

**“PUBLIC TRANSPORT FOR PERTH IN 2031”**

*Motion*

Resumed from 18 May on the following motion moved by Hon Ken Travers —

- (1) That the Council note that —
  - (a) the Liberal–National government released in July 2011 a “Draft for Consultation” of their plan “Public Transport for Perth in 2031”;
  - (b) the draft plan proposed two transformational projects by 2020 —
    - (i) the fast-tracking of the northern suburbs railway extension to Yanchep; and
    - (ii) construction of a central northern corridor/Curtin/UWA light rail;
  - (c) the draft plan identified that the following infrastructure was required in the next five to 10 years —
    - (i) a new rail station at Karnup (near Paganoni Road); and
    - (ii) upgrades to Canning Bridge and Stirling Stations;
  - (d) the draft plan proposed a number of on-road bus rapid transit projects be built by 2020, commencing with a bus rapid transit system between Ellenbrook and Bassendean and across to Morley.
- (2) That the Council calls on the government to —
  - (a) explain why it has taken two years to release the final version of this plan;
  - (b) outline whether it is still committed to the projects and the time lines outlined in the draft plan; and
  - (c) provide detailed reasons, including passenger modelling, for any changes it has made to priority projects or their timing.

**HON SIMON O'BRIEN (South Metropolitan)** [1.11 pm]: I quite enjoyed myself when I was speaking about this motion on Wednesday, 18 May. I want to hear what Hon Ken Travers has to say in response, so I do not intend to talk for very much longer today, and I assume no other members will speak.

Is it not funny how things move along in politics? When I last spoke on 18 May, I was critical of politics in general, not only in this state, but elsewhere, in relation to transport policy. In a nutshell, my main criticism was that it was all about politics rather than about planning. I gave some examples of people thinking that they have to promise a railway everywhere because people like railways, so “Let’s promise them a railway”, but without regard in many cases to any form of planning and sometimes with nothing more than a base desire to curry favour in a particular seat. My view, which I expressed at that time, was that what this state has needed for a very long time is a long-term plan that can be embraced generally in its thrust by both sides of politics. Given the time it takes to develop particularly large infrastructure projects, it is sometimes necessary for successive governments to build on work that has already been done, otherwise the job does not get finished. We know of plenty of examples in which, at the time of a change of government, the incoming government enjoys opening things that the previous government has substantially built. I spoke about that phenomenon on a number of occasions in the past. That is what has to happen and it does happen because, by and large, our departmental officers keep our state running on a day-to-day basis. That is why we have some of the massive developments that we have in not only transport infrastructure, but also other infrastructure such as hospitals, schools and so on. All sorts of plans are held by a whole range of building agencies to meet the needs of the future as best as they can be predicted, whether it is plotting where and how many primary schools will be needed in a particular region in the future or where the main roads will have to be in the near future. Sure, in the short term these plans can often be disrupted by temporary developments. Sudden expansion in the mining sector and an influx of residents into Western Australia can throw out all sorts of plans about how many schools we have programmed for, how many services hospitals can provide and how much traffic roads can bear and all that sort of thing. However, by and large, we are well served in this state, and always have been, by those who are running the place in a hands-on way. I think we need to recognise that.

Not least amongst these are our public transport planners. Sometimes we wish people would come on board with our ideas a bit sooner than they do. Sometimes it takes a while to plant seeds, and then we have to wait until people think, “Well, this is my idea.” I have given some examples of that in the past when initial ideas have been met with all the reasons that they cannot do what we are suggesting they do, and then, lo and behold, it is very satisfying years later—in some cases only months later—when we see things happen. I am sure it was pure coincidence that I called for proper merging lanes where lanes terminate and for arrows to be painted on

freeways so that everyone knows that they have to change lanes and two lanes become one. Even though I was slapped down by some experts at the time—I think it might have been as recently as this year —

**Hon Ken Travers:** I supported you.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** Hon Ken Travers did. I think we both appeared on 6PR and other media outlets.

**Hon Ken Travers:** One of its highest rating shows, I believe!

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** I will tell the member what; have a look at Kwinana Freeway around Canning Bridge, for example, and the improvements there due to adopting that approach, which I am sure was completely coincidental to have been raised in here. Anyway, sometimes we get these —

**Hon Ken Travers:** Are you suggesting that you had a deal with the minister before you announced it?

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** No; I am not suggesting that. The member's—I would not say paranoia—over-familiarity with the dark arts of the Labor caucus room should not be allowed to intrude any more on my speech!

