

MAIN ROADS AMENDMENT BILL 2023

Second Reading

Resumed from 23 February.

MR S.A. MILLMAN (Mount Lawley — Parliamentary Secretary) [12.17 pm]: I rise to speak with unwavering support for the Main Roads Amendment Bill introduced to this chamber by the Minister for Transport, Hon Rita Saffioti. I do so by reflecting upon the incredible record of achievement that we have already seen from this minister under the McGowan Labor government in both this term and its previous term from 2017.

One of the things that I say often in this place is that good government is evidenced by striking the right balance, updating our statute book, and making sure that we put in place modern legislation that will provide benefits for the Western Australian community. The Main Roads Amendment Bill meets those criteria. Bear in mind that the Main Roads Act is almost 100 years old. Community expectations 100 years ago about the provision of road services were significantly different from the community expectations today. Back then, Main Roads was required to build and maintain roads. Main Roads must now manage modern highways and freeways, implement and integrate complex technological infrastructure, and operate a vastly improved and expanded regional road network with much higher traffic and freight volumes.

When members take long drives in the country and are behind a truck, they will often see stickers saying “Fix Australia—Fix the Roads”, or “TWU—Carrying Australia”. I love seeing both those stickers. This bill speaks to both of those. It represents some of the great work that the Transport Workers’ Union of Australia is doing. I will be talking also about roadhouses and roadside facilities for long-distance freight drivers. The bill also builds on this government’s legacy of fixing the road network in Western Australia by taking the money that is available to us through our sound financial investment and putting that into our road network to ensure that we will have a world-class twenty-first century road network that is ready for use by the people of Western Australia.

The range of powers that this bill will introduce include a more efficacious management of the \$55 billion state asset, which is under-utilised at the moment, providing an opportunity to generate a return for the government and the community. If passed by Parliament, the bill will provide Main Roads a power to enter into a wide range of commercial arrangements, including profit sharing and innovative business arrangements, with those business arrangements subject to ministerial and Treasurer approval; expand the functions and powers of Main Roads to reflect a modern road authority with regard to managing land and roadside facilities; and provide Main Roads with the ability to facilitate the operation of road service centres or roadhouses and to acquire and lease land for any purposes under the act. I think about the work of people like Tim Dawson of the Transport Workers’ Union and the campaign it ran to improve roadside facilities its members need to use. When TWU members travel long distances on their freight journeys, they have no option but to stop and use these roadside facilities. Some of these facilities are neglected, run down and in poor condition, so the campaign run by the TWU was to see the McGowan government invest in revitalising and improving those facilities, making them accessible to those truck drivers. The success of that campaign is a testament to not only the McGowan Labor government and Minister Saffioti, but also the collective work and effort of the Transport Workers’ Union under the stewardship of secretary “Smoky” Dawson.

That pertains to this legislation. I want to talk more broadly about some of the road infrastructure projects that the McGowan government has undertaken and delivered since it was elected in 2017, because focusing on maintaining and improving our Main Roads network has been a signature feature of this government and one that it has carried out in an exemplary fashion. I wind back a bit to the 2021 state election. In the midst of the of the 2021 state election, there was a lot of commentary and discussion about the outstanding job the McGowan government had done, in concert with the community, shepherding Western Australia through the COVID pandemic. At that time, it seemed as though the issues that people were concerned about were health and our hospital services, the response to the COVID pandemic and the leadership and stewardship that the McGowan government had shown. Whenever I went doorknocking, was out at community events or talking to people, people said to me that they were very happy with the way that the McGowan government had handled the COVID-19 pandemic.

The concession that the Liberal and National Parties had no prospect of succeeding in the 2021 election was made early by the former member for Dawesville, of the Liberal Party, when he said that it had no chance of winning the 2021 state election. It was a fairly made concession that was prophetic in its accuracy, because it turned out that it had no chance of winning the state election and the McGowan government was returned with an increased majority. The reason I say that is that COVID took a lot of things away from us, including the opportunity to campaign on our incredible record of achievement when it came to road and transport infrastructure over the first term of the McGowan government between 2017 and 2021. The list of achievements by this minister in this portfolio is incredible. She has demonstrated an assiduous ability to deliver results for the people of Western Australia in both her planning and transport portfolios. A lot of the light, heat, attention, and glitz and glamour is focused on Metronet. Metronet is a signature project that will redefine the way transport operates in metropolitan Perth. It

will be a legacy project that will predominantly benefit the people of Perth for decades to come. When it comes to transport investment, this minister believes that no-one should be left behind. That is why when we look at the record of achievements, it is throughout the entire state of Western Australia.

Some of the key metropolitan projects that have been delivered over the life of the McGowan government in both the fortieth Parliament and the forty-first Parliament include one that is dear to my heart and has a big impact on people in not only the Mount Lawley electorate but also the inner north-eastern suburbs around it, such as Maylands, Bayswater, Morley, Noranda, Nollamara and Mirrabooka. It is the Tonkin Gap. For many years, the narrowing of Tonkin Highway—from a south-easterly direction from Morley towards Perth Airport and in the opposite direction from Perth Airport back to Morley—over the Swan River, Guildford Road and the railway line has resulted in one of Perth's worst spots of congestion. It is fair to say that the Tonkin Gap in Bayswater is probably Perth's number one congestion hotspot. Yesterday, we heard a question from the member for Maylands on the iconic Bayswater Bridge that was the bane of existence for truck drivers going through Bayswater.

The bane of existence for communities travelling through the eastern corridor of Perth along Tonkin Highway is undoubtedly and unquestionably the Tonkin Gap. To remedy the problem of the Tonkin Gap required courage, determination, investment and commitment. We have seen these attributes from this minister in order to fix that longstanding problem. We inherited that problem from a previous government that did not have the courage, determination, commitment or investment to fix the Tonkin Gap. Not only is this minister remedying this number one congestion hotspot by widening the Tonkin Highway through that corridor, she is also doing it at the same time as we are building the Metronet project that will connect the Morley–Ellenbrook line into the train line at Bayswater back in through to metropolitan Perth. This civil engineering project of an unprecedented size is being delivered by this minister and Main Roads. For that I commend them.

Secondly, I want to talk about the Mitchell Freeway, another piece of major transport infrastructure that significantly impacts the people in my electorate of Mount Lawley. The investment that the McGowan government made from 2017 right the way through until 2023 has seen a significant improvement with the widening of the Mitchell Freeway. I remember that the former member for Hillarys used to bleat about the fact that the initial stages of the widening of the Mitchell Freeway were not going far enough, but we have now seen widening of the Mitchell Freeway extend well north into the northern suburbs from Hepburn Avenue —

Mrs J.M.C. Stojkovski: Hodges Drive.

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: To Hodges Drive. Thank you, parliamentary secretary.

That is together with, as I understand it, the duplication of Marmion Avenue for the northern suburbs and remediation on Wanneroo Road, including the new intersection at Wanneroo Road and Joondalup Drive. This is a significant investment in road transport infrastructure for people living in the northern suburbs in order to bust congestion, improve efficiency and productivity, and drive economic growth. When we look at the road widening of Mitchell Freeway, the introduction of smart freeways and the Mitchell Freeway extension, we see that this is a government and a minister who is committed to the wellbeing and welfare of people in the northern suburbs such as Joondalup, Kingsley, Wanneroo, Girrawheen and Landsdale, all the way up to Butler and Burns Beach. This is a government that sees the needs of those communities and serves their needs by making these important investments.

