

Metropolitan Railway — Ellenbrook Extension — Statement by Minister for Transport — Motion

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting on the following motion moved by Hon Linda Savage —

That the report be noted.

Hon LINDA SAVAGE: Just to recap, I have noted the ministerial statement by the Minister for Transport of 5 May 2009 concerning the Ellenbrook rail extension. That statement began with the minister saying that he was using the opportunity to update the house on developments in the government's election commitment to extend the rail network to Ellenbrook. As I said, since becoming a member for East Metropolitan in March, the first issue that was raised with me was public transport in Ellenbrook. It began at the City of Swan mayoral dinner on 1 May when I sat next to a librarian from the Ellenbrook Library. It has been raised with me on every occasion I have met with Mayor Charlie Zannino and councillors of the City of Swan. It was raised with me by Rob Wahl in July, who was then the chairperson of the Ellenbrook Residents Association; by the staff of the Cool Room, the youth facility in Ellenbrook; the child health nurses; the staff at the Munchkins preprimary program; and the Woodlake Childcare Centre. As I mentioned, I have written to the City of Swan and received correspondence on 16 August 2010, which said in part that the city was committed to continuing to lobby for improved public transport and for the rail line to go to Ellenbrook. The point I reached before question time was that it seems to me that since March, when I became a member, the promise of the rail line to Ellenbrook had been accepted as a promise that would not be honoured.

The other public transport issue raised with me repeatedly is the bus service from Ellenbrook to Midland. I told members that the service is available on the 335 route; that is, two buses leave at 7.14 am and 8.46 am respectively and two buses return at 3.30 pm and 4.25 pm respectively, with no services at all on Saturdays, Sundays or public holidays. Because of that I asked the first of a series of questions in this house regarding public transport in Ellenbrook. The first question I asked of the then Minister for Transport, Hon Simon O'Brien, was on 11 August 2010 and reads —

- (1) Why are there no direct bus services from Ellenbrook to Midland on Saturdays, Sundays or public holidays?
- (2) As the government intends Midland to become a special trading precinct, will the government consider providing a direct bus service from Ellenbrook to Midland on Sundays?

In response to my question—prior to the recess—Hon Simon O'Brien indicated that the direct service from Ellenbrook to Midland caters for school children only and that analysis had shown that the first preference of Ellenbrook residents was the strong public transport connection from Ellenbrook to Morley. The second strongest priority was for a connection between Ellenbrook to the Bassendean train station. I would not describe myself as naive, but I certainly took the answer to that question at face value, even though I noticed that it did not answer the question about whether any consideration was being given to a direct service from Ellenbrook to Midland when Midland became a special trading precinct.

I note also that the minister said that Transperth had conducted community consultations at Ellenbrook on numerous occasions and had analysed letters and websites from residents. On the basis of that—it seemed to suggest that the information I was receiving from the mayor, councillors and constituents of Ellenbrook was something quite different from what I was hearing about a desire for the rail line and the direct bus to Midland—I asked another question the next day, 12 August, about the community consultation that had occurred at Ellenbrook on numerous occasions, which, in answer to my question, the minister had spoken about the day before. I asked also a number of detailed questions about what that analysis had shown. I will not read the entire answer into the *Hansard* again; members may wish to refer to it themselves—it was on 12 August 2010. I do not think I am going too far by saying that the answer was somewhat dismissive. That was certainly how the constituents whom I sent the answer on to felt my question about their concerns had been dealt with.

As it happened, on the same day the Minister for Transport announced the introduction, from mid-October, of an all-day bus service to Bassendean station, with every second bus extending its route to the Morley bus station. That service to Bassendean station has been welcomed by residents who have spoken to me, but some concerns have been raised with me, which I will speak about later. Perhaps people can pass on those concerns to the Minister for Transport themselves. Notwithstanding the introduction of the all-day bus service to Bassendean station, constituents continue to raise with me their concern about there being only limited direct bus services to Midland, as well as the absence of any weekend service to Midland. That was, of course, the number one concern that they expressed to me after their concern about the rail line, which, as I said, they expressed, but in the context that they understood that that was a promise that would not be honoured.

