

RAILWAY (METRONET) AMENDMENT BILL 2022

Second Reading

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

MR S.A. MILLMAN (Mount Lawley — Parliamentary Secretary) [2.53 pm]: I would like to continue the remarks I started before question time. I was reciting to members the benefits of some of the terrific Metronet project, and how those benefits would impact on the people of the great electorate of Mount Lawley. Members will recall that I was talking about all the commuters who travel through the suburb of Mt Lawley from their respective suburbs on their way to the CBD. They might come from Banksia Grove, Wangara, Ballajura, Ellenbrook, Bullsbrook, Chittering, Gidgegannup, Mundaring or anywhere in between that arc of towns and suburbs. Throughout this whole region, these people are accessing the CBD on roads that run through the electorate of Mount Lawley.

Happily, and thankfully, the McGowan government is committed to job-creating, congestion-busting transport infrastructure projects. Members will recall that before question time I talked about the rat run in Swan Street, Yokine. One of these congestion-busting projects that the minister has put so much time, energy and effort into will be a great result for the people of Mount Lawley and residents in the electorates of the members for Balcatta and Morley. I refer to the Morley–Wanneroo intersection. Millions of dollars will be invested into upgrading this intersection to discourage people ducking off the main arterial roads and cutting through local neighbourhood streets.

I want to move back to talking about the bigger picture involved in this. When we talk about investing in public transport infrastructure, we are sounding the bell for all the principles that we in the Labor Party hold dear. Good public transport infrastructure speaks to questions of equity and fairness and to the creation of vibrant, liveable local communities. It speaks to protecting our environment, increasing productivity and supporting our economy. One of the things I have noticed since the 2021 election is that we on this side of the chamber know precisely what it is that we stand for. The trouble we face is that members opposite have no idea what they stand for. I cannot tell. The complaint was made that we were not supporting local businesses. I heard the Premier’s answer during question time when he listed, chapter and verse, the previous government’s acts of economic vandalism. But one of the things he missed that impacted on the people of Mount Lawley—so much so that my predecessor, the former member for Mount Lawley, a member of the Liberal Party, decried it in the lead-up to the 2017 election—was the fact that the previous government increased land tax three times. That was in addition to all the other economic vandalism the Premier outlined.

Dr D.J. Honey interjected.

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: I thank the member for Cottesloe for that interjection. He will be an economic vandal if he is ever elected into government, and I pray that that day never happens. On one hand, members opposite all talk about the surplus this government has enjoyed as a result of high iron ore prices, but then they come along and say, “Guess what? The price of steel has gone up.” Picture my surprise; one leads to the other. Instead of being profligate and wasteful like the previous government, as was shown, chapter and verse, in the Langoullant inquiry, this government has taken the responsible, difficult economic decision to make sure that we are on a firm foundation for the future. That is why we are not going to give small landowners and small businesses a kick in the teeth by introducing increases in land tax. We are going to continue stimulating and diversifying the economy through sensible investment.

Metronet will cost billions of dollars, but it will be a game-changing project. It will fundamentally alter the shape and face of Perth. There will be thousands of jobs created just through the construction of Metronet, across a range of industries. The project that is the subject of this piece of legislation will create jobs in the removal of level crossings and the lifting of railway intersections, and construction jobs. When the space is freed up underneath those railway lines, we will see place activation. We will see communities coming together and community engagement. Then, when the public transport system receives the investment in infrastructure that it requires, we will see increased productivity and more integrated and connected communities.

Members do not have to take my word for this. None other than the Tourism and Transport Forum of Australia—hardly the rank-and-file of the working class or the trade union movement, but a body of CEOs and business leaders—together with PricewaterhouseCoopers authored the report *Better public transport. Better productivity: The economic return on public transport investment*. The executive summary of that report states —

A well-functioning transport system is vital to the productivity of all economies, including Australia.

If we want to avoid economic vandalism, avoid the LNP. If we want sensible economic management that diversifies the economy and improves opportunities for all, stick with the McGowan Labor government. We are making the necessary investment in public transport infrastructure in order to ensure that we deliver improved productivity.

I know that the member for Armadale, the Minister for Finance, will make a contribution shortly after me. I hope I have not covered too much of what he is going to speak about. The member for Armadale will know of Paul Krugman, an eminent economist from *The New York Times*. He said —

“Productivity isn’t everything, but, in the long run, it is almost everything. A country’s ability to improve its standard of living over time depends almost entirely on its ability to raise its output per worker.”