Then we go south and see the improvements to Kwinana Freeway, such as the widening of Kwinana Freeway and the intersection at Roe Highway and Kwinana Freeway, for improved traffic flow and the easing of congestion. This is an easing of congestion, mind you, that is taking place when the population of Perth is growing materially. We are encouraging more migrants to come from the eastern states and overseas to help with our labour shortages. On the one hand, we are increasing the population of Perth and the number of drivers and cars on the road, but on the other hand, we are doing it in a way that means that our daily commute is not as bad as it might have been if these investments had not been made. We see the widening of Kwinana Freeway south and northbound, and also the introduction of smart freeways on Kwinana Freeway. These have made a material difference to people's daily commute. Whilst I am in the southern suburbs, I will talk about Armadale Road. My good friend the member for Jandakot keeps talking to me in our office upstairs in Parliament House about how important the widening of Armadale Road is for his community. It has opened up all of that area in the south-eastern suburbs for business and housing development opportunities. We can see that building the infrastructure first and providing the infrastructure that the community needs is an incredible opportunity to make sure that the Western Australian economy remains vibrant and robust and the services that Western Australian people demand—fairly—from their government are delivered.

I said earlier that as well as the significant work undertaken to deliver the Metronet project, which will predominantly benefit people in Perth, this Minister for Transport has also concentrated the government's attention on delivering for regional Western Australians. This minister is a champion of a regional road safety program that has seen more than \$800 million spent to seal shoulders and install audible lines on 8 500 kilometres of roads in Western Australia—8 500 kilometres of roads in Western Australia have been made safer because of the investment of this government

and the diligence of this minister. In addition, there have been very important road projects for our big regional centres such as Albany and Bunbury, which are blessed to have champions as local members who continue to advocate on behalf of their communities. The Bunbury Outer Ring Road and the Albany ring road have received the significant improvements that the communities of Albany and Bunbury have cried out for over successive years. They were neglected by the so-called party of rural and regional WA and these works were delivered by the real party of regional WA, the Australian Labor Party, and Minister Saffioti. In addition, in the electorates of the members for Central Wheatbelt and Moore, we have seen significant upgrades to the Great Eastern Highway and the Great Northern Highway.

Whilst I am talking about regional WA, this minister not only has a plan that is being implemented in concert with Main Roads for the benefit of Western Australia, but also can respond to unforeseen circumstances. I am talking now about the unprecedented floods in the Kimberley and the Fitzroy River basin and the significant effect that that has had. I will spend a bit of time on this issue.

I want to give a shout-out to the communities in Fitzroy River that are doing it tough and struggling in the circumstances that they have been presented with by virtue of these floods. In particular, I want to give a quick shout-out to the Muludja remote community, which is about 40 kilometres east of Fitzroy Crossing, and to the local community school there, which is struggling in difficult circumstances. I also want to give a shout-out to Tash, who is the school principal and a friend of mine, and to her partner, Dave, and say that I hope you guys are going okay. Keep your chin up. You have done a great job serving the local community. The government is focused on doing what it can to improve the situation in Fitzroy Crossing.

I want to talk about some of the things that have happened in the Kimberley, including the ferry to get things moving. The government started the ferry service for goods and four-wheel drives on 14 March. It has carried more than 15 000 passengers, with 500 people a day using the ferry at its peak. It is also popular amongst our furry friends, with Trixie, a local Fitzroy dog, riding the service daily and getting pats from the barge operators. After the low-level crossing was opened, the ferry ceased its operations on 30 April but with the impending wet season, the ferry will be ready to go once again when that confronts the community. After a short hiatus, a single-lane, low-level crossing to the north of Fitzroy Crossing is now open to all vehicles. This causeway has reconnected communities in Fitzroy Crossing and enabled buses to access East Kimberley and West Kimberley ahead of the tourist season. It has also meant that heavy vehicles can now travel to East Kimberley again. Although semitrailers are the largest heavy vehicles allowed to travel on the crossing, the department has also set up small road train breakdown and assembly areas on each approach to the river to facilitate road train crossings.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: This has made it much easier to cross the river in a similar fashion to before. Construction on a dual-lane crossing near the old bridge is now underway and it will be able to carry all vehicles and pedestrians. Construction is progressing well, with the crossing on track for completion later this year. It is important to bear in mind that design of the bridge is near completion, the geotechnical work and service relocations are underway and the piles are arriving onsite. A nine-month procurement process was expedited and completed in eight weeks. In addition to all the projects that I mentioned before—it would have been great had we had the opportunity to campaign on those projects in the 2021 state election—flooding of the Fitzroy River highlights how nimble, reactive and responsive this McGowan Labor government is. Confronted with that situation, that community faced a perilous future. But the work of this minister in doing exactly what I have just described with the ferry, the low-level causeway crossing and the expedited process for construction of the bridge has put the community in a much more hopeful position. Those opposite might decry the length of time taken and might try to strike fear into the hearts of people in that community. That is irresponsible. We should be focusing on hope; we should not be focusing on fear. That is one of the key differences between us and them. We are saying to those communities, “You’ve been through a terrible set of circumstances, but we see you; we understand what you’ve gone through and we are working as hard as we can in order to remedy that situation.”

Next I want to talk about a really important philosophical basis for Labor governments. Labor governments believe that governments can do good work; people can trust governments to get on with the job of doing important things. Liberal and conservative governments and the neo-Liberal philosophy have a tendency to want to privatise, sell-off, outsource and subcontract; they do not have the same faith and belief that governments can do good work. They are always so sceptical about the role of government in the community. It makes one wonder why they want to run for Parliament if they are so sceptical about governments doing good things. One of the things that this government has done that really speaks to the values of the WA Labor Party and the Labor movement more broadly is that we think that government can play a good role. One of this government's greatest attributes is that it has delivered on bringing road maintenance back in-house. We now have public service employees, public workers employed by the government, doing road maintenance. Instead of lining the pockets of subcontractors who donate to the Liberal Party and all the rest of it, Main Roads is directly employing workers to do the work and maintain our roads. In a shocking and lamentable move, this work was contracted out by the Court government in the 1990s. It was ideological zealotry

to attack the union movement, attack workers and undermine the role of government in society. There was no contract certainty. It is a shame that no-one from the Liberal Party is in the chamber because I would love to see them take account of this. I know that members of the Nationals WA realise that as a result of this decision, workers left the regions because they did not have jobs. The jobs they had working for the government were sold off by Richard Court. I bet you—I do not know, but I imagine—that in those cabinet meetings, the National Party representatives, if they were standing up for their regional communities, would have known just how important those jobs were. To see them go would have been a kick in the guts. Happily, the party of the regions is back in government and we have decided to support the regions by bringing those jobs back in-house. There was no contract certainty and lots of people moved out of regional WA. We now have 660 permanent FTE in-house at Main Roads—660! Of those 660 permanent FTE, 500 are in the regions; we are putting jobs back into the regions in WA. That is what people get with a Labor government and this minister for Main Roads. Workers get better pay and conditions with a unionised workforce; they are getting between \$12 000 and \$22 000 more per annum under the Main Roads enterprise bargaining agreement. They get long service leave, sick leave, other leave entitlements and access to workers compensation.

