

CORONAVIRUS — MAJOR PROJECTS — CONSTRUCTION JOBS

253. Ms C.M. ROWE to the Premier:

I refer to the impact of COVID-19 on the Western Australian economy. Can the Premier outline to the house how the McGowan Labor government's decision to fast-track major projects across the state will not only support the WA economy, but also help save local construction jobs?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

I thank the member for Belmont for the question. Construction of major infrastructure projects is going to be a major part of Western Australia's recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. This government already has a record number of transport projects underway and a record number of projects in the pipeline. By the end of this year, we will have six Metronet projects underway. It is a range and scale of rail building never seen before in Western Australia. We are working hard to get the remaining contracts signed and underway sooner than was planned. We are fast-tracking the tendering process on about 11 large-scale road projects in city and regional Western Australia worth about \$2.3 billion that will create 13 000 jobs, including the Bunbury Outer Ring Road, which has 4 500 jobs attached to it; the Mitchell Freeway extension to Romeo Road, which has 1 200 jobs; the Albany ring-road, which has 1 000 jobs; and the Tonkin Highway gap project, which will create 3 000 jobs. This morning, with the Minister for Transport, we announced the preferred proponent to deliver the gap project. The Tonkin gap alliance comprises five Australian companies, most of which are based in Western Australia, including BMD, Georgiou, WA Limestone, BG&E and GHD. The project will also fix a major bottleneck on Tonkin Highway between Morley and Redcliffe and upgrade a stretch of road between Collier Road and Dunreath Drive to a three-lane freeway-standard road. It has been talked about forever; now it is happening. There will be a new bridge over the Swan River as part of the project, and new interchanges at Guildford Road and Great Eastern Highway.

The alliance will also deliver critical enabling works for the Morley–Ellenbrook line, including the dive structures at Bayswater and Malaga to enable the rail line to enter and exit the middle of Tonkin Highway. It will replace the Broun Avenue flyover. The contract for the Tonkin gap project is expected to be awarded in June, with work to get underway in the second half of this year.

We are also supporting local companies to be in the best position possible to tender for and get work on major projects. Our railcar manufacturing facility is delivering \$64 million worth of local contracts for local companies. This morning, with the transport minister, we visited Eilbeck Cranes in Bassendean, which is designing and fabricating four overhead gantry cranes that will be used at the Bellevue, or the Midland, facility to build the new rail carriages. The cranes will lift the rail carriages around inside the major shed that is being built. Vector Lifting in Cockburn is delivering \$3.8 million of work to build the bogie turntables and lifting jack. Vossloh in Kewdale is delivering \$11 million of work to design and manufacture the turnouts, and Firm Construction in Perth has \$46 million of work to build the major manufacturing facility.

The government is doing all it can to bring forward major infrastructure to support the economy as we emerge from COVID-19. Getting projects underway is what we are about. We are also supporting local businesses through the Western Australian Jobs Act and the local capability fund. We are determined to get as much work as possible into our state.