By making these investments, we are improving the productivity of the people of Western Australia and improving productivity through the infrastructure of our transport system.

I refer again to a separate report from the Tourism and Transport Forum. None of this is new. It is just a shame that although the coalition commonwealth government gets it, the McGowan state Labor government gets it and the Tourism and Transport Forum gets it, the state opposition—the Nationals WA and the Parliamentary Liberal Party—do not get it. I refer to a report from the Tourism and Transport Forum from 2010—that is over a decade ago—that reported on the benefits of public transport. The benefits are multifaceted. So far, I have only talked about the economic benefits. This report from the Tourism and Transport Forum, *The benefits of public transport*, from May 2010, can be summarised as follows —

1. Public transport plays an important role in minimising the cost of congestion and maximising economic productivity.
2. Equality of access to employment and services, increased cohesion and decreased isolation are significant social benefits that public transport investment can provide.
3. By providing an alternative means of travel to private vehicles, public transport has a critical role to play in reducing carbon emissions.

That is the triple bottom line. It is now known as ESG—environmental, social and governance—but it used to be known as the triple bottom line. Public transport improves the economy, improves social cohesion and improves environmental outcomes. The report continues —

4. Recognition of these benefits across various policy areas must form the basis of a coordinated expansion of investment in public transport by all levels of government.

All those benefits speak to those values that I talked about at the start of my contribution after question time—equity, fairness, creating vibrant communities, protecting our environment, increasing productivity and supporting our economy. It was fascinating doing my research for this speech. I was disappointed to hear the Prime Minister criticise the Leader of the Opposition, Anthony Albanese, a couple of days ago for having lost weight. He had done some exercise, lost weight and improved his overall health. I had the great privilege of being the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health and I know how important physical activity is. Physical activity is vitally important to improve people’s overall physical and mental health.

I came across a fantastic article in the journal *Health and Place*, volume 36, November 2015, entitled “Public transit generates new physical activity: Evidence from individual GPS and accelerometer data before and after light rail construction in a neighborhood of Salt Lake City, Utah, USA”. I read this article. The only other article that I will refer to, for the purposes of *Hansard*, is on the question of equity. This is an article from *Urban Form and Accessibility: Social, economic, and environment impacts* of 2021. Chapter 14 is titled “Public transport equity outcomes through the lens of urban form”. The reason I wanted to refer to this article is that although transport researchers traditionally focus on the movement of goods and people to solve mobility issues, researchers, planners and policymakers are increasingly interested in the integration of land use and transport systems in an effort to increase accessibility, thereby contributing to the wellbeing of individuals. As the former Minister for Lands, the member for Armadale, and the new Minister for Lands, the former mayor of the City of Vincent, would know, accessibility, liveability and amenity in our communities are all very important things. It is great to see that the research is heading in that direction. The article states —

Although the provision of public transport services has wide and differentiated impacts across individuals and metropolitan regions in the short, medium, and long term ... direct equity outcomes ...

That is on the point of equity. Let me return briefly to physical activity. The article continues —

Poor health outcomes from insufficient physical activity ... are a persistent public health issue. Public transit is often promoted for positive influence on PA. Although there is cross-sectional evidence that transit users have higher PA levels, this may be coincidental or shifted from activities such as recreational walking.

The researchers used —

a quasi-experimental design to test if light rail transit ... generated new PA in a neighborhood of Salt Lake City, Utah ...

[Member’s time extended.]

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: The researchers used global positioning systems and accelerometers before the construction of the light rail transit system in 2012 and after construction. They tested within-person differences in individuals and analysed the time differences in physical activity before and after, and they controlled sociodemographic variables. The finding was —

Results suggest that transit use directly generates new PA —

Physical activity —

that is not shifted from other PA. This supports the public health benefits from new high quality public transit ...