At that point I thought I should try to find out a bit more about the research that Hon Simon O'Brien had referred to. My office made a number of attempts—we have the email correspondence relating to this—to find out what the numerous consultations were. Unfortunately, we were not able to get any information. As I said, I had

already asked a question about that and had not received any clarification from the minister about that issue. Therefore, I asked another question—I do not know whether Hon Simon O'Brien recalls it—on 16 September 2010. This was now the third question that I had asked about this matter. The answer to this question was a bit more illuminating, because the answer included the words “Prior to this”. In that respect, Hon Simon O'Brien was referring to the consultation that occurred when the Bassendean bus service was announced as a fait accompli, which, as I have said, was welcomed; so he was referring to that. However, prior to that, which was in late 2010, the community consultations were those conducted prior to September 2008. The closest I have got to an answer about these community consultations is something that occurred perhaps around 2004. I suppose the comment I would make about that is that, by then, I had asked three questions in good faith on behalf of the residents of Ellenbrook, and it had taken me that amount of time to even get the answer to what I think was a pretty straightforward question about what the research and the analysis was, particularly as it seemed to be quite different from what I was hearing from the people who were coming into my office and when I visited Ellenbrook.

I want to speak briefly now about the forum that was held also late last year. These are the transport planning forums that were held by the Eastern Metropolitan Regional Council. They were put together by councils in partnership with Curtin University of Technology. The one in Ellenbrook was held on 3 November 2010 at the Ellenbrook Community Library. I did not attend this one; a staff member from my office did. However, the report I have come out this year, and it provides a lot of very useful information about the public transport concerns of people of not just Ellenbrook, but also the whole region. I will refer a little to this report and how these forums were conducted. I will read now from the executive summary, which states —

Participants at the forum —

This is the one in Ellenbrook that a member of my staff attended —

took part in a series of structured and facilitated exercises that required them to consider various options for a public transport system for the region.

The report is very interesting because it provides a more recent overview than a lot of the figures that are available for the region, particularly for Ellenbrook, most of which are —

[Member's time expired.]

The CHAIRMAN: I will give the call to Hon Alyssa Hayden.

Hon Linda Savage: No, I thought I could —

The CHAIRMAN: Order, members! The member is entitled to rise again. I will give the call to Hon Alyssa Hayden, but the member is entitled to continue. I will give her the call again.

Hon ALYSSA HAYDEN: As a proud Ellenbrook resident and as a member for the East Metropolitan Region, I will put forward my opinion on the transport needs surrounding Ellenbrook. The idea of a rail line to Ellenbrook was not even a thought for many residents of Ellenbrook until Hon Alan Carpenter raised it and made it a promise near the end of a desperate election campaign. However, I want to inform fellow members of the real transport issues that have been affecting the residents of Ellenbrook for many, many years.

Hon Simon O'Brien: Where do you live, by the way?

Hon ALYSSA HAYDEN: As I said at the beginning, I am a resident of Ellenbrook.

Hon Simon O'Brien: So you'd know what you're talking about.

Hon ALYSSA HAYDEN: I sure do know. I have been there for 14 years.

As the suburb has grown and the population has increased, this community's transport issues have shifted and moved accordingly. Some time ago the residents' urgent need was another entry–exit point into and out of Ellenbrook. When we experienced a truck spillage at the Pinaster Parade roundabout, which was the only entry–exit point into and out of Ellenbrook, this issue was raised, and the danger and urgency were highlighted. We now have four entry and exit points into and out of Ellenbrook.

Hon Jim Chown: Courtesy of which government?

Hon ALYSSA HAYDEN: Courtesy of the developers, which should have done it properly in the first place.

Moving ahead some eight years, the problems we are now experiencing are as a result of the need to upgrade Gngangara Road. We do not have traffic from only Ellenbrook and Aveley using Gngangara Road; we also have high volumes of traffic travelling from the west along Gngangara Road through to the Swan Valley and the Vines and on to Midland, as well as all the new construction sites in and around the housing developments in our region. This extra traffic travelling west along Gngangara Road is causing a bottleneck at all the entry–exit points in Ellenbrook. This would have to be the number one transport priority for most residents of Ellenbrook. Being a

local government road, unfortunately responsibility for it sits with the City of Swan, and it is its responsibility to do this upgrade. However, the member for Swan Hills, Frank Alban, and I have been working with the City of Swan and encouraging it to put this issue on its priority list and to make it the number one priority.

Hon Ken Travers: Do you support it becoming a main road?

Hon ALYSSA HAYDEN: I certainly do, and I even offered to help the City of Swan with its application.

Hon Ken Travers: My view is that it should now be classified as a main road.

Hon ALYSSA HAYDEN: I totally agree. We just need to see whether the City of Swan is happy to relinquish that right.