Members would think that if we are paying all these extra wages to these workers, perhaps there is an additional cost to the government. Perhaps this was what underpinned the ideological zealotry of the Court government, but no. As a result of not having to rely on subcontractors, bringing in-house the 660 permanent FTE has resulted in savings of \$25 million per annum. Looking after the workers, looking after the regions, looking after the community and looking after the state's finances; that is a quadruple that only a Labor government can deliver. We have increased in-house skills, knowledge and expertise, and we have put ourselves into a position in which we are at a much higher level of responsiveness to things like the Kimberley floods. We are building our capacity to respond to those natural disasters, which we are unfortunately likely to see more of as the impacts of climate change really bite. We are futureproofing Western Australia's road infrastructure by bringing that capacity in-house.

I want to finish in the time that I have. I have mentioned a number of the road projects throughout the northern suburbs. I want to make this point. People may look askance and say that the Mitchell Freeway does not go through Mt Lawley. The Great Eastern and Great Northern Highways do not go through Mt Lawley. Let me tell members this: if people who live in an arc from Yanchep all the way round to Gidgegannup come down Wanneroo Road, Alexander Drive, Beaufort Street or Guildford Road via the Great Eastern Highway—any of those roads—before they reach the Perth CBD, they will have travelled through my local community, the neighbourhood that I have the great privilege of representing, the suburb of Mt Lawley. People on Wanneroo Road will have travelled through Yokine, people on Alexander Drive will have travelled through Dianella, and people who travel down Walter Road will have travelled through Morley and Inglewood and down into Mt Lawley. These road infrastructure projects benefit the whole community of Western Australia, but they also have a material benefit for the people in Mt Lawley, because by busting traffic and reducing congestion, we are making that run into the CBD much easier for those commuters, and that means that rat-running, cutting through side streets and cutting through our local roads is materially reduced. As a dad with two school-age kids, who, as often as they can—not as often as I would like—walk, ride or scoot to school, I want to make sure that our local roads are as safe as possible. Although local roads will not be captured by this bill—this is a Main Roads Amendment Bill that deals with the significant road infrastructure in the state, and local roads remain the province of local councils—if our big arterial roads are safer, the obvious consequence is that our local roads will be safer, and that means our neighbourhoods will be safer and our kids will be safer when they walk, ride or scoot to school. That is another corollary benefit of these significant infrastructure investments.

Finally, I want to talk about a couple of particular road projects that pertain precisely to the Mount Lawley electorate, without the geographic argument. One significant investment that was made by Minister Saffioti and the McGowan government concerned the upgrade of the Wanneroo Road–Morley Drive intersection, which is probably one of the most congested parts of those inner north-eastern suburbs. The member for Mirrabooka is here. It significantly affects her electorate, as well as the electorates of the member for Morley, the Minister for Health, the cabinet secretary and the member for Balcatta. All those electorates were significantly impacted by knock-on congestion created by the Morley Drive–Wanneroo Road intersection. In all our electorates, we saw local roads being used in a way they were not designed for, and rat-running and speeding on side streets. In order to encourage people to use the main corridors, investment needed to be made to ameliorate the congestion.

Ms M.M. Quirk: Can I interject for a second?

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: Yes, member for Landsdale.

Ms M.M. Quirk: One of the pleasant experiences of my drive, as you described, on Wanneroo Road is seeing your smiling face on bus stops.

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: Thank you, member for Landsdale. People comment on the bus stops. I love the bus stops.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr D.A.E. Scaife): I should just remind the member for Landsdale not to mislead the chamber!

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: They are a good way of letting my community know how they can get in touch with me if they ever need any assistance from the local member for Mount Lawley.

I want to talk about the Wanneroo Road–Morley Drive intersection and the upgrades to that intersection. The way in which Main Roads has worked on that intersection has not only dealt with the immediate concern and congestion, but also put in place the capacity to have preference given to public transport. Instead of being stuck behind buses that pull over at the stop in order to take on passengers, there are now dedicated bus lanes as people come in and out of the intersection, so there is room to move. That means as we increase the number of buses that we put on and the patronage on our public transport system, which is always a feature of a Labor government, we will be able to make sure that the traffic flows well, not only now, which it does, but also into the future.

This government has not left the heavy lifting of looking after safety on our local roads to our local councils. I know that this government has invested significantly in the City of Stirling. We can look at the Stephenson Avenue extension, for example, and stage 2, which is leading into the Stirling city centre and across to the Mitchell Freeway. The City of Stirling has been campaigning for that project for a long time. We see that this government is working constructively and collaboratively with local councils to deliver the road projects that will make a material difference to people in those communities. I would say that that ability to proactively and collaboratively come together and solve transport problems is a real feature of this minister's stewardship and the new approach that has been adopted by Main Roads under the McGowan government.

I finish by commending the minister for the work that she has done in the time that she has been the minister, and commending the McGowan government for the investment it has made into our road transport infrastructure, because it makes a significant difference to the benefit of the people of Western Australia, it helps drive productivity in our economy and eases congestion, but, most importantly, it reduces unsafe practices on our roads and delivers for the entire community. I commend the minister and I commend the bill to the house.

MR R.S. LOVE (Moore — Leader of the Opposition) [12.46 pm]: I rise to contribute to this debate on the Main Roads Amendment Bill 2023, and, in doing so, say that I am the lead speaker for the opposition on this matter, and that the opposition will be taking the position not to oppose this legislation.

This bill is actually quite similar to and draws quite a bit of the wording from the Main Roads Amendment Bill 2015, which was introduced and read into the Parliament but did not progress through the Parliament, but there are some key differences between this bill and the bill that was presented in 2015. One obvious difference is that there is no freight charge in this bill, which was a provision of the 2015 bill, and because of that, there are a few consequent changes in some of the definitions. This current bill also goes further in what it will allow the commissioner to do; in other words, the roles of the commissioner and of Main Roads Western Australia will expand quite considerably from what they are now and what they were intended to be back in 2015. I will talk a little bit about those differences as we go through the bill.

Clause 17 of the current bill is considerably different from clause 18 of the 2015 bill. Those clauses seek to amend section 15B of the act, "General functions of Commissioner". This section goes to the major changes in the bill that we see before us. The current bill will give much wider powers to the commissioner than those envisaged in the 2015 bill or in the current act, as I have said. I will talk a bit later about some of those issues.

It is also interesting to look at the proposed changes to section 15B that were proposed back in 2015 but are not contained in this bill. In 2015, it was proposed that in section 15B(2), there would be a final statement, if you like, of the functions of the commissioner. It stated —

In carrying out the functions referred to in subsection (1), the Commissioner must —

- (a) identify, implement and promote measures to —
 - (i) improve the safety of roads in the State; and
 - (ii) reduce the deaths of people, the injuries to people, and the damage to property, resulting from incidents occurring on roads in the State; and
- (b) act in a way that supports the sustainable economic, social and environmental management and development of the State.

Those very laudable matters are not mentioned in the bill before us. The parliamentary secretary is in the chamber. Perhaps it could be explained why that was not seen to be necessary to be included in this bill. It seems to me that reducing those injuries and coming to the outcomes that I just outlined is certainly something that we should all be aiming for.

The opposition was given a briefing on the bill. Perhaps government members had a similar briefing; I do not know. The briefing was quite instructive. I thank the minister for organising that for us. Among the matters discussed

in the briefing was the rationale, if you like, or the case for why the act needed to be changed. We were told that it was nearly 100 years old and it had only general powers, which had been interpreted widely over the years and often used inferred powers. Section 15 included a general power to manage land; section 16, a general power to construct highways and main roads; and section 18, a general power to enter into contracts and agreements. We were also told that the last substantive amendment made to the act was back in 1996, with a couple of tweaks done since then.

