

LEACH HIGHWAY–WELSHPOOL ROAD INTERSECTION — UPGRADE

**381. MR S.J. PRICE to the Minister for Transport:**

I refer to the vital role that will be played by the McGowan government's record investment in transport projects in supporting Western Australia's economy through COVID-19. Can the minister update the house on the work that is underway to upgrade the Leach Highway–Welshpool Road intersection, and can the minister advise the house how this project will support local business and help protect jobs?

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:**

I thank the member for Forrestfield for that question and for his interest in not only road projects, but also job-creating projects across Western Australia. Members will know that the Leach Highway–Welshpool Road intersection ranks amongst the worst in the state—it is the second-worst intersection in the state for crashes and the seventh most-congested intersection. In the 2019–20 state budget, the McGowan government allocated \$46.5 million to jointly fund with the commonwealth government a \$93 million project for a new interchange at that location. It is expected to create 400 jobs. We have been able to bring this project forward as part of our economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic; it is another infrastructure project that has been brought forward.

The Premier might remember that special day at the intersection and that car and the mullet.

**Mr M. McGowan:** I have a lot of experiences with cars and mullets!

**Mr B.S. Wyatt** interjected.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** I wish I had never gone there!

It is a very special project. We brought forward by seven months the opening of submissions for proposals to design and construct this project. Up to 50 000 vehicles travel through this intersection daily, making it one of the most congested and dangerous intersections in our state. These upgrades will not only create a safer and more efficient intersection but also create and support local jobs. It was initially anticipated that the contract would be awarded in February next year, but the government is bringing it forward to August, with construction commencing later this year. This is just part of the 24 road projects the government is fast-tracking across the state, including, of course, the Fremantle Traffic Bridge, the Albany ring-road, the Bunbury Outer Ring Road, the Tonkin gap project and the Mitchell Freeway extension. This is billions of dollars of projects to create jobs and investment certainty in Western Australia.