Another transport issue for the people of Ellenbrook is the high volume of trucks. As I said in my maiden speech, the need for the Perth–Darwin highway is a vital transport issue for the people of Ellenbrook and the surrounding areas. I could talk for days on the Perth–Darwin highway, but, basically, for this region, for our transport industry and for our tourism industry, the Perth–Darwin highway is vital.

Hon Jim Chown: You're obviously a member with great local knowledge.

Hon ALYSSA HAYDEN: I thank Hon Jim Chown.

Hon Ken Travers: Are you suggesting that's a rarity on your side, Hon Jim Chown?

Hon ALYSSA HAYDEN: Along with the hardworking member Frank Alban, I have been pushing this issue hard with the Premier and with both Hon Simon O'Brien, who is the former Minister for Transport, and Hon Troy Buswell, who is the current Minister for Transport. I am proud to say that our efforts have not fallen on deaf ears. The Premier has agreed that it needs to be a major project and, in fact, it is a national building program priority. A lot of land acquisitions and costings are required to make it a priority and to get the federal government to come on board and agree to the construction. I understand that studies are currently being undertaken by the minister's department. I look forward to the response to the study so that I can, hopefully with the support of my colleagues opposite, get the federal government on board to build what I believe will be stage 1. Obviously, we will not be able to get the Perth–Darwin highway done completely in one round, but stage 1 would be the preference. I ask members to refer to it as stage 1 of the Perth–Darwin highway, not the Swan Valley bypass, as so many people are calling it. As a business owner, I believe Swan Valley, which is our tourism precinct, and the word "bypass" should never be referred to together, so I would like all members to refer to it as stage 1 of the Perth–Darwin highway.

More importantly, Ellenbrook has benefited greatly from the excellent work of Frank Alban, who worked with the Minister for Transport to increase the bus services throughout Ellenbrook. An enhanced bus service provides total flexibility for the people of Ellenbrook. The bus service can be adjusted as the community continues to grow and to cater for all the villages in Ellenbrook. I do not know whether many members have travelled through Ellenbrook, but they can get lost there for days if they do not know their way around. The many villages in Ellenbrook make it a tight community, but they also make it difficult to cater for an enhanced bus service that provides total flexibility. That is why I believe the bus service is the only solution to this. As I said earlier, the work of Frank Alban has increased the bus service in and around Ellenbrook, and we now have a seven day a week main spine service through Ellenbrook on routes 955 and 956, linking Ellenbrook with the Midland train line at Bassendean train station. On weekdays, this service operates every 10 minutes during the peak period and every 15 minutes during the remainder of the day. Every second trip extends to Morley bus station, taking residents to Centro Galleria shopping centre. There is an hourly service on the weekend. We also have new feeder routes around the villages of Ellenbrook, linking people to the main spine. These feeder routes operate every half-hour Monday to Saturday and every 15 minutes during the peak periods. These improvements have provided Ellenbrook residents with an all-day service to Bassendean train station, with every second bus service extending through to Morley bus station. At Bassendean train station, passengers can transfer to the train line. They then have the option of going to Midland or Perth and to any other train station along that line, or, as I have said, continuing on to Morley. These new, improved bus services are providing the people of Ellenbrook with total flexibility. They started operation on 17 October 2010. The current figures show that 381 Ellenbrook residents a day use the bus services during the morning peak period, 553 residents use them during the afternoon peak period and 1 013 residents use them in the non-peak period during the day and on weekends. That means that approximately 1 940 people use the new bus services in Ellenbrook daily.

As an Ellenbrook resident, I am aware of the requests for a bus service to Midland. However, members must also note that Ellenbrook was always going to be a satellite city and be able to sustain itself. Stage 2 of The Shops At Ellenbrook has recently opened, and this has provided residents with a lot more choice and shopping alternatives. We need to be very careful that the residents from Ellenbrook are not lost to Midland. These shops need support to remain open so that residents continue to receive the services that they are currently getting. I am

sure that Western Australian taxpayers and members opposite do not want a government that makes decisions that are not cost-effective. At the moment, there is no population to warrant a bus service from Midland to Ellenbrook; however, this will change and it will change soon. As residents of Ellenbrook are aware, several new housing developments in and around Ellenbrook are under construction, or are soon to be under construction. Just this morning I joined the Minister for Housing, Hon Troy Buswell, and my colleague Hon Donna Faragher at the turning of the sod for the Whiteman Edge development, which will see 3 000 homes with an estimated population of 9 000 people. The north east corridor is a very fast developing region. Once these homes are constructed, the population demand will be there to ensure that there is a bus route to Midland. I assure the residents of Ellenbrook and surrounding suburbs that Frank and I will continue to work with the Minister for Transport to ensure that these important bus services are delivered.