There is an additional benefit—a public health benefit—that comes into play. We have economic, environmental and social benefits, to say nothing of the fact that fundamentally this is just about us, the McGowan Labor government, delivering on an election commitment. In 2017 and in 2021, the Labor Party went to the people of Western Australia and said, “We will make sure that if we are elected, we will deliver on our election promise of building Metronet.” That is exactly what we have demonstrated from 2017 right until 2021 and now. The reason it is so important for me to stand up and speak in support of this legislation is because once again, the McGowan government is delivering on an election commitment. I cast that in stark contrast. Members might be wondering why I of all people should be reading research on light rail. It is because a long time ago, promises were made about light rail for the people of Mt Lawley. Sadly, that was a broken promise. Metro Area Express was promised time and again by the Liberal Party and abandoned as soon as it was elected at the 2013 election. Shame on the Liberal Party and shame on Colin Barnett for abandoning that policy.

I for one look at the way in which this government is handling public transport, the innovative approach that it is taking and its commitment to delivering on its election promises and, although people might say that the refurbishment of the Armadale line has very little to do with the people of Mt Lawley, I take great pride in supporting this minister and supporting this legislation. With that, I commend the bill to the house in no uncertain terms.

DR A.D. BUTI (Armadale — Minister for Finance) [3.07 pm]: I rise to contribute to the debate on the Railway (METRONET) Amendment Bill 2022. It is always pleasing to listen to the member for Mount Lawley’s contributions. He mentioned Paul Krugman, who not only writes for *The New York Times*, but also is a Nobel Prize winner, as the member would know, given his interest in economics. It is always safe to quote Professor Krugman. A Labor member of Parliament is also on safe ground when talking about public transport because we are the party of public transport, particularly when it comes to trains. The Liberal Party and, I assume, the Nationals WA, although we never really understand where the National Party stands on most things, do not have it in their DNA. We all know what they did many years ago. The Fremantle transport line was closed. They were going to sell the land. I always ask the Liberals of today how we would be today if we did not have the Perth–Fremantle line. They never know how to answer. It would be an absolute disgrace. The congestion would be unbelievable.

The member for Moore and his fellow travellers in the National Party always seem to criticise Metronet but they do not understand what Metronet is about. It is about more than trains and public transport. It is much wider than that. It is about community, equity, productivity and the environment. All those things come into play when we talk about Metronet. The Minister for Transport brought this bill before the house. It will do much more than extend the railway line to Byford. I am sure that the member for Darling Range will speak about that. It will improve the community around the railway line. It will improve transport across the railway line. Railway lines are often a divide between communities. In Armadale, the railway line divides the west and east. One of the great benefits of the bill before the house with the extension of the railway line to Byford is that it will remove level crossings to open up the two parts of Armadale. It will remove a number of level crossings in my region—Armadale Road, Forrest Road and Church Avenue, which are probably within 600 metres of each other. It will enrich the CBD of Armadale. The City of Armadale is banking on this project as a way to revitalise the centre of Armadale. This is great news. This bill is about more than a train line. The Armadale train line is a historic line. It is very important to the people in my community. The minister would know, being a local in the region, how important the train line is.

Yes, there will be some disruption, but the minister and the government are looking at various ways to minimise the disruption that will take place. We have to do this. The necessary construction in removing level crossings and improving the train line and the stations will mean that at last Armadale will have the best trains in the system, because the improvements to the train stations will allow the more modern trains to service the Armadale line. It is a win–win–win situation! Yes, there will be some difficulty. But the way the opposition operates is if something is difficult, it just does not do it. Western Australians would not have to worry about level crossings or trains if we listened to the opposition’s point of view on public transport because we would have no trains and no need to remove level crossings! To ensure that we can have proper transport routes across railway lines, we need to remove these level crossings. There are a number of level crossings on the Armadale line. I mentioned the three in my vicinity, but in the eight-kilometre stretch between Armadale and Byford, there are level crossings at Armadale Road, Forrest Road, Church Avenue, Byron Road, Eleventh Road and Larsen Road. That is just in the stretch between

Armadale and Byford. Of course, coming from Perth, we have the situation in Cannington and Welshpool, and level crossings at Mint Street, Oats Street, Welshpool Road, Hamilton Street and Wharf Street. It is very important for productivity and for the lifestyle of Western Australians who live in the eastern corridor of the metropolitan region that this work is done. I know that the minister is looking at ways we can minimise the delays that will take place for people not being able to utilise the train during that period. Sometimes we need to go through some discomfort or challenges to have a better future.

