

**THORNLIE–COCKBURN LINK — ELLIOT PLACE–CAMERON STREET FOOTBRIDGE**

*Grievance*

**MR C.J. TALLENTIRE (Thornlie)** [9.42 am]: My grievance is to the Minister for Transport, and I thank her very much for taking this grievance, which is essentially about providing clarity to the Thornlie community about a footbridge that was promised in the lead-up to the 2021 election. That footbridge will cross the freight lines in the easement between Thornlie and Cockburn and that will, of course, cross the new Thornlie–Cockburn Link line. Therefore, a significant volume of train travel will be traversed. It is natural enough that when a government looks at a major project such as the Thornlie–Cockburn Link, it does its due diligence and reviews things, which is what the Public Transport Authority has done at all stages. Some mischievous elements in the local community have sought to exploit this assessment and suggested that there is a cloud over the future of this very important pedestrian–cycling bridge that will link Cameron Street and Elliot Place. I seek the minister’s reaffirmation of the government’s 2021 election commitment so that there is no doubt that the McGowan government sticks by its promises and delivers on its commitments and that this essential piece of infrastructure will be delivered for the Thornlie community.

Just to say a little about the history of the area, for many years, freight has gone through the area on tracks that were built to a standard that is no longer acceptable. The local community is getting the benefit of the removal of level crossings. The Nicholson Road level crossing has already been removed and now a bridge goes over the train line. I think it was on 5 October 2020 that the Elliot Place–Cameron Street pedestrian level crossing was closed for good safety reasons, with the commitment that it be replaced with a pedestrian–cycling bridge over the train lines. That is the commitment the government will honour and on which I seek the minister’s confirmation.

The quality of these train lines will be upgraded with an anti-vibration system and, in fact, there is no longer any need for freight trains or, indeed, the future PTA trains, to sound their sirens at each level crossing. The safety regulations in place are that when a train goes through a crossing, it has to sound its siren, and that was really quite a nuisance for our local community. When I lived in Debenham Street, I was aware of trains, often CBH Group trains, travelling at night. I would hear them sound their siren at the Nicholson Road level crossing and then again at the Elliot Place–Cameron Street level crossing, which was disruptive to people’s sleep in the community. There is now no need for that.

The new bridge will result in a great connection between the northern and southern parts of Thornlie. That means that families going to the Tom Bateman Sporting Complex, students attending Yale Primary School and people looking to use our wonderful long-term cycle network—we have some great activation with the Your Move program and getting people to walk, wheel and ride—will be able to use this access from Elliot Place to Cameron Street and up to Roe Highway, where there is a beautiful bridge. I think that bridge might have been built as part of the Roe 6 project. That will enable people to go on to Langford, up to Parkwood and the Canning River and into Perth. It will be a key access point for our community and it will mean that people can avoid using their cars on short local traffic journeys. If this bridge does not go ahead, people will not have an option of a bike ride or walk and their journey would involve going up to the Nicholson Road crossing, which is a 1.9-kilometre stretch each way, so a total of 3.8 kilometres, or they would have to go the other way down to Spencer Road, which is a similar distance. It would be too much for people to endure. This crossing will make it feasible for local journeys to be done by walking, wheeling and riding on bikes or whatever their choice is. It will take pressure off an already congested road network, which is vital.

In the time left to me, I want to acknowledge the tremendous work that has been done by some community advocates in the Thornlie area. Thank you especially to Paul Gayton, who is the community representative on the Thornlie–Cockburn Link Community Reference Group. Paul has been doing an absolutely fabulous job keeping the community informed of what is going on and letting people know about discussions. I also thank Rachel Wright, Janet Kirkham and many others who have been asking about this. I know that they are just as keen as I am to hear the reaffirmation that this bridge will go ahead. I know there are some who have concerns but they are very much in the minority. The community is going to be greatly enhanced by the train line and, of course, the footbridge from Cameron Street to Elliot Place. Thank you, minister.

**MS R. SAFFIOTI (West Swan — Minister for Transport)** [9.50 am]: I thank the member for his grievance and for his strong advocacy on this issue. Of course, no-one knows cycle and pedestrian paths better than this member, who is a very strong advocate for helping my team to create better connections from train stations to communities, whether it be for the rollout of the principal shared pathways network or our grants to local governments. I thank him very much for all the work he does.

As we know, we are building the Thornlie–Cockburn Link, which includes two new train stations. Work is well underway. As part of those works, of course, we had to close the pedestrian level crossing at Elliot Place in Thornlie for safety reasons and because it is a significant construction site. When we closed that level crossing, we made a commitment to build a new footbridge. I can confirm that we will build a new footbridge in that area. When

planning footbridges, they always have to be bigger and better than maybe even originally contemplated to ensure compliance with disability access and to make sure there is the right clearance over the freight rail line. One of the other key issues is its impact on local residents. Footbridges benefit the entire community, but those in close proximity sometimes have privacy concerns and other issues. In March this year, the project team surveyed 30 residents of around 30 properties immediately near the proposed footbridge to find out their feelings about the footbridge going ahead. The consultation found that over half the residents supported the footbridge, with many of them wanting to have easy access to the Tom Bateman Sporting Complex Reserve. Taking that into account, we are reaffirming our commitment to a universally accessible footbridge with ramps on either side, which will remain within the scope of the Thornlie–Cockburn project. The bridge will be designed to help minimise the privacy concerns of people in neighbouring properties. The project team will continue to liaise with local members and the City of Gosnells about the bridge. There are some preliminary designs and, through the local member, we will continue to update the community about the progress of that project. This is a very exciting project, member. As people in the area will know, work is well underway with the relocation of existing rail lines and the building of new stations. The two new train stations will connect with the shared path network. Collectively, there will be 14 bus stands and 1 400 parking bays, which will provide a brand new option for people to travel across the network, whether into the city or on to the Mandurah or Thornlie lines. There will be incredible advantages. Of course, going to the football will also be a much easier process for people in that area. I also acknowledge the member for Southern River. Both members are very passionate about public transport and connectivity in particular. We will be celebrating another major milestone for the Metronet program. I thank him very much. We are reaffirming the construction of this footbridge. As I said, we are going through the more detailed design to make sure it can meet universal access requirements and provide amenity and connectivity for the local community.