I take this opportunity to commend the Public Transport Authority for its analysis in identifying and developing the current expanded bus service, which is connecting the residents of Ellenbrook to not only their workplaces, but also the leisure destinations in and around Bassendean, Morley, Midland and the Perth district. This government is committed to ensuring that it delivers the best possible outcome for both the residents of Ellenbrook and Western Australian taxpayers. As I have mentioned, I have been a resident of Ellenbrook for 14 years. I believe the residents of Ellenbrook appreciate a government that considers all options, all choices and all consequences, and the real needs of the community.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: I want to make a few comments about this ministerial statement. I agree with the member opposite, Hon Alyssa Hayden, except that it is clear that she lives in Ellenbrook, not the neighbouring suburb of Aveley. The story about buses in Aveley is very different, because there is not a single bus route in that suburb. It is one of the great suburbs in this city that were identified by the former Minister for Transport as not having adequate bus services as a result of the lack of investment by the current government to expand our public transport system.

This ministerial statement is one of the statements made by the government since the election in which it has admitted that it made an election commitment to build a rail line to Ellenbrook. Many people, including the Premier, have tried to redefine that commitment. It is worth highlighting some of the things that occurred during the election that confirmed beyond reasonable doubt that the Barnett government promised to build a railway line to Ellenbrook. The first document is a flyer from Frank Alban headed “Liberals will build rail line to Ellenbrook: Delivering Rail for Ellenbrook!” That flyer was sent out to the electors of Ellenbrook. It was clear that a Liberal government would build a railway line to Ellenbrook and improve local bus services. He even listed the suburbs in which he would fix the bus services. That included Henley Brook, Aveley, the Vines, the Swan Valley, Bullsbrook, Gidgegannup and Mundaring. I challenge members opposite to see whether that has occurred yet.

The second document is a costings document in which the Liberal Party committed to spend \$53 million over the following four years to commence construction of the Ellenbrook railway line. There is no doubt that it was due to commence the construction of the Ellenbrook railway line during this term of government, yet we have seen no action in putting money in the budget. It should be in the forward estimates if the government is to honour its election commitment. Members on this side of the chamber will watch the forthcoming budget very closely because it will be the last budget under which the Liberal government will have that opportunity. I suspect that it will not build the railway line. How do I know that? We need only look at this ministerial statement. The minister basically acknowledged that the government made a commitment, but he then pointed out that, despite having started the work, the government had decided to get a further study done. The minister mentioned —

The PTA commenced the required work at the end of April and will provide the government with a preliminary report by the end of August 2009.

I expect that the government would have received that report by now, unless it is completely hopeless. So it would know whether it will build the railway line. At this stage, there has been no public announcement about whether that will occur. A document that was released in August last year might give the house some guidance on the real plans of the Barnett government—that is, the draft strategic subregional plan for the outer metropolitan region of Perth that formed part of the “Directions 2031” document that was released. It is interesting to note that on page 57 of the subregional plan, under the heading “Public transport network”, it clearly states that the government expects to see an extension of the railway line into the northern suburbs to Yanchep with new stations at Alkimos, Eglinton and Yanchep. In fact, a lovely map in that document highlights the proposed route. What does the government have to say about the development of public transport in the north east corridor? On page 72 of that document it states —

The Directions 2031 conceptual public transport network indicates a link to Perth Airport.

That is great! It is another promise about the government’s commitment to develop a rapid transit service to the airport, which we still have not seen. The document says also —

Feasibility studies are currently underway, to investigate a new Spur line from Bayswater linking the Midland line along Tonkin Highway to a station at the new Airport Business Park, then underground to the new Airport Terminal.

That study was in fact commenced by the former minister, Alannah MacTiernan, in cooperation with and joint funding from the federal government. I might add that under Alannah MacTiernan's plan the railway would go through the airport to a station in Forrestfield to service the areas of Kalamunda and Hazelmere—not Hazelmere. What is the other suburb out there? There is Forrestfield and —

Hon Simon O'Brien: Ask Hon Linda Savage; she is from out that way.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: I will get it. High Wycombe is the suburb I was thinking of.