This is a transformation of the public transport route between Armadale and Perth, but, more than that, it will transform the communities that live in the eastern corridor and will allow better access between the east and the west, and over the railway line. As I said before, this is one of the great public policy projects in Western Australian history. The opposition should understand how incredibly important this project is, and its members should remove those anti-Metronet stickers they have on their cars. Metronet is much more than public transport; it is about community. It is one of the greatest projects of a Labor government. One of the other great Labor policies that is more than an election promise was the change to transport fares in the metropolitan area and all the way down to Mandurah. A fare that was normally \$9 is now capped at \$2.40, which is the fare for two transport zones in the metropolitan area. To me, that is one of the greatest Labor policies we have seen. I am sure the Acting Speaker will agree that it is one of the great Labor policies. It is a policy of equity and access. It will be one of the signature policies of the Minister for Transport to carry with her at the end of her career. It is also an incredibly challenging project.

The federal government understands how important Metronet is. It understands the amount of infrastructure work being carried out in Western Australia and it is supportive of Metronet. I was listening at question time. I did not realise that the coalition's federal election ads included Metronet, but that is understandable. I should not be surprised as it is a great project. Would it not be good if the opposition could support the government on something that is so good? As the Premier mentioned in one of his answers to a question, in South Australia, the Labor opposition did not bag or criticise its government throughout the last two years of COVID, and it will probably win the election on Saturday—or let us hope so. It will follow a one-term Liberal government. Its success will be the combination of the Liberal Premier of South Australia not listening to proper health advice and doing what we have done in Western Australia with COVID, and an opposition that has been positive and has worked with the government when it needed to. But in WA, we had opposition, opposition, opposition. Members opposite will be marked down on that by the Western Australian public. They have been marked down and they will continue to be marked down by that.

This is a great project. The member says the opposition is not opposed to it—so support it! The opposition members cannot bring themselves to support it. I know the members opposite do not have it in their DNA to support trains or public transport or good public policy and good legislation. With those words, I commend this bill to the house. More importantly, I commend this as a transformational project. Metronet has to be seen as more than just public transport; it is important to equity, access, quality of life, a better environment and better communities.

MR C.J. TALLENTIRE (Thornlie) [3.16 pm]: I am delighted to rise to speak to the Railway (METRONET) Amendment Bill 2022. It is a very worthy starting point to talk about the history of the Armadale line, noting it is 129 years old. I find it fascinating that railway systems around the world are in human civilisation terms all fairly recent. Looking back, the oldest railway that was non-animal-driven but a powered locomotive was the Stockton and Darlington Railway, which began service in 1825. No railway system around the world is older than 200 years, yet we see such elaborate, complex, sophisticated and extensive engineering works all constructed within the last 200 years. That level of intense civil engineering activity has to happen. Yes, there will be some inconvenience for those who live nearby it for a brief period, but the benefits are for those who will use it not only in the immediate moment after its construction, but also for years to come as it endures. Those of us who are connected to the Armadale line have the opportunity to have a sense of our intergenerational contribution to the infrastructure of Western Australia. It is a brilliant opportunity for us to be a part of a project that will be delivering benefits for many years to come.

I want to touch a little more on that Stockton and Darlington Railway, because it is the part of the world that I was born in. I have strong recollections as a four-year-old being on the platform at Darlington station with my grandmother and seeing the *Flying Scotsman* go through. There is a strong railway culture in that part of the world. That is partly because the designer and inventor of much of that amazing track and locomotive technology was a man by the name of George Stephenson; in fact, he came up with the standard gauge rail, being four feet eight and a half inches that is used around the world. What is fascinating is that George Stephenson led this journey. He had to provide the technical advice to guide legislation through the Westminster Parliament. Of course, there were landholders who were outraged that a train line would be coming across their land and this created disputes, but people realised the broader benefit so that the legislation was able to get through. Stephenson was involved in not only the Stockton and Darlington Railway—I am coming to a really interesting point that will be of interest to members—but also the Liverpool and Manchester Railway.