**Hon Ken Travers:** They didn't accept my idea, so I thought you might have inside running on your idea.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** A measure of bipartisanship has been achieved and that brings us back to the motion and what I would like to see happen.

By and large, we have bipartisan agreement on plans for future accommodation of primary school students across the length and breadth of Western Australia, allowing for all the demographics in different areas, but for some reason we do not have bipartisanship on public transport. That is where there needs to be a change of thinking. As I said in my remarks on 18 May, people need to be able to come out with long-term public transport plans, put them on the table and say, "Here's what a range of experts, acting as a panel, have put to us as a potential plan for the future. Now, stakeholders on all sides, what do we think about that? What do we think about this plan that contemplates the changed demographics for the future population increase, where the transport tasks exist, how many people have to go from where to where at what time and so on? How much money will it cost and where might those funds be sourced? How long will it take to go through the very necessary environmental and other approvals processes that have to be embarked upon before we can say yes, this is a worthwhile investment for the future so that we can have some continuity?" I tell members that the time that is required is a darn sight more than the several weeks of an election campaign. That is what disrupts things, and I have seen both sides get up to this over many years. As I indicated last month, it is time that, frankly, the whole scene and everyone involved in it grew up a little bit so that we do not have a situation in which anyone proposing a plan and seeking feedback is automatically attacked, and there is a kneejerk reaction saying do not do that, when it has been devised in accordance with a plan that has been developed by non-political experts. They say, "No, you don't want to do that; you want to do something completely different." That is not going to serve the public transport needs of Western Australia either. When time ran out on me on Wednesday, 18 May, I was offering some encouragement to the current minister, who happens to be Hon Dean Nalder, who has some imagination, but I offer it to whomever might be the Minister for Transport at the material time.

**Hon Ken Travers:** If Jim has his way, it will be me!

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** I do not know who it will be in times to come—none of us do, but we know there will be someone there. There might be a massive influx politically into the shooters, fishers, farmers and golfers party! The Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party in this place has increased by 100 per cent in recent times and it could keep increasing at that rate! Whether it is Hon Ken Travers or whomever it might be, they need to have an environment that enables a sensible dialogue. Yes, there will be politicking about the fine-tuning of timetables and priorities at election times, which is fair enough, but it is legitimate to develop a plan that looks long-term at future needs, understanding that that will need to be not only fine-tuned but also perhaps substantially altered to meet the needs of the time as years and decades go by. When that plan is altered in response to the evolving needs of the public transport community in Western Australia that does not mean it is a weakness, a backflip, a backdown, a broken promise or something like that. I would like to see that happen.

Rumours put around by the media in recent days are that a proposed long-term plan will be tabled at some stage in the future. I hope so, and I hope it is received in a constructive way. So far, there have been kneejerk reactions, predictably, but let us hope the commentators can get past that stage so that we can work together a bit more cohesively in the manner that I have described to provide some benefits to Western Australians well into the future—benefits that are not going to impose unrealistic sudden imposts on the public purse, plans that can have a robust ruler laid across them to see whether they measure up and, dare I say it, a prospect that major parties can agree on some of these things instead of using them as a vehicle to disagree. That is not saying that any opposition of the day, including the current opposition, cannot and should not give

a robust critique of this government or any government of the day when it sees it is failing or has handled things in a way that perhaps, in its view, might have been done differently and better. That is the role of opposition, but we need to get away from all the froth and bubble of politics at least, insofar as we endorse plans and visions for the future that the vast bulk of Western Australians can all associate with and support.

In closing—it is confession time—I have been around long enough to have played some of the games that I am now speaking against. I think everyone else in this chamber—I am not reflecting on the Chair, of course, but most other members in this place—has done much the same from time to time. There is a time and a place for that, but I have learnt from observation of this particular policy area that there is a better way for us all to go about it while reserving the right to debate matters.

**Hon Ken Travers:** You are starting to sound like a future father of the house!

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** I am sorry, I had to pause there because I am touched that the honourable member interjecting should so publicly express his desire that I hang around indefinitely. I promise him and I give him this undertaking now: I will see whether I can make his dream come true; but I would like him to also join me and see whether he can make my dream come true, which is to have a bit more constructive debate about how we review matters of policy in this place.