The document then states —

Connections to major centres projects include the development of a rapid transit service to Ellenbrook, It states not a rail service to Ellenbrook, but a rapid transit service. This is a government document, but the government has never publicly released the information. It has never put out a press release announcing it has canned the idea of a rail line and is no longer talking about a rail service—as it is in the northern corridor—but is talking about a rapid transit service to Ellenbrook. The document continues —

... with the projected number of passengers justifying a road based priority service.

A road-based service! I do not know when I last saw a road-based train. In fact, I think if a train were road-based, we would call it a bus. It would be called a bus!

Hon Simon O'Brien: Or you would call it light rail.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: No; it would still be called a rapid transit bus system, which is what this document outlines. The document continues —

An option of running a Bus Rapid Transit ... service between Ellenbrook and Bassendean and across to Morley is feasible.

I have to say that a rail line is not drawn in on the map in this document. I know what is going to happen. The government knows what its decision is but it will not come clean. This government is so arrogant that it is happy to build a palace on the hill and a ministerial compound with palatial new offices, but it is not going to honour the election commitment it made at the last election to get on and start construction during this term of office.

Hon Liz Behjat interjected.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: When that announcement is finally made, it will be buried in the government's 10-year master plan for public transport that will talk about what could be done in Perth but that will contain very little action. We know that the Liberal Party does not spend money on public transport.

By the way, Hon Liz Behjat, I am talking loud to drown out the interjections.

This government does not spend money on public transport. It does not buy the rail carriages when they are needed. It does not buy the buses when they are needed. It has a long history of not investing in public transport. And although the Liberal Party made a solemn commitment to the people of Ellenbrook at the last election that it would start construction of the new Ellenbrook railway line, we see the real truth hidden away in this government document that I had to go searching for; namely, that the government proposes a bus rapid transit system out to Ellenbrook and has no plans for a railway line. That is a disgrace. If that is the case, the government should at least have the decency and honesty to come out and admit that it is breaking an election promise. However, what do we get? We get the Premier talking in terms of, "Oh, we never made a promise. We said it was a second-term issue and that we would consider it during that term." What a load of nonsense. At the commencement of my speech, I read the flyer put out by the Liberal candidate in that seat that clearly said the government was going to get on with the rail line. I have read out the section from the Liberal's Party's election costings document about the \$53 million that it would be putting in for the start of the construction of that line. It actually put that \$53 million into the first midyear review after it was elected. It promised to start the construction of that line, yet now it is doing nothing. In fact, it is also worth noting that the way in which the government has funded the new bus services in Ellenbrook is by reallocating service kilometre funding from other bus services across the metropolitan area. The government has not put more money into service kilometres for the provision of bus services in Western Australia; it has stolen that money from other bus services to try to hide the fact that it is breaching its election commitment to get on with constructing rail services out there. It has not put a single bus into the suburb of Aveley, despite its promises. I have to say that if the government does not fix this, the opposition will pursue it for the next two years.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: I want to briefly comment. This is a blast from the past. This is a statement that I made in the house in May 2009—almost two years ago—and that raises issues that I am sure we will revisit about the timeliness with which the house tends to review these matters. However, the statement has led members, in the course of the debate, to talk about related matters on the subject of public transport to Ellenbrook. Predictably, members opposite have contributed looking to the past and members on the government benches have contributed looking to the future. I thought Hon Alyssa Hayden's contribution was not only compelling, but very refreshing. She spoke with a great deal of local knowledge and passion for her community and she made a very good contribution. Her remarks carried a credibility that I think has previously been lacking in today's debate. Interestingly, she spoke about not only what might be—she made some very pertinent comments about related issues such as Perth–Darwin highway stage 1 and so on in her forward-looking remarks—but also what has been done by way of the provision of bus services for Ellenbrook.

Hon Ken Travers interjected.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: A service that operates with a ten-minute peak frequency time is quite extraordinary. I think that service would probably exceed any other service in the metropolitan area. And it operates every 15 minutes off-peak, which is also quite extraordinary. I was very interested to visit Ellenbrook in the third quarter of last year—by bus as it happens!—with some colleagues, including the local member, Frank Alban, MLA.

Hon Ken Travers: Was it a regular passenger service or was it a charter bus?

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: It was a bus and it was specially —

Hon Ken Travers: Was it a charter bus or a regular passenger bus?

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: Answer the question!