That railway was opened on 15 September 1830. The opening ceremony was attended by the Prime Minister of the day, the Duke of Wellington. This was at a time of intense debate in Westminster about the Corn Law and there was all sorts of fracturing around the place, especially on the conservative side about the right way to proceed with the Corn Law. The member for Liverpool, William Huskisson, was on a different side of the debate to the Prime Minister. Anyway, on the day of the official opening of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway, Huskisson saw an opportunity to make up to the Prime Minister and calm the waters a little. William Huskisson was on a dignitary's train wagon and saw the chance to go up and say hello to the Prime Minister and make amends for any disagreement. In the heat of the moment, with all the excitement and all the fanfare going on, which members could imagine from our rail line openings, sadly the MP for Liverpool, William Huskisson, did not see a locomotive called the *Rocket* coming along, and I think he panicked. He saw that he could move closer to a stationary wagon, or in another direction, where he was hit by this brand new locomotive that George Stephenson had designed. On the opening day of this new piece of rail infrastructure, he was hit and killed. Tragedy can befall any member of Parliament at any time but on openings days, with all the razzamatazz, excitement and that feeling of infallibility, I guess, when people think they are safe because it is a great occasion and, surely, tragedy should not strike at such a moment. It did strike then. I offer that as a word of caution to members when we come to enjoy the opening days for these new rail lines. They should bear in mind that it will be almost exactly 200 years when the new Armadale line is up and running. It will be 200 years since the first-ever Stockton and Darlington Railway line was opened. We will have a connection to enjoy at that time.

I have heard stories about projects throughout the world and have always asked questions about the construction process during the time of intense development in lines such as the Paris Metro and railways elsewhere in the world. Sure enough, there will be moments of inconvenience. That is why people in the Thornlie electorate understand that they will have to have that little bit of pain to experience the huge gain that will come about.

I heard the Deputy Leader of the Opposition speak, and I wonder whether he is clear about the geography around the City of Gosnells and the general south-east corridor, because I think he is a little bit confused about benefits coming to the City of Gosnells. He quoted the mayor, and I will mention some of those comments in a moment.

Mr R.S. Love: They are not my words; they are the mayor's words. I read them out.

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: I think the member might have got them slightly out of context. If I recall correctly, and I have not read *Hansard* as the member only spoke earlier today, the member said that the City of Gosnells gets no benefit from the shutdown of the Armadale line.

Mr R.S. Love interjected.

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: Something is not ringing true here, member for Moore.

Mr R.S. Love: Take it up with the mayor.

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: I will point out for the member's benefit that the City of Gosnells is getting the benefit of a \$700 million project—the extension of the Thornlie line. That goes through to the Nicholson Road station, which the City of Gosnell has long advocated, and it goes onto the next station, the Ranford Road station as well. Clearly, there is a huge benefit. I think the member for Moore might have misunderstood the issue of direct benefits to people who are currently users of the Gosnells train station. We are all beneficiaries of massive infrastructure projects like this. It is true that a shutdown for, perhaps, an 18-month period will be inconvenient, but what I am totally reassured by, and as the member identified, is that the Minister for Transport and I met with the Mayor of the City of Gosnells, Teresa Lynes, and had a very pleasant conversation with her about the very strong need for alternatives to be put in place during this shutdown phase. I know that the minister is absolutely adamant about that. That is why we have this consultation phase open at the moment. The government is calling on the public, on my constituents and other constituents in the south-eastern corridor to put forward their ideas on the sort of rail replacement service they would like to see while the train line is inactive. This is an excellent opportunity for people to put forward those ideas, and I am sure that wherever possible, we will meet those requests and ideas. That is the way it needs to be. In that way, at the end of it, we will have achieved in the most efficient manner possible, a train line that will have huge legacy implications, as other members have mentioned, in terms of not only efficient transport by rail, but also urban planning, linkages with communities, and the suppression of some level crossings so there is a better flow of traffic and people and there is not this dividing line with people being on one side of the track or the other. It will be transformational for the south-east corridor. I am really excited about it.

Of course, we could always say that while we are at it, we could do this level crossing and that one! In a perfect world, every single crossing would be done all in one go, but naturally there is a hierarchy of priorities and we have to work according to that. I have every confidence in the minister's choice of priorities. I understand that because we will have trains from the Thornlie-Cockburn line coming onto the Armadale line around Beckenham station, that from there on it is absolutely imperative we have the suppression of level crossings from Beckenham through the Victoria Park area to Perth. That is critical. I know the member for Cannington has spoken about the boom gates at the crossing—for example, at Wharf Street—because already traffic can be stuck there for ages. Imagine what it would be like with a potential doubling of the number of trains on the line. The same occurs further down the line

at Welshpool Road, Oats Street and other places where the crossings have been or will be removed. It is essential that we remove those crossings; they are our priorities. I know that in time we will be dealing with other crossings as well.