It was pointed out that changes will be made to include a broader definition of “works” and “main roads works” to support a range of functions. There will be expanded functions, including commercial operations and other public purposes, under proposed sections 15B(1)(f), 15B(1)(g)(i) and 18E, “Other powers”. An expanded delegation power will allow sub-delegations of powers under other acts. The amended act will include substantially increased penalties. They will increase very substantially. There will be a provision for an infringement regime, and increased and variable contract approval thresholds.

The bill will also include enhanced powers to enter into commercial agreements and business arrangements with the Treasurer’s approval; provisions for business arrangements requiring the approval of the minister and the Treasurer, including company, partnership, trust, joint venture, and arrangements for sharing profits or sponsorships; the ability to generate revenue or profit; new and restated powers regarding adjoining works, road service centres and leasing of land; new powers to allow fees and charges to be applied in property developments, mining operations and for infrastructure placed in the road reserve; and expanded regulation-making powers, such as unauthorised use of the road reserve—that is, third-party works, unauthorised use of road train assembly areas and unauthorised parking of vehicles et cetera.

The opposition had some concern about the application of some of these powers and how they would be reviewed. The briefing identified commercial opportunities for using a road reserve for tourism, rest stops, public charity events, roadside vending, service centres, roadhouses and advertising. Some of the examples given include the heavy vehicle industry installing unmanned fuel outlets; the commercial leasing of land and premises for service stations; ancillary activities, such as a cafe, to support Matagarup Bridge activities; and the leasing of land and premises in support of commuters and the community, such as childcare facilities, gyms, bike repair shops near public transport hubs or community centres. They all had some sort of connection to transport. We asked what would stop the construction of apartments et cetera on land that was under the control of Main Roads. We also had some concerns around the ability of Main Roads to compulsorily acquire land and then use it for purposes other than potentially the development of road networks. Those matters were raised with the minister’s office.

We received some follow-up after the briefing. I will run through it for the benefit of the house. One of the matters that I raised related to the interaction between what Main Roads would be allowed to do and local planning arrangements that might already exist. I asked: what would be the interaction between the Main Roads Act and planning powers? The response was —

All relevant planning policies and guidelines will continue to apply under an amended Main Roads Act, including Development control policy 1.10—Freeway services centres, roadhouses incl signage ...

Any service station or road service centre or roadhouse would still need planning and development approvals from the relevant local government and/or the WA Planning Commission.

That is an interesting arrangement. On Indian Ocean Drive in the Shire of Dandaragan is a site that was envisaged by Main Roads to be a service centre when the road was constructed. The rationale was that Main Roads had fairly recently at that stage opened the Forrest Highway to Bunbury and there were very few places to stop, apart from a couple of older establishments, and big distances between stops. Main Roads received criticism that Forrest Highway was not adequately served with service centres and rest stops. In a bid to overcome that, there was some discussion with a local landowner. In exchange for allowing Main Roads to use the land as a site from which to work when it was building the section of Indian Ocean Drive from Lancelin to Cervantes, Main Roads bitumenised quite a considerable area of land. There were two entrances into and off the main road. It certainly envisaged that a service station would be located there, and that was always the understanding it had with the owner of the land.

After this arrangement was put in place, the then Department of Planning developed a different idea. The proposal never received planning approval; it was refused. The department came up with the *Indian Ocean Drive: Planning guideline*. Somehow the department did not think that Main Roads’ ideas for planning along the road were acceptable. It had a completely different approach to what should be available on the road. I know that this document was developed before the minister’s time, but it would be interesting to hear how it could be used as a guide to what will happen in the future if there is an interplay between the views of the department and the Commissioner of Main Roads.

Mrs J.M.C. Stojkovski: Can I just ask what that document is called?

Mr R.S. LOVE: It is called *Indian Ocean Drive: Planning guideline*, dated March 2014. It was released by the Western Australian Planning Commission and the then Department of Planning. This is a much smaller document than the one I saw. I think it included lots of maps, and it was quite thick.

The conclusion was that there could not be a toilet on Indian Ocean Drive. There is now a Main Roads-sponsored facility, not a service station, just a toilet by the road, because there was a considerable distance between stops. I am not saying who is right and who is wrong, but there was obviously a difference of view between the two departments. It would be interesting to hear how these matters will be adjudicated in the future. I note that the Minister for Transport, the minister responsible for Main Roads, and the Minister for Planning happen to be the same person, but that will not always be the case. Main Roads is in many ways an autonomous body so it has a considerable ability to prosecute its own views in any case.

Another matter spoken about was the ability for some return of charges to Main Roads. There was a discussion, and questions, about the bulk concessional loading scheme. The minister's office responded that the bulk concessional loading schemes were established over 10 years ago to address an increase in bulk commodities, especially iron ore, being moved by road. Anybody who has been on the Geraldton–Mt Magnet road, for instance, would have seen very large vehicles moving up and down the road called quads—very, very heavy four-trailer trucks that travel much quicker on the way out they do on the way back, fully laden to port in Geraldton. I assume they are probably subject to the bulk concessional loading scheme because that consideration is not seen anywhere else in local road networks. The scheme is used for other mining operations carting bulk commodities, such as lithium producers, but to date not for any haulage in the agricultural sector. The agricultural sector is quite interesting because sometimes there will be wheat bins, or grain bins, CBH bins, and it is determined that there will be an out load from the bin to another bin or to port. Sometimes rail is used but quite often road transport is used. Shires in my electorate have said that they have just finished repairing roads and spending hundreds of thousands of dollars on them only to have a campaign to move wheat from a particular bin parcel on their roads and leave them in a very poor state indeed, costing the local ratepayer. Sometimes the bin may not be in the thick of the shire, it may be in another shire, and it is going to Kwinana, the metro grain centre or Northam, so there is no return for the ratepayers in that—they are not growing the wheat but the roads are being destroyed because of the passage of that grain. It is a difficult matter in country areas because everybody wants to see the grain industry well off, but some of the communities affected negatively find it difficult to accept. The briefing went on to say that the bulk concessional loading scheme was voluntary and applied to large-scale haulage projects that operate at concessional rates. Funds generated under the scheme are then applied to the relevant haulage route.

It is interesting to see how that is managed. It may be done at the local level, now that Main Roads has given greater autonomy to some of the regional areas. I assume it manages the expenditures on those roads. The minister is here now. We were just talking about the Mt Magnet road in the midwest being one of the roads where this is probably operating, and just how much of return that is making. No charges apply to the initial 300 000 tonnes per annum. The concession provides significant cost benefit to a producer. If a proposal were to be received in the agricultural sector, it would be considered along with normal guidelines. Interestingly, charges apply to the owner, producer or the receiver of a commodity, not the heavy haulage operator. At the moment, the current rate is 0.4¢ per tonne, and it would be interesting to hear from the minister whether any changes are envisaged, whether there will be a widening of that, whether the powers inferred under proposed section 18A(1) of the legislation mean that there will be more autonomy for Main Roads to set that fee or how that will occur. Perhaps we can work through those issues in consideration in detail.

