially when we look at alternative routes, such as Hartfield Road onto Lewis Road in Forrestfield, which takes drivers to the intersection of Lewis Road and Welshpool Road East—as we know, that is already a challenging intersection—or, in Wattle Grove, access via Arthur Road onto Bruce Road, and then onto Welshpool Road East, which is a bit of a problem as well. Residents have also asked whether stopping drivers going south onto Tonkin Highway from Hale Road will increase the traffic flow on Hartfield and Lewis Roads onto Welshpool Road East, which is already a nightmare.

Another concern, which has been raised previously, is the impact, if any, the new proposal will have on emergency services accessing the area. There is concern that emergency services needing to enter Wattle Grove or Forrestfield may be delayed.

The new design has a new collector road, or distributor road, that takes people from Hale Road onto Tonkin Highway, but it requires drivers to go through the lights at Roe Highway. People have asked why they have to go via that route and not just straight onto Tonkin Highway. I know there are challenges with the designs. Some people in the community are saying that the only solution is to maintain full access to Tonkin Highway—north and south. This is a very constrained intersection, purely as a result of the original plan for it to be a flyover. The road reserve is not very big at this intersection and the challenges have been compounded by subsequent installation of other public infrastructure, including a Water Corporation facility. The Dampier to Bunbury gas pipeline is not too far away. When the Gateway project was completed, there was no anticipation of any other access; that just terminates, and it does not make life easy as well. There are also significant environmental restrictions in the area with an A-class reserve, Bush Forever sites and significant Aboriginal sites in very close proximity to the intersection. In addition, there is the base of the Veteran Car Club of WA, which has nearly 2 000 members who go there; it is a great place for people to be involved and to connect with the community.

Can the minister please outline the extent and time frames of the traffic modelling undertaken, together with how my constituents' concerns about additional traffic on local roads will be considered? I understand that Main Roads has sought information from the City of Kalamunda and other government agencies about future land use planning. It has spoken with the Western Australia Police Force and the Department of Fire and Emergency Services about their operations to ensure that community safety will not be compromised. Environmental groups and public utility providers have had input as well in developing the current half-diamond interchange with north-facing ramps. Can the minister please detail why south-facing ramps have not been included and whether it would be possible to include them?

Once again, I thank the minister for her support and understanding about this issue. I know that she has had similar experience with similar issues in her own electorate. My community certainly appreciates the minister's support in this.

**MS R. SAFFIOTI (West Swan — Minister for Transport)** [10.01 am]: I thank the member for Forrestfield for that grievance and for his hard work on this and all the other issues in Forrestfield. Forrestfield is a dynamic area, where a lot of things are happening, including rail lines and new infrastructure. I think we are seeing a record amount of state government spending in Forrestfield. Of course, as outlined by the member for Bicton, with all new spending comes challenges in designing infrastructure to make sure that it can benefit as many people as possible.

Interchanges are not a new issue. I am glad that that the member for Bateman is here. When interchanges were designed for NorthLink, I experienced the same issues. An interchange was not provided at Beechboro Road. At the time, I asked for further traffic modelling work to be undertaken, but it was not done. I was very keen, when the member raised this issue, not only in Parliament in November, but also previously in a number of meetings, that we do everything possible to make sure that we provide as much access as possible for the local residents. As the member outlined, he made a grievance in November, but, of course, he met with me previously on a number of occasions about this issue.

I asked Main Roads to examine all the possible options and we undertook some significant traffic modelling. On Tonkin Highway and surrounding roads, 50 loggers and 25 cameras were installed to monitor traffic volumes and vehicle journeys. The survey was undertaken in October and was used to inform the traffic modelling. Of course, other traffic modelling has been undertaken since then. The area chosen included north of the Roe Highway, the Tonkin Highway interchange; south of Tonkin Highway, Maddington Road; west of Roe Highway, Orrong Road and the Welshpool Road East interchange; and east of Roe Highway and Berkshire Road. There was significant traffic modelling across the entire area. We will continue to do traffic modelling, particularly on the local access roads, which I think is a major issue. Again, with all major interchanges and major works, there are always distributional impacts for the local community. I think the member outlined a couple of those roads—for example, we are investigating issues at the intersection of Welshpool Road and Lewis Road, and the intersection of Welshpool Road, Bruce Road and Brook Road. We are doing further traffic modelling to address the issue that the member has raised; that is, what would be the impact on those intersections with the current model and looking at how we would address those making sure that does not become a congestion issue?

The member also raised how the Western Australia Police Force and Department of Fire and Emergency Services view the project. Currently, both agencies have indicated that they do not foresee any concerns with the new interchange based on information that has been provided. As a result of the work that the member has done, we were able to release a new concept design for north-facing ramps. We are getting further community input about those new north-facing ramps.

I will go through some of the figures that the member was asking for. The survey showed that 80 per cent of vehicles turning either east or west from Hale Road travel north on Tonkin Highway. That is 5 642 vehicles a day. These surveys were done outside school holidays, addressing an issue that the community raised. The survey showed that 20 per cent of vehicles—1 389 vehicles a day—travel south. The same survey indicated that 80 per cent of vehicles—5 787 vehicles a day—travel from the north away from the city on Tonkin Highway and turn east or west bound onto Hale Road towards Forrestfield or Wattle Grove, while 20 per cent—1 406 vehicles a day—come from the south along Tonkin Highway and turn east or west bound onto Hale Road towards Forrestfield or Wattle Grove.

There are a couple of issues. A particular issue was access heading south and turning right onto Hale Road, and we have been able to address that in the new concept. There are currently some real problems there anyway with people jumping two or three lanes. We are also addressing that. We did significant investigations, designs and costings on south-facing ramps. There are a couple of key issues. First, they would require some private home acquisitions; we estimate that up to eight homes would need to be acquired. There is also some major Water Corporation infrastructure that, as I understand it, mixes desalinated water with dam water. That would also be a significant cost. As the member said, there are other environmental constraints, along with the Vintage Car Club of WA. A range of issues would make south-facing ramps very difficult and costly to deliver. I think it would have a major impact on local amenity and on the local homes nearby. The estimate is over \$60 million for the ramps; moreover, the impact on the local community would be very significant. I think the design that has been put forward is a good design. I am glad that the member is constantly talking to his community. I will continue to work with the member to make sure that all the issues raised, particularly the distributional impact of local traffic, are addressed. We will continue to do further traffic modelling to get a great outcome for the member's constituents.