

PERTH PARKING MANAGEMENT BILL 2023
PERTH PARKING MANAGEMENT AMENDMENT BILL 2023

Cognate Debate

Leave granted for the Perth Parking Management Bill 2023 and the Perth Parking Management Amendment Bill 2023 to be considered cognately, and for the Perth Parking Management Bill 2023 to be the principal bill.

Second Reading — Cognate Debate

Resumed from 10 August.

MR C.J. TALLENTIRE (Thornlie) [3.39 pm]: It is a pleasure to speak to these cognate bills regarding the Perth parking management arrangements. I welcome the Perth Parking Management Bill 2023 and the Perth Parking Management Amendment Bill 2023 coming into this place, and I wholeheartedly welcome the purpose for which these amendments are necessary. I want to say a little about the great virtue of this Perth parking management system that we have in place. Ultimately, it is about providing a dissuasive mechanism and sending a message, a disincentive, to people wanting to drive their private vehicles into the Perth central business district. It is a discouragement to people coming in by private vehicle and occupying that very precious land space that a car occupies for the whole of its duration in the city area while it is not being used; it is simply being parked. Precious land given over to parking space is actually an incredibly inefficient use of land, and, by definition, we could say that land in the city centre is exceptionally valuable, so why would we give it over to metal boxes sitting there doing nothing? That is what this mechanism will counter. It will work against the notion that people can just drive into Perth, even at the time of greatest demand, and there will be a parking bay for everyone. That is just not feasible. We cannot do that. We have got to be able to provide parking bays for those who need them—absolutely—such as those people who are involved in deliveries or are assisting people with limited mobility. On occasions I need to bring my elderly parents into the Perth central business district. My dad loves to go to the Apple Store and at 85 years of age that is a real treat for him, so I need to be able to park near the Apple Store; we can work that out. For most of the time, for the vast majority of us, there is no need for us to occupy a parking bay for the day when there are many great alternatives, and I will come to some of them.

Essentially, the purpose of this legislation is to enable us to further spread the benefit of the money that is raised through the levy, and I really think that is a great thing, too. At the moment, the zone over which the expenditure can occur is somewhat limited, and we want to be able to extend that out to local government areas that are contiguous with the Perth central business district. I think that is a great thing because it recognises that we will be able to spend money on the things that will make it easier for people to use means other than a private vehicle to get into the city.

To give the perfect example, the Minister for Transport has been an absolute champion of all things related to active travel. One of the most emblematic initiatives that we have proposed at the moment is the bridge that will go from near the Swan River foreshore, the WACA, Trinity College and the police headquarters, over to Heirisson Island and then Victoria Park. It seems that with the current arrangements and the legalities around where this levy can be expended, it is not actually possible to use the levy funds to build the part of the bridge that will extend from Heirisson Island over to Victoria Park, yet that is absolutely crucial to the success of this project. This will be, as I mentioned, a pedestrian and bike bridge that will be used by all forms of active travel, including e-devices. We want to encourage those means of travel. This new saying that we have—to walk, wheel, ride and thrive—is such a great mantra for us all to adopt. The walk, wheel, ride and thrive idea is great for people's health and wellbeing. It is a great way to alleviate congestion and develop community spirit. It is a much better way for people to get around, but it depends on us providing good infrastructure. We need to give people infrastructure that will make them feel safe and give them some sense of security. That is exactly what this new bridge will do.

The bridge is an example of the sorts of projects that we might see in the future. I know that some initiatives have been announced very recently in Northbridge and elsewhere around the City of Perth, and the areas that connect in there. We have a magnificent principal shared path network that is being extended, and there are all sorts of projects underway, and I will address some of those. It seems that, quite often, some of the most expensive-to-deliver sections, because they often require the most complex engineering and difficult construction, are areas that need to be retrofitted, such as where the principal shared path network comes into the CBD area. This bill will do a really important job and will enable us to expend on those connection areas that, as I say, can be very expensive.

Some other projects are being envisaged as well. One very exciting project that a lot of people in the cycling active travel community have spoken of is called the veloway. I know this is really just on the wish list at the moment, but it is a fascinating project. If someone is driving their car from the Kwinana Freeway, coming through Perth and then going up the Mitchell Freeway, they have, more or less, a continuous flow through—of course, not when there is traffic congestion. Let us say they are doing it late in the evening and they have a very smooth run through. If a person is doing that particular run by a bike, e-scooter, e-bike or whatever the means, they have quite a disrupted journey. Once they get to the top of the Kwinana Freeway—we will do the south–north run—they come to Hay Street

where they will have to get across the lights and then onto Wellington Street, through a series of traffic lights, and eventually they can wind their way over to the Mitchell Freeway bike path, which has been significantly upgraded, with some magnificent works completed there. It then takes them in a very smooth fashion from the Leederville area all the way through to the City of Stirling council chambers and beyond. That path has really come a long way. There is a magnificent bridge that goes over Scarborough Beach Road and some really clever and brilliant engineering work has been done there. My point is that the linkage between the freeway south and freeway north is seamless for cars, but those on bikes, or other means of active travel, have to negotiate a higgledy-piggledy set of traffic lights and things. The veloway is only on the wish list of the cycling community, but it would extend over all of that and eliminate the need for people to negotiate all those sets of traffic lights. That is just one of the sorts of things that people want to talk about.