I sought further clarity about freeway service centres. The key change under this legislation is the ability to acquire the land under the Land Administration Act for the purposes of a road service facility, to lease to any person and for that person to operate the facility. Under the current act the commissioner has the power to lease land only to the person from whom the land was acquired. I am mulling through that and thinking of the proposed route from Dongara to Northampton around the Moonyoonooka store. Various maps lead to the current store having to be moved. If this is the system under which that takes place, what guarantees do landowners and current operators in the area have that they would be able to participate in the future of those facilities? Would Main Roads simply make the decision itself and potentially freeze out the landowners? The land could be compulsorily acquired and someone else would develop a service centre, or Main Roads could even develop it, and then it could be leased to someone else, so the landowner would miss out and would not only have their land compulsorily acquired but, in effect, their business. That is a conundrum I am sure the minister will be able to consider and take on board. I am not saying that that will happen, but it seems it is a possibility. I am just applying a local lens to how it would operate in that circumstance.

A couple of specific service centres were discussed, such as a West Pinjarra service centre. On 16 December 2016, Main Roads entered into an access deed for the freeway service centre at West Pinjarra. The relevant land is private freehold. The licensee pays Main Roads an annual fee for costs incurred, such as ramp maintenance, guide posts, pavement marking, lighting et cetera. The fee is payable in accordance with a relevant invoice generated by

Main Roads. No other fees such as a ground lease or other is paid to Main Roads. There is also the Baldvis centre. Main Roads entered into that on April 2011. Again, Main Roads entered into an access deed for that freeway service with BP. The relevant land is private freehold. The licensee annually reimburses Main Roads a flat annual fee commencing from the date of commissioning. The flat fee is in relation to Main Roads' recurrent costs such as outgoings and expenses, power consumption, maintaining the entry and exit et cetera.

Then there was some discussion about commercial activities by Main Roads. Proposed section 15B(1)(g) qualifies that activities must not adversely affect Main Roads' other functions. The other functions are set out in 15B(1), and the purpose of the legislation is set out in the long title. Essentially, the commercial activities would need to link back in some way or be a benefit to the road network. The question is how that would be assessed. Who would do that assessment? Would it ultimately be the minister? I assume the minister would have to give some level of approval to such a commercial activity. We may be able to discuss that when we get to that proposed section 15B(1)(g). In any event, the briefing went on to tell us that any such commercial activities would need the minister's approval, but, again, I am not sure about the criteria or the lens through which the minister would address some of those matters.

The minister was not here when I talked before about Indian Ocean Drive and the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage having a different view from Main Roads on some of the facilities and planning on that stretch of road. If Main Roads were to develop facilities along its roads, what level of consultation would there be with the local community? I know that the briefing paper states that the existing planning legislation would apply, but how would that actually play out? Would the applicant have to go through a joint development assessment arrangement or would it be assessed by Main Roads Western Australia? I am seeking clarity from the minister about how these matters would be discussed. I am assuming that, ultimately, Main Roads would have considerable influence in determining where and what types of facilities should be placed along a road. The minister is aware that I have previously raised concerns about the consultation processes undertaken by Main Roads presently, whether that be on the Bunbury Outer Ring Road or the Dongara–Geraldton–Northampton bypass, especially around the walkway area in the most recent change, or, indeed, the Charles Street situation when Main Roads put forward an idea but nobody else thought it was a very good idea and, ultimately, Main Roads had to withdraw it. Part of the problem that it encountered was not doing the consultation up-front, and that led to the proposal being withdrawn.

It is not just me who has highlighted that sometimes Main Roads tends to act in a fairly insular manner. I know that the minister would be very familiar with the special inquiry into government programs and projects that the government conducted under John Langoulant. He had some interesting things to say in that inquiry. Page 58 of the inquiry's report deals with a couple of projects such as Perth Stadium, the Swan River pedestrian bridge and other matters. The report talks about the transport sector and Main Roads' interaction with the planning process throughout the whole of that development and of the need to improve its operations. That is not me saying that; it was the special inquirer who said those things. If the minister turns to pages 58 and 59, she will see all that written out for her. To give the chamber a flavour of what this is about, the special inquirer observed the operations of the Public Transport Authority and Main Roads through the prism of its inquiry into the Perth Stadium and Swan River pedestrian bridge projects. It did not look at the operations of the port authorities. The report says —

It is apparent that staff within the Public Transport Authority and Main Roads —

They are two of the arms that were examined —

have considerable expertise and their respective achievements over many years have benefitted the State's development.

Nobody would quibble with that. It continues —

The Special Inquirer observed that the Public Transport Authority and Main Roads work more competitively than collegiately. Three issues were apparent:

... The Main Roads WA legislation is dated and the Special Inquirer was made aware of a number of aspects of the legislation which cause cost inefficiencies.

Is the minister aware whether all those issues that the special inquirer identified for the government have actually been dealt with in the legislation that is now before the house, and does the bill make sure that those inefficiencies will be dealt with? The report goes on to refer to the funding differences between different branches of the departments. It says —

Main Road's access to hypothecated revenues through vehicle licence fees takes them outside the budget process and enables them to operate more independently than other agencies. Main Road's preference for alliance contracting arrangements on major road programs is arguably not always cost effective.

I have raised some concerns around those arrangements myself. It is interesting to see the special inquirer almost presciently outlining those issues when he undertook that inquiry.

The report goes on to talk about the cultural differences. It states —

The cultural differences between the two entities, and the Department of Transport, are long standing and pronounced. The culture of Main Roads particularly is one of a closed shop which is not amenable to external review.

I wonder whether the minister is satisfied that she has addressed those cultural issues that the special inquirer identified. Has she initiated changing the culture that the special inquirer and I have brought to the minister's attention?

In another section of the report, the Department of Transport talks about its involvement with steering groups to oversee the development of the precinct on the Swan River around Perth Stadium. It goes on to say —

Whereas the main parties involved in the Stadium project formed a “one team” project group and were located together at the Stadium site the transport bodies chose not to be part of the team.

It goes on to say —

The lack of communication with other agencies on these design issues was a major factor which gave rise to the need for these changes.

He is talking about the contract variations. The report continues —

Main Roads' approach in managing the contract and communicating developments have been the source of much dissatisfaction and were assessed by the Special Inquirer to be unsatisfactory.

The minister may care to look at some of that information to see whether she is satisfied that, along with the changes that have been made and the ability of Main Roads to launch into a whole range of different activities and work on things that are not necessarily related to roads, the culture is good, the oversight is sufficient and the benefits to the state can be identified and reported on.

With that, I will conclude my contribution. I will just say once again that the opposition will not be opposing the bill. I want to tease out the issues that I have raised as we go through the discussion. We will be going into consideration in detail and talking about those matters as this bill progresses through the house.

MR C.J. TALLENTIRE (Thornlie) [1.16 pm]: As the member for Thornlie, I am very proud to rise to address the Main Roads Amendment Bill 2023. The bill is about a very important part of our mobility. There is so much interest in the technology of mobility, including the various vehicles and devices that we use to get around, that I think the surface upon which we travel often gets forgotten about. In many ways, this legislation is about updating the very important Main Roads legislation that will enable the futurisation and the future development of our road network in a way that will be in keeping with what the latest technology can provide. It is up there with the various global initiatives on the future of roads. The bill will ensure that we will have in place the capability, the approvals processes, the funding mechanisms and the land acquisition arrangements to ensure that our road network—certainly that part that is looked after by Main Roads Western Australia—will be as contemporary as possible. I contrast that future vision of the roads with the reality that I am sure many people in Western Australia will face for probably at least 100 years to come, given the size of our state and the sparseness of the population. Good old gravel roads will be a major form of our road network. Gravel roads become corrugated, get chewed up and demand a lot of resources to maintain, mostly from local governments. They are essential for the travel of people and goods. The Leader of the Opposition touched on the transport of grain around the state. Much of that is done on the gravel road network.

