

NORTHERN SUBURBS RAIL LINE - CAPACITY

630. Mr P. PAPALIA to the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure:

Is there any truth to the claims made by the opposition and reported in *The West Australian* that there will be a reduction in capacity on the northern suburbs railway line when the southern suburbs rail commences operation?

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN replied:

I thank the member for the question and I know that, in common with many members from the southern suburbs, he is eagerly waiting for the new trains to come on board.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, members!

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: Indeed, people in the northern suburbs are pretty excited about it too!

Hon Simon O'Brien made the claim that all rail carriages were being used to capacity, and that when the Perth-Mandurah line began operation, carriages on the Joondalup and other lines would be pulled. That is completely and utterly untrue. In fact, we are holding the trains for the Mandurah service in reserve. We have 45 B-series cars; they are the new trains being held in reserve. We also have eight refurbished A-series cars that will be brought into service when the new line opens. In all, we have 53 railcars which are not currently on that line and which will be brought into service as soon as the line opens. We have taken the opportunity presented by the additional train stop to cycle the A-series trains through so that we can in fact have a complete refurbishment of all the A-series cars. Again, this was a complete fabrication by Hon Simon O'Brien. Mr O'Brien has also forgotten that the New MetroRail project did not encompass only the southern suburbs rail. In fact it also encompassed the extension to Clarkson, the construction of a new line to Thornlie and the doubling of the number of railcars. The government was always going to increase the capacity on the existing lines and the new spur line. The facts speak for themselves. There has been an almost five per cent increase in train patronage each year since the government brought new cars into the system. There has been a growth in public transport usage in Western Australia that has not been experienced elsewhere. There has been some congestion during afternoon peak periods at the new underground stations serving Joondalup. We think that is partly because there has been a 4.6 per cent spike in patronage in the weeks since the new stations were opened, because so many people are keen to come and see them. People are discovering that trains run very close to where they work and more people are using them. We have capacity in reserve and we are waiting to see how the travel patterns settle; next week we will put additional capacity into the afternoon peak at Joondalup. In total, this is a great success story.

The hypocrisy of the opposition once again needs to be brought to bear. This is the mob that opposed the development of rail. Let us once again remember what the Leader of the Opposition said about rail in 2002. He stated -

I do not agree with the project at all. It is miles ahead of its time. It is an absolute waste of taxpayers' money. The Government is trying to con the people of Western Australia into believing they need a railway line when they do not.

The Leader of the Opposition will be hoist on that petard.