One of the beauties of having this funding that will come from the Perth parking levy is that we can have that conversation, look at those sorts of ideas and work out where the priorities are. I think it is quite right that, at the moment, our top priority is to get that bridge from East Perth across to Heirisson Island and then over to Victoria Park. I know how much it will help people who want to commute from there. It will be far safer than the current situation in which they have to negotiate a very narrow footpath on the Causeway, which has some quite uneven pavers and cracks. It gives people the feeling that their wheel could go into a crack and all sorts of things like that. The last thing we want is for someone to have an accident while travelling to their place of work or coming into the city for whatever reason.

It is very interesting to look at some of the methods that have been used to deal with the issue of traffic congestion in other cities around the world, bearing in mind that often the driver for a lot of decongestion initiatives is, first and foremost, to improve air quality in the city area. Other drivers include the decongestion benefits, countering climate change and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from transport. They are three strong reasons.

I have been following the situation with a scheme in London known as ULEZ, or the ultra low emission zone. It is an interesting program that the Mayor of the City of London, Sadiq Khan, has been driving, even though it has been a long time in its creation. I know that a previous mayor—a fellow called Boris Johnson, who was, until not too long ago, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom—was very much for it, but he totally backflipped on it. The support for the ultra low emission zone is very much driven by the need to reduce, as the name suggests, the emissions intensity. The system is based on someone either opting to pay a levy of £12.50, or about \$25, to go into the city area or having a vehicle that is compliant with the ultra low emission zone standards. I am told that the vast majority of vehicles in the City of London are compliant. ULEZ has been expanded to cover all the London boroughs, so it covers a very sizeable population. It has been the subject of great controversy. It had great bipartisan support, but it suddenly became a focus point for those on the extreme right to say, “No, we can’t possibly have people paying a penalty if they have a polluting vehicle.” It became a flashpoint in the recent Uxbridge and South Ruislip by-election caused by the resignation from Parliament of the previous UK Prime Minister. As disgraced as the Tories were at that election, they won it because they ran a campaign saying that they would stop ULEZ. It was absolutely disgraceful that they got that amount of right-wing media. However, we have to bear in mind that that country has incredible media like *The Sun*, *The Telegraph*, the *Daily Mail*, the *Daily Express*, *The Spectator* and GB News. We have it bad with the Murdoch press of course and some other papers. However, in the UK, there is the force of that right-wing press, and then, sadly, the BBC just follows along. It is a dreadful situation. Something as worthy, credible and useful as the ULEZ program can be demonised so that people fail to see it for what it is. There is a campaign mechanism that is designed to denigrate good policy. It makes me think of something that is going on in Australia right now with the disgraceful behaviour of those promoting the no campaign. It is sometimes easy to denigrate good policy, because good policy depends on bringing about positive change. How sad it is that that can sometimes be the way that things happen.

Fortunately, in London, ULEZ is going forward. Sadiq Khan, a very astute man and a fine mayor, is driving that. He is providing all sorts of concessions to those who might have an old vehicle that is not ULEZ compliant. He is providing what is known as a scrappage payment—it is an interesting word that I have not heard before. People who have older vehicles that are not ULEZ compliant can access the payment through the £160 million scrappage scheme. I mention this because the ULEZ arrangements do not tackle what I think is a major problem that our Perth parking levy does tackle. The approach taken through our Perth parking levy is clever because it is about attacking the problem of congestion. With ULEZ, there could still be heavily congested streets, but they would just be congested with electric vehicles or, in fact, vehicles that are ULEZ compliant. These vehicles still emit pollutants such as nitrogen dioxide and PM2.5 and other very damaging things.

[Member’s time extended.]

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: Those NOx, as they are called, and PM2.5 emissions have been falling since ULEZ was introduced, but they are still there. This is really worrying, because it can cause premature death and stunt the growth of children’s lungs. That is the driver for these things. Even if the streets are congested with all electric vehicles, there will still be a great inefficiency. There will still be the problem of people wasting time as they negotiate various

traffic jams on their way to their destination. That is why I think our Perth parking levy is a far superior mechanism. I note that the ULEZ arrangements are to be overlaid with congestion charges as well, so it is not the sole method. There is potential to have two programs in tandem, but I think there is a risk of complicating things in the minds of the public. Again, we can see the elegance and the value of this legislation. That is a very positive thing.

I note that there is great transparency to be had with the changes that are coming in and the improvement that we will see in the breadth and scope and administration of the Perth parking levy. The new requirements for spending from the levy will be published in the Department of Transport's annual report. I think that will further instil confidence in the community because the expenditure will be there for people to see. They will be able to understand the purpose and they will be able to say that that money is adding to the quality of infrastructure that brings people into the city and enables people to travel smoothly, using their choice of transport. That is all highly commendable. It is important to note that the Perth parking levy mechanism has enjoyed support from both sides of this Parliament. I understand that the act and the levy were introduced in 1999, during the time of Richard Court's government. That is an important feature of our legislation—the fact that it has had bipartisan support.

I would like to highlight some other things about the current situation. The information I have is that roughly 66 per cent of trips made into the CBD are made by car.

Debate adjourned, pursuant to standing orders.