I have surveyed my electorate in the past and asked the question: which level crossings would you like to see removed as a matter of priority? It is always very interesting to read what people say. I have to say that a lot of people in the Thornlie electorate—those people who live in Maddington, Gosnells and Thornlie—are often inclined to say that they are getting by as things are and that they can manage. I have to then go back to them and say, “We’ve got the money to do this. Let me know what your priorities are and we can work on them in the future.” I have no doubt that their desires will be fulfilled in the future.

An 18-month closure sounds like a lot, but we can compare that with the last time one of our train lines was closed for an extended period, from 1 September 1979 to 29 July 1983, a decision of the Charles Court Liberal government closed the Fremantle line, and think about the inconvenience that that must have caused. The line was closed, of course, just because of some notion that there was no patronage and some anti-rail philosophy that pervaded the Liberal Party at the time. It was not because of the construction of a better system at all; it was closed, you could almost say, through spite. The Court government will never be forgotten for that. It is the government that closed the Fremantle line. Fortunately, though, thanks to the advocacy of Professor Peter Newman and many others at the time the strong campaign to have that line reopened was ultimately successful and the line was reopened when Labor came back into power in July 1983.

I think this is a very important piece of legislation because it is about getting a major piece of civil engineering rail construction done as efficiently as possible. People can look forward to a magnificent rail service in the future that will be transformational, making sure people can get around this city and commute easily within their own neighbourhoods. It is a very exciting opportunity for us.

I want to conclude on the point that we are now addressing the replacement services and ideas are coming forward. The minister will not be surprised to hear me say that I am very interested in the opportunity for people to look at the various e-rideable and cycling options that might be available to people as well as replacement bus services. It might be very convenient for people who currently commute to Maddington or Kenwick stations to drive over to the new Forrestfield–Airport Link and use that service, because that will be opening at around the same time that this closure will come into effect. There are some really good options that will be available to people that will make this closure far less painful than some opposition members are perhaps inclined to suggest.

We will greatly improve our system and have a much broader rail network that has east–west linkages. That is why I am especially excited by the Thornlie to Cockburn connection. I am ever thankful that the construction of that rail line will be seen as one of the legacies of the McGowan government. It is something that we worked hard on when in opposition. We heard general interest from some of the local Liberal members at the time, but there was never a hard commitment to developing a train line from Thornlie station through to Cockburn. It was always a fairly half-hearted suggestion that that might be something to do in the future. Now we have it coming forward as a reality. Yes, as part of the construction there is a need for a shutdown, but that is something I and the vast majority of people in my electorate support, because we know it is the way to get the job done. We all know that sometimes getting the job done can mean a little bit of inconvenience, because we understand that sometimes it can be the most effective way to get the job completed.

MR W.J. JOHNSTON (Cannington — Minister for Mines and Petroleum) [3.37 pm]: I do not want to speak for very long, but I do want to congratulate the Minister for Transport on the decision to remove so many level crossings on the Armadale and Thornlie lines. The Armadale–Thornlie line runs through the electorate of Cannington and it has been and continues to be a great irritant to my constituents. The support for the people of my electorate from this minister on the removal of these level crossings is tremendous.

I note that the former Court Liberal government did not plan to bring the Mandurah line up the freeway but around the Thornlie alignment and onto the Armadale line, in the way that the Thornlie line does now. That was called the Kenwick deviation. I used the Freedom of Information Act to access the documents given to cabinet for it to approve the decision to use the Kenwick deviation. When I got those documents, I was expecting to see all the work that was being proposed to be done for the Kenwick deviation that would allow the trains to pass through the electorates of Cannington and Victoria Park. I was shocked to find it was I think \$9 million allocated for improvements on the existing Armadale line. That is just ridiculous. There is no way all the Mandurah traffic could have gone through the Kenwick deviation and onto the Armadale line from Beckenham into the city without improving the line and removing those level crossings, yet that was exactly the Court government’s plan. It was just ridiculous.