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: We were not with travelling the —

Hon Ken Travers: With the riffraff?

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: No. Mr Chairman, I do not intend to digress for all interjections, but I do not think it is very becoming of Hon Ken Travers to refer to people in the north eastern corridor as riffraff. That is not a sentiment of the government. The reason for that bus expedition —

Hon Ken Travers: I am happy to get on the buses with the public; you're the one who goes on the charter buses and not regular public transport.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: When did Hon Ken Travers last catch a bus?

Hon Ken Travers: Last week.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Bully for you! Which bus did the member catch?

Hon Ken Travers: I caught the train in and then I caught the very overcrowded red CAT bus to Parliament House.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: The free bus.

Hon Ken Travers: It is not free if you have to pay the increased Perth parking levy!

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Was Hon Ken Travers paying any of that?

Hon Ken Travers: No, I wasn't.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: No, the member was not, but he took advantage of the free CAT bus service.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Let us get a little perspective here. The debate is straying far too much from the ministerial statement in front of us and I am starting to find it difficult to see any relevance to the topic at hand. Given that only 14 minutes remain, I ask members to get back on task.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Before I was interrupted by an unruly interjection, I was about to pledge to the Chairman my unqualified support for the motion that this ministerial statement be noted. In so doing I also note some related remarks. I am pleased to hear that Hon Ken Travers caught the CAT bus, which is a service that was introduced by the former Court government and my ministerial predecessor, Hon Murray Criddle. Hon Ken Travers says that Liberal governments never bring in anything new or invest in public transport, but he is using that very good service, which, as he indicated, is very well used.

Hon Ken Travers interjected.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: For heaven's sake, just get up in a minute! The bus that I was on was not a scheduled service because that was not the route that I and others were examining on the day. However, we certainly covered a great deal of the ground that is covered by PTA services and looked at a number of matters of interest.

Hon Ken Travers: Did you go into Aveley by any chance?

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: One of the interesting things locals told us was that they are absolutely knocked out by the quality of the bus service. Locals think the frequency, in particular, is quite extraordinary. Locals offered some unsolicited views and said, "Why would we want to exchange a 10-minute bus service for a 15 or 20-minute train service, if such were available?" That is an interesting point, and it was not solicited. Those comments reassured us that that reflected the view up there. There will be more of that another time.

Before I sit down, I will address the issue of the suburb of Aveley, which was raised by another member in this debate. Hon Ken Travers has had a lot to say about bus services, or their absence, in Aveley, and he points out that Aveley is one suburb among others that is relatively new and has not yet had PTA bus services extended to service it. Obviously, we look forward to that happening, because when new suburbs are created, if services are not prearranged, they have to catch up in due course as our service providers become available. I am not particularly familiar with this part of the world. When was the suburb of Aveley created and when did people move into it?

Hon Ken Travers: You tell me.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: I do not know.

Hon Ken Travers: Ask Hon Alyssa Hayden; she is the font of all knowledge for the East Metropolitan Region.

Hon Alyssa Hayden: Don't you know?

Hon KEN TRAVERS: You tell me: did you take your bus trip through Aveley, because it would have been the first bus through there in a very long time!

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: That is a hilarious comment.

Hon Alyssa Hayden: Only about four years.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: The suburb of Aveley has apparently been created during the past four years. I do not think the suburb has reached its full extent yet. The point is that at the time of the Carpenter government, bus services did not exist in Aveley; nor did they service the Ellenbrook area to the extent that we have been servicing it recently.

Hon Ken Travers: You have been in government for two and a half years, minister!

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Two and half years, and you had eight years!

Hon LINDA SAVAGE: I was talking previously about the document "Transport Planning Forums 2010 Findings: East Metropolitan Region Public Transport Aspirations", which makes very interesting reading about not only the whole region but particularly Ellenbrook and the community's concerns about public transport. I will speak about that another time.

Following the number of people who approached me and the correspondence I had with the City of Swan and the questions I asked, I was involved in organising a transport forum at Ellenbrook. That transport forum occurred in the upstairs community room at the Ellenbrook Community Library on 2 September. Over 50 people attended that forum and again raised the issue of the railway line, but the second most frequently raised issue was the direct bus to Midland. I want to say a few words about why people want to go to Midland. Certainly no-one is suggesting it is because people want to take their shopping away from Ellenbrook, but there are things that people cannot get at Ellenbrook.

Hon Jim Chown: What is the population of Ellenbrook? Fifty residents turned up out of what population?