This is really exciting legislation because Main Roads as a department and as an organisation can do some very expensive and large-scale projects that require incredibly complex engineering. I just want to say how brilliant a lot of that engineering is. I am constantly struck by the manner in which projects are developed and then executed. Major construction works are being undertaken and, yet, the engineering work allows for us to continue to transit through the area, albeit at a reduced speed and with congestion and other such problems. I am amazed when I see areas of development like the Leach Highway–Welshpool Road intersection that I frequently travel through and is now at completion point. It is amazing that despite all that engineering work going on, it was always possible to drive through that area—absolutely incredible. I marvel at the quality of the engineering in that staged development phase and how clever that work is. The member for Mount Lawley talked about the Tonkin Highway gap project and acknowledged that prior to that we had the eastern gateway project. It is incredible that despite the engineering works going on there, as complex as they are, we can still travel through there at all development stages of the project. That applies to not only vehicles, but also the principal shared path for those who walk, wheel, ride, scoot or use whatever other means they choose. The temporary structure that was put in place to enable people to walk, wheel, ride or scoot along was incredible in itself. I do not think it is officially open yet but people can access the new PSP that goes through the Tonkin Highway gap and across the river. It is stunning and magnificent. The width is incredible; the quality of the pavement and the grade on the inclines has been so cleverly done, and the way that links into our network is absolutely brilliant.

I know that in some ways my comments are a little unfashionable. I hear from some people who say that these deviations are a bit excessive and they complain about the amount of time a deviation might be in place. It is true that sometimes deviations do not provide an ideal outcome, but it is, by definition, a deviation that is temporary in its existence. I am inclined to say to those people that we must not have some absurd idea of entitlement that we, as a generation, should be entitled to live without any encumbrance while development goes on. It is an extreme notion of entitlement that we should be able to live our lives without the slightly annoying at times and slightly troublesome problem of a deviation. We are not an entitled generation such that we should not incur the complexities and some of the costs that go with the development of these projects. Generations before us have encountered all sorts of upheaval and disruption while roads were built, so why should our generation be any different? I marvel at the quality of the works that are going on around the state. Thinking of previous generations and their contributions to the road network, one of my favourite sections of highway in the state would be in the Pilbara that goes north from Newman. It is not so stunning around Newman, but once you get a little further north up towards the Auski roadhouse, the red Pilbara rock and the way Great Northern Highway carves through the landscape is absolutely stunning. It is a section of road that provides a sense of connection with that ancient Pilbara landscape. I find it to be a very moving experience travelling through there on my way to perhaps Karijini National Park or somewhere like that. It is absolutely magnificent to see that part of what is, as has been mentioned, a \$55 billion state asset in our amazing road network.

As I have said, we have to be mindful that this road network is currently dominated by internal combustion engine vehicles. It is unlikely that that will stay the case. Internal combustion vehicles may have some role to play in the future, but we can already see that new technologies such as electric vehicles and hydrogen-powered fuel cell vehicles are going to become the dominant users of our road network into the future. It is very important that we are able to design and build that network and then adapt it to accommodate those new technologies. I see this legislation enabling that in the future.

Mention has been made about roadhouses and the ability for new road service centres to be constructed on highways and main roads; that is, of course, important. We have talked before about the importance of our state's tourism potential as a road trip state. I will say again that the quality of the roadhouses in Western Australia at the moment leaves a lot to be desired, especially in terms of food. I shudder to think of the feedback that goes overseas when people report on the food that was available to them in the roadhouses when they were travelling around the state. I am sorry to say that I do not think it would necessarily be a favourable report. Who knows? Perhaps this legislation will provide some capacity for the Commissioner of Main Roads to insist that the road service centres provide food of a healthier and higher quality to make sure that we do something about this reputation we have on the gastronomic scale, which must currently rate very low. We need to lift up and enhance that experience and reputation so that we can be known as a road trip state. It may not be a gastronomic experience, but people will enjoy a healthy eating experience. I think that is very important.

I also note that this legislation refers to the compulsory acquisition of land in the road reserve and the ability for the Commissioner of Main Roads to do that negotiating. Improvements will be made to the Land Administration Act so that when compulsory acquisition takes place, people will be compensated as efficiently as possible. Arrangements are currently in place, but it is important to update and modernise those.

I want to say a little about road reserves across the state. The Brand Highway in particular highlights that width of road reserve that preserves native vegetation. I believe that former Premier Sir David Brand insisted that we have a substantial width of road reserve to preserve the incredibly rich flora in this state along our road network. In terms of diversity, one of its highest points is along sections of the Brand Highway. We have now come to realise that the frangible nature of that vegetation is actually very useful when motorists leave the road pavement. The vegetation type is such that if a vehicle that might be travelling at 110 kilometres an hour comes off the road, the vegetation will not only give way to that vehicle, but also slow it down. It can in fact be a useful road safety mechanism when properly managed. It would be quite different, of course, if a person were travelling along a road on the south coast, perhaps near some karri trees; tragedy would occur if they came off the road there. Therefore, we want to design our road network in such a way that it keeps people on the road surface. That is always the safest option. New technologies and the technologies of the future will provide more answers and options for us in making the road network safer to ensure that people do not leave the road in the first place. It is an interesting thing to ponder that along Brand Highway there is a road safety benefit that was brought about by what was originally a conservation initiative and has turned out to also be a means of helping people reduce their vehicle speed in those very bad cases when they come off the road.

Another thing that I am fascinated by is the length of time of the Main Roads Western Australia planning processes. One road that I have kept an eye on since the early 1990s has the nickname "the orange route", which will replace the Perth Adelaide National Highway. The orange route will bring traffic across Great Eastern Highway from El Caballo Blanco, out Wundowie and Wooroloo way, to Toodyay Road. Main Roads has quietly been doing land acquisitions since the 1990s, which is the length of time Main Roads has been planning this. People have bought properties there and invested in them. I think of a Clydesdale horse stud on Breeze Road in Gidgegannup that has

been very successful and has provided a very fulfilling time for its owners. But, inevitably, there will eventually come a moment when the future of Breeze Road, as beautiful as it is—it is one of those lovely, country, tree-lined roads—will be part of the orange route, which will make its way from the existing alignment of Great Eastern Highway to Toodyay Road. Some tremendous opportunities will come with this legislation.

I want to pay tribute to a person who has worked in a voluntary capacity to keep the Main Roads road network looking its absolute finest around Walpole on the south coast, and that is Michael Filby. On several occasions environment ministers have acknowledged Michael Filby for his voluntary work. He has taken it upon himself to ensure that that part of the road network is free of litter. The Walpole area went from being somewhat disregarded and damaged by the amount of litter there to having Michael, who is a retiree, make it a constant habit to be out there on the road collecting litter. Many other voluntary groups take it upon themselves to clear the road network of litter, and the way Michael Filby has led things on the south coast is an absolute tribute. Walpole has now received various tidy town awards, and travelling through that part of the world is an absolute delight. The feeling there is that this is the nature of the south west of this state at its very finest, and there is no distracting litter that has been discarded by some thoughtless person. That is something that is always really great to see.