Of the three level crossings in my electorate, Wharf Street is the worst. If someone is travelling north on Wharf Street, they can be stuck for 13 or 14 minutes in the morning and, in total, the boom gates are down for more than 30 minutes—not continuously, but overall—between 8.00 am and 9.00 am. That is because there are the outbound and inbound Armadale and Thornlie trains and the inbound *Australind*. That crossing is just dysfunctional. Also, St Joseph’s

School and St Norbert College in Queens Park are north of the line, and Cannington Community College, which is a K–10 school, and Sevenoaks Senior College, which is a year 11 and 12 school, are south of the line; therefore, students use Wharf Street to cross. Obviously, there is a pedestrian crossing at that location, but it is just chaotic. Sevenoaks Street is on the Cannington side, which is a major thoroughfare, and Railway Parade is on the northern side. It is just a nightmare. Indeed, it is one of the few traffic lights that has to coordinate with the north and south of the rail line. The traffic light for Wharf Street and Railway Parade on the north side has to coordinate with the traffic light for Sevenoaks Street and Wharf Street on the south side of the rail line because of the complexity of running the traffic.

I remember around the time of the 2017 election getting television cameras to come out and look at that crossing, and the journalists could not believe how many cars were queued up Wharf Street. All that chaos is going to be fixed by this decision, and that is why the council is so strongly supportive of this decision. In fact, long before the government made this decision, the City of Canning had already produced social media materials to call for the raising of the rail line. Therefore, the idea that this has somehow or other blindsided the councils is ridiculous. The councils in our area want this action. As people know, I am a resident in Victoria Park. I live one block back from the train line—not near Oats Street but further around near the Victoria Park station. This will make a big difference not only in my personal life, but also, much more importantly, for the constituents in my electorate. Those people in Queens Park, East Cannington and Cannington are going to get enormous benefit out of this.

We will also have a grade separation at Hamilton Street. Although it is not as high volume as Wharf Street, it is still a critical intersection, and I know that the council wants to reconfigure the northern end of Hamilton Street where it intersects with Welshpool Road, and this will make that reconfiguration much better. Indeed, I want to congratulate the minister for working very hard to make sure that both those level crossings go, and not just one, because there was a proposal that the Wharf Street level crossing would simply be shut and there would be no grade separation. That would have been terrible because it would have meant that, apart from anything else, the pedestrianised crossing would have gone and schoolchildren would not have been able to cross at that point. It would have significantly reduced the safety and convenience of pedestrian traffic in the area.

We are going to get a brand new station at Queens Park, which is fabulous, and a brand new integrated station at Cannington, which will be moved slightly to the west. It is a better configuration, and I congratulate the council for working on Cecil Avenue where it is redoing the alignment. The Minister for Lands will be pleased that—and I am strongly supportive of this—DevelopmentWA will do the development alongside Sevenoaks Senior College, which will be able to take advantage of this. This is one thing that is not understood by people who do not live in the eastern suburbs. They do not recognise the transformation that this decision will allow to the land use around the train stations. There is a large block of land that belongs to the government. I remember when Hon Bill Marmion was the Minister for Housing. He came and cut the ribbon at a housing project on Wharf Street. I encouraged him to go and have a look at the block of land at the corner of Cecil Avenue and Sevenoaks Street, because it belonged to the government. I said to him, “Go and have a look at that. Do something with it. Put up apartments—I do not mind. It can do with some height because that block deserves something decent.” Across the road, next to the office building, is a triangular block that belongs to the council, which is also looking for partners to develop it. Then there is the old Bunnings site. This is transformational. It will really make a huge difference to the people of Cannington because it will allow us to transform the land use. Although the train changes are fabulous, it will also allow this transformation.

I will finish by saying that there is no question that being without a train for 18 months is inconvenient. My daughter uses the train. She lives in Queens Park. She does not have a driver’s licence, and it is going to be very inconvenient for her. But that is why we have given such long notice. I congratulate again the minister for being careful in her planning so that the users of the train line can now exactly explain what bus services are needed rather than—which I think is what the opposition wanted us to do—the bureaucrats designing the bus routes and then imposing them on the users of the line. This way, the users of the line get to tell us what the best bus routes are, and that is common sense. Any other pathway would have been very, very suboptimal with not as good an outcome. Therefore, I congratulate the minister. Unlike the transport ministers of the former government—there were so many—who never delivered anything, this is a minister who is doing the hard work to get real success. I look forward to members opposite getting off the fence and making a decision about whether they support this project or whether they just “not oppose” it. They do not oppose this, but they cannot tell us what they actually support. They mean nothing; they stand for nothing; they are nothing. Congratulations, minister.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Ms E.L. Hamilton**.