Hon LINDA SAVAGE: The population of Ellenbrook is well over 20 000. I have the updated figures from the census and I am quite happy to read them into the record. I take Hon Jim Chown's point. I do not live in Ellenbrook and that is why I have to read the documents, look at the research and go there to do my job. I do not make general statements. I will continue, if the member does not mind.

People in Ellenbrook cannot go to specialist medical appointments, a Medicare office, a movie theatre or, often, the dentist. There is a range of things that people cannot do in Ellenbrook. People cannot go to Centrelink. Also, of course, there is no Sunday trading; there is Sunday trading in only Midland.

I would like to talk about how people access the new service of the bus to Bassendean train station to get to Midland. As I said, that new service has been welcomed, but it is not as simple as it might sound from the way it has been explained. I will talk about what is involved in getting from Aveley, for example, where one of my

constituents lives and there is not even a bus stop. I have been quite often to my constituent's house. Mrs Kathleen Mitchell, who first came to see me in about September, needs to walk approximately 30 minutes to get from her house in Aveley to the centre of Ellenbrook to get on the bus. Mrs Mitchell is 76 and a grandmother. There are a lot of young mothers in Aveley and members would be aware from the statistics that Aveley has the fastest growing number of children in the under-five age group. At the other end of the spectrum, Aveley also has a significant number of elderly people. That is the way in which the population is growing; there is a young group and children and an older group.

Once Mrs Kathleen Mitchell has walked, if she could, 30 minutes to the bus stop, she would get on a bus in the centre of Ellenbrook. As Hon Alyssa Hayden would know, the bus from Ellenbrook goes to the interchange. Mrs Mitchell would get on the first bus in Ellenbrook and then go to the interchange. Once she got off at the interchange, she would get on another bus and go to Bassendean train station. Then Mrs Mitchell would get the train from Bassendean train station to Midland train station. If Mrs Mitchell wanted to go to Midland Gate, she would have to catch the little shuttle bus. As Kathleen Mitchell tells me, that trip involves eight transfers.

Members can imagine how hard it is for Mrs Mitchell, who is 76. She has to walk from Aveley into the centre of Ellenbrook and then take the bus to the interchange stop and get off the bus at Bassendean station. Members will know that Bassendean station has a lot of stairs, which Mrs Mitchell finds quite difficult. Goodness knows how someone with a pram and two children would find it; that is something I have had experience of—a pram and two or three children.

Mrs Mitchell tells me that having to make eight changes on public transport from where she lives, including a walk, is something that she and many of her friends and neighbours in the area find prohibitive. I want to put it on record that although the Bassendean service has been welcomed, it is not as simple for the people who use public transport as it has been described by government members.

Mrs Mitchell also provided me with an update of her views on public transport in the Ellenbrook region; I feel that she has many ideas that the Minister for Transport, Mr Troy Buswell, would be interested in hearing, and I will make sure that he gets them. Perhaps he would like to accompany Mrs Mitchell on the public transport journey to Midland and back, with the eight changes it involves. Perhaps he could pack a picnic lunch and go with her so he could see what is actually involved.

In the short time I have left I would like to talk about the new service to the Bassendean train station. It has been welcomed, but there has been an issue raised with me about the fact that most people still have to commute from Ellenbrook for work, and the last bus from the Bassendean train station to Ellenbrook leaves at 9.51 pm. That is proving to be a problem for people who work in the city; by the time they have finished, given extended trading hours, they often find it difficult to make it to the Bassendean train station in time for the last bus service. I would like to put on record that that is a problem. Members will of course be aware that taxis are very limited at that time of night. I have been asked to raise the possibility of consideration being given to providing one more bus after the 9.51 pm bus; that would be appreciated.

There are many other issues I could raise about public transport, including the lack of bus shelters, for example, in the centre of Ellenbrook, and the lack of information at the bus stops. Mrs Mitchell also raised with me the fact that it is a problem for her and her elderly friends that the buses that are in service tend to be those that do not have protective barriers to prevent people sliding off the seats, and they do not have many poles for holding onto. These are all very, very legitimate concerns. Given that there is no bus service in the Aveley area, and no direct bus service from Ellenbrook to Midland, it would be good if at least the existing buses were more user-friendly, particularly for elderly people, of whom there is very significant number living in Ellenbrook and the surrounding suburbs.

Question put and passed.

Progress reported, pursuant to temporary orders.