I conclude by saying how exciting it is that our road network can be designed in a way that will ensure that we have seamless integration. I can imagine a situation in which someone is commuting to work by electric buses or driverless cars. An essential part of our road network upgrade will accommodate driverless vehicles. Our road network will also interface with people who want to use bike or scooter hire services or a walk, wheel or ride service, so that is very important. Our road network should be designed with the thought in mind that an increasing number of people will work from home. Certainly, on days like today when it is wet on the roads, it is the perfect opportunity for someone to work from home, and it will reduce the pressure on the road network. People might choose to do as I do and not use a vehicle at all but use other means and save themselves the stress of being stuck in traffic jams.

Our road network is undergoing an incredible development. I pay tribute to the brilliance of the engineers and other people involved, such as the director general at the Department of Transport, Peter Woronzow, and the various executive directors there, including Leo Coci, Des Snook, Doug Morgan and Gary Manning. Their planning, designing and contracting is quality work, and it sets our state up very well to ensure that we have the best quality transport mobility network around, which is vital to the state's economic and social wellbeing. I commend this bill to the house.

MR D.A.E. SCAIFE (Cockburn) [1.36 pm]: I rise today to speak on the Main Roads Amendment Bill 2023. As several speakers have pointed out already, this is an important bill. The bill will modernise our primary piece of legislation that governs our Main Roads network, and will provide the regulatory framework for Main Roads Western Australia to do the important work that it does.

The current legislation, the Main Roads Act, is very old. It is nearly 100 years old, and it has not had a standalone amendment to it since the 1990s—I think it was about 1996. There might have been consequential amendments to the act over the years by virtue of general amendments made to a range of legislation, but specific standalone amendments have not been made to this act since the 1990s. Given the critical importance of our Main Roads network, it is important that we keep the legislative framework that governs that network up to a modern standard. As I say, it is the primary legislation for Main Roads and for the management of our main roads. It is worth noting that the road network that is managed by Main Roads is a \$55 billion public asset and in many ways it is probably one of our most significant assets. Setting aside the dollar value that is ascribed to it, our main roads are the important channels of just about every activity that Western Australians engage in, whether it is getting to work, getting home, getting from one neighbourhood to the next or whether it is for industry carting goods around the state. It is the connective tissue of Western Australia. It is worth reflecting on the point that the member for Thornlie made, which is that roads have been important for industrialised nations for many hundreds of years. The Main Roads network is particularly important for a state like Western Australia because the state is so vast and relatively sparsely populated. Its communities and industrial centres are separated by vast distances, not all of them are connected by rail, so our road network is that critical link between communities, many of which are very remote. Obviously, we have seen how devastating it can be for communities when the road network is disrupted. I am referring here to the recent unprecedented flooding in the Kimberley. I am mindful that I have the member for Kimberley sitting directly in front of me. I will not speak about this in great detail because she is the expert and knows much more than I do, but I want to acknowledge the incredible work that she has been doing in supporting her communities in the Kimberley.

I was recently chatting with the member for Kalgoorlie about the specific challenges that regional members face compared with metropolitan members of this chamber. We all have some shared experiences, but the job of regional members is significantly harder. It is significantly harder by virtue of the travel and the pockets of specific and unique disadvantage that exist throughout regional electorates. It is also different because of the distinctive challenges that happen in different communities. In my community, Cockburn, some issues affect specific suburbs but, by and large, issues that affect one suburb will also affect the neighbouring suburb. That is not the case in seats

like Kalgoorlie and the Kimberley. The Kimberley during the floods is perhaps one of those unusual circumstances in which the whole of the Kimberley, or just about all the Kimberley, was affected by those floods. Even communities like Broome that were perhaps not in the direct path of the flood and not in the Fitzroy River catchment have seen knock-on effects to transport connectivity. I am sure Kununurra is much the same. I want to acknowledge the great work that the member for Kimberley has been doing. She has been flying, driving and travelling all around her electorate over the last few months, and she has been twisting arms, begging, borrowing and bartering —

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member, I hope you are meaning metaphorically.

Mr D.A.E. SCAIFE: Metaphorically, obviously—she has done nothing improper. We have seen just good old-fashioned politicking from the member for Kimberley, supporting and listening to her communities. I want to acknowledge her work and acknowledge the minister's work in supporting the member for Kimberley and supporting the recovery of those communities, whether it has been in the delivery of the barge service across the Fitzroy River or, quite recently, opening the low crossing across the Fitzroy River. Did we do that, member for Kimberley?

Ms D.G. D'Anna: Yes.

Mr D.A.E. SCAIFE: It was really fast work from the minister, the government and the member for Kimberley. I want to acknowledge that.

Given the importance of our main roads network, it is critical that we bring the legislative framework that governs it into the modern era. Even if a main road does not pass through a member's electorate, one would pass nearby. As the member for Mount Lawley pointed out, using main roads keeps people out of suburban roads, so even if a member's electorate does not have a main road, main roads are used by people from the member's electorate. It is critical to all of us and to everybody in Western Australia.

I would like to speak about some of the projects that this government is undertaking in my electorate. This government has made record investments in road infrastructure throughout Western Australia. That investment has been balanced against investments in rail, public transport and port assets, but there have been clear and record investments in our main roads network. I am glad to say that my community has benefited from many of those investments. I would like to acknowledge the minister and the government for delivering so many projects around metropolitan Perth, especially in my electorate of Cockburn.

The first project I would like to discuss is the Armadale Road–North Lake Road bridge and the associated upgrades to the road network around that precinct. That road was opened on 15 December 2021, less than a year after I had been elected. It was my first ribbon-cutting ceremony, and it was a delight to accompany the Minister for Transport and cut the ribbon to open that bridge. We were also accompanied by the then federal member for Swan, Hon Steve Irons, because it had federal government funding. I am pleased to say that the member for Swan in the federal Parliament is now Zaneta Mascarenhas, MP, who is a great Labor woman.

Mrs J.M.C. Stojkovski: She's a very hardworking member of Parliament.

Mr D.A.E. SCAIFE: She is a very hardworking member of Parliament and had a great campaign team around her.

The ACTING SPEAKER: That sounds like a bit of immodesty there.

Mr D.A.E. SCAIFE: Never on my part, Acting Speaker. That is a scandalous allegation!

That project involved a significant partnership between the federal government and the McGowan Labor government. The federal government delivered just over \$200 million of the funding for that project, and the state government contributed almost \$52 million. It was a really big \$250 million project. That project delivered the bridge over the Kwinana Freeway so that traffic travelling west down Armadale Road now has the option of diverting off Armadale Road over the bridge and onto North Lake Road rather than going across the freeway onto Beeliar Drive. That is really significant for my community because the intersections around the freeway and Beeliar Drive were very heavily congested. I think at the time we delivered the project, it was the third most congested intersection in Western Australia and in the Perth metropolitan area. That congestion was caused by a variety of things; it was caused by the large growth that has occurred in my electorate over the last 10 years and by the development and expansion of Cockburn Gateway shopping centre, which is very conveniently located next to the freeway. As a result of being next to the freeway, the shopping centre loses a side of access, meaning that a lot of traffic is pushed onto Beeliar Drive and Wentworth Parade. The traffic lights around that area, both at Wentworth Parade and further along at Midgegooroo Avenue, are extremely congested. Now, with the development of that bridge, traffic that might be travelling to the light industrial area in Bibra Lake has the option, rather than travelling directly across Armadale Road to Beeliar Drive and then up through Spearwood Avenue towards the light industrial area, of proceeding directly down North Lake Road. This takes the heavier light industrial traffic off Beeliar Drive and improves access for residents.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms M.M. Quirk): Member, can I just interrupt for a second to welcome the Swan Valley Anglican Community School in the gallery, who get to witness their hardworking local member, Minister Saffioti. Enjoy your visit. Thank you, member.

Debate Resumed

Mr D.A.E. SCAIFE: Thank you, Acting Speaker. I, too, will say to the students that I am in the process of acknowledging the very hard work of the member for West Swan, the Minister for Transport, who is easily one of this government's hardest working members of this chamber. I have been outlining the many investments in our main roads network that the minister is overseeing around the state, particularly in my electorate of Cockburn.

As I said, that bridge is very significant in taking traffic off Beeliar Drive and improving congestion around Beeliar Drive and Wentworth Parade. It is also significant because it has improved access around Atwell, a suburb on the eastern end of my electorate. Atwell has two main points of entry and exit. In the northern part of the suburb, they are Freshwater Drive and Tapper Road. Those intersections were pretty tricky for people to navigate, particularly because on the other side of Armadale Road a commercial precinct brings in a lot of traffic. It has a Bunnings and a kids play centre, and it is a very busy part of the network on the eastern side of the freeway. Part of the work associated with the bridge is building Western Australia's first duck-and-dive roundabout and intersection. That will enable freer traffic flow into and out of the suburb of Atwell and also easier access to the commercial precinct for people who want to go to Bunnings or the like. I acknowledge the Minister for Transport for delivering that project in partnership with the federal government. That will be a significant project for my electorate, and I have had a lot of positive feedback about it. People have said to me that it will cut five minutes or more off their journey, particularly if they are travelling west from Atwell or from the electorate of the member for Jandakot to Cockburn Central, so I thank the minister for that.

The second project that I want to discuss is the upgrade to the Beeliar Drive–Stock Road intersection. That \$7 million project is on a much smaller scale, but smaller projects are often the ones that make a measurable difference to not only people's lives, but also safety, which is something this government is also focused on. This government is focused on busting congestion, making people's commutes easier, and making it easier for industry to cart goods around our state. We are also focused on making people's experience on the roads as safe as possible. That is a very busy intersection in my electorate.

Stock Road is obviously a main road. Surprisingly, Beeliar Drive is not a main road. One of the things we discover when we become a member of Parliament is that some roads that we assume would be a main road are not, and some roads that we would not think would be a main road are a main road. Cockburn Road in my electorate is a main road, despite the fact that it is only a two-lane road. The history of that road is that it originally was to be a much larger and more heavily used corridor to the coast. The state government committed to that \$7 million upgrade given that that intersection is on a main road. The aim of this intersection upgrade was not just to ease congestion or assist with traffic flow; it was specifically about safety. A lot of heavy vehicles travel along Stock Road. There is also a lot of residential and pedestrian traffic from suburbs like Lake Coogee and Beeliar.

That intersection upgrade delivered a number of improvements. The first was that the pedestrian crossing was fully signalled; prior to that, it did not have dedicated pedestrian signals. That has made it safer for people in my community to cross Stock Road. The second was that safety barriers were installed on the western side of the intersection. Those safety barriers are a welcome improvement for people who live or work next to that intersection because should an accident occur, particularly with a heavy vehicle, they will protect the houses along that road, and also some of the commercial premises, including a childcare centre, that are close to that intersection. The third was that new extended turning pockets were built that will avoid the need for traffic to bank up and ensure that vehicles are able to turn at that intersection more easily.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr D.A.E. SCAIFE: Now that I am more than halfway through my speech, I am concerned that I might be making other members envious of all the investments that the government has been making in my electorate. It looks as though I am getting a nod from the Minister for Police. I am sure that many good things are happening in his electorate as well. I have been very fortunate over the last few years to have had significant investment in my electorate.

The next project that I want to discuss is the upgrades to Cockburn Road. I have been working closely with the minister and her office on this project. Cockburn Road runs along the coast in the western part of my electorate, next to Coogee Beach. It connects the suburbs of South Fremantle through to the industrial precincts that are developing along Russell Road, such as Latitude 32 and the Australian Marine Complex. That road is coming under increasing pressure, partly by virtue of the growth of industry in that area, but also because more people are going to Coogee Beach. I know that the member for Warren–Blackwood has been known to frequent Coogee Beach on occasion and says it is beautiful. I appreciate that. I have to say I am not sure it is quite at the level of Greens Pool,

which is a favourite spot of mine, but it is a great spot just down the road from where I live. Cockburn Road, which probably was originally envisioned as a heavy industrial road, is now attracting a lot of residential and tourist traffic with people going to Coogee Beach and to Coogee Common and Coogee Beach Cafe. It is a growing beach precinct.

One of the things that members of my community have raised with me is pedestrian safety. People who live in Coogee and want to cross Cockburn Road to swim at the beach, go for a walk or use the amenities face significant challenges, particularly at busy times. Last year, a resident who lives near Amity Boulevard contacted me to raise the need for a pedestrian crossing on that road, because she likes to take her child in a pram to Coogee Beach but feels unsafe having to make that crossing daily. I am very pleased to be working with the Minister for Transport and her office on delivering that pedestrian crossing. In my first year in this place, I raised a grievance with the Minister for Transport about that issue, and it was very pleasing that the minister responded to that by committing to deliver that pedestrian crossing. I actually received an update on that from the minister's office this morning, which confirmed that we are on track for delivery of that pedestrian crossing before the summer rush this year. I thank the minister and her office for its efforts on that.

I also acknowledge the minister and her office for working with me and the community on a couple of hiccups that have happened along the way. Once we announced the delivery of that project, a number of residents became quite concerned that because the proposed pedestrian crossing will be located directly opposite a caravan park and close to Powell Road, it might impact their ability to turn right onto Cockburn Road. Residents on Beach Road were also concerned about their ability to turn right onto Cockburn Road. The Minister for Transport and Main Roads WA agreed to delay the delivery of that project while we explored the possibility of a larger treatment to the intersection by building a four-way signalled traffic intersection along with the City of Cockburn. Unfortunately, that did not turn out to be a feasible option in the short term, but I know that Main Roads and the City of Cockburn have committed to deliver that over the longer term. In the interim, we will be delivering that pedestrian crossing to improve pedestrian safety on Cockburn Road; and, once that crossing has been delivered, we will be monitoring the intersections at Powell Road and Beach Road closely to ensure that any negative effects on residents on Beach Road or on residents of the caravan park are properly addressed. I am thankful to the minister, and also to John Clydesdale, who was formerly in the minister's office, and Jo Vinci, who is currently in the minister's office, who have done an outstanding job in listening to residents, keeping me updated, and, ultimately, later this year, delivering on a project that will improve the Coogee Beach precinct.

I am pleased to say that another upgrade on Cockburn Road that Main Roads is planning in the Coogee Beach precinct—it is a little further south—is a roundabout at the intersection of Cockburn Road and Mayor Road. Mayor Road is an extremely busy road in my electorate. People who live in Coogee obviously use it. Coogee Primary School is located next to it. The obvious route for anybody travelling to the beach from the suburbs of Yangebup and Beeliar and those suburbs further east in my electorate, such as Success and Atwell, is Mayor Road with an exit onto Cockburn Road. We get situations, particularly on a Sunday morning, in which traffic is backed up.

Debate interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.

[Continued on page 2064.]