Having said that, I did say I wanted to give the honourable member the chance to respond and shoot me down on his motion, I hope I have conveyed something that is of some use to members in their future considerations.

**HON KEN TRAVERS (North Metropolitan)** [1.27 pm] — in reply: Can I say to Hon Simon O'Brien that I was wondering whether he had misled the house at the beginning of his comments when he said that he would allow me time to respond, and that they would be short.

I want to make a couple of comments and I appreciate the opportunity to respond. If Hon Simon O'Brien reads the motion I moved in this house, he will see that it did not condemn the government for its public transport plan. In fact, I argued in support of the railway line to Yanchep, saying that I completely agreed with everything in the government's 2012 submission to Infrastructure Australia about why that project should be seen as a transformational project and brought on and delivered before 2020. I was agreeing with the government. My motion asks for an explanation from the government for why it had not proceeded with that project as it outlined. Disappointingly, we did not get that response from the parliamentary secretary. We did not get an explanation from the government about why it had not proceeded in the original time frame. I pointed out that even in February 2014 the then Minister for Transport approved getting on with that railway line and building it by 2023, yet today we still do not have an answer from the minister or his representative in this house about why that project has not occurred and what has changed. In my view, that project would have greater benefits than any other single project. That was this government's view and it is my view, so why has it not happened?

I agree with Hon Simon O'Brien on the need for bipartisanship. Although I welcome the one positive comment made by Hon Jim Chown, which is that I should be the Minister for Transport, I do not want to disappoint him, but I do not expect to be. But I do appreciate his kind thoughts. I also appreciate Hon Simon O'Brien's honesty about having to secretly set up a public transport plan for Perth to look at the long-term issues.

**Hon Simon O'Brien:** That was a poor choice of words.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** They were Hon Simon O'Brien's words, though.

**Hon Simon O'Brien:** I know; it was a poor choice of words.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** I understood what Hon Simon O'Brien said. To get what he wanted, he had to go out and get a case. Even though it was part of his government's policy, he had to go out there and get up a case within cabinet to deliver on a policy with long-term plans. The 2011 plan was delivered by Hon Simon O'Brien's government, but in the end it has not been delivered by this government. Now we have been told that we will get another plan in a couple of weeks or some time after we break. In the interests of bipartisanship, I hope that that plan will finally identify the extension of the railway line to Yanchep as a priority. I am disappointed that, subsequently, we still have not had from the government an explanation for why it has dropped its light rail plan. We found out yesterday that MAX is dead! The Barnett government did what Kaos could not do—it killed Max! Interestingly, I noted that it also changed the number for the 99 bus. The only question left is: when will the chief go? I say to the people of Western Australia, "Get smart; vote Labor". That is the message that has come from this debate over the past couple of days.

To finish off the debate on a positive bipartisanship note, I am looking forward to the public transport plan. I am a believer in transport and public transport as part of the solution. I will look at that plan, as Hon Simon O'Brien has asked us to do, with open eyes. But I make this point, and I hope Hon Simon O'Brien agrees with me: the only way to do that is to have a government that is prepared to be open and accountable about how it has developed that plan. For example, when we tried to get the modelling that underpins the 2011 draft plan, we

were referred to a couple of poor maps in the middle of the plan that showed the projected demand. If the government does that and does not provide the underlying data, it will fail to sell its plan and it will fail to have the opposition look at it with an open mind. When the government releases its transport plan for Perth in a month's time, attached to it in an open and accountable way should be an explanation about where the government sees the jobs of the future. At the moment we are a very single-centric city, with the majority of the jobs in the CBD. Metronet is built around a plan to develop jobs in the metropolitan hubs such as Murdoch, Joondalup, Rockingham and Perth Airport, and will connect those places. If we want a proper analysis of the government's plan, we need to know where the government believes the jobs underpinning that plan will be in the future. To where will people travel to work? Where does the government expect the population to be? We all talk about infill, and the one thing about a transport plan is that it has to be linked with a land-use plan; we cannot have one without the other. We need a clear plan, which is why light rail is so important; light rail is a stimulator of land-use changes. That is why light rail is so important in the regional plan; it will stimulate those changes. The debate is about whether it was the right route or whether there is a better solution. We need to hear from the government a clear explanation of where the jobs will be. The government and the City of Joondalup have rezoned massive swathes of land in Joondalup to R30, which will provide battleaxe block development.

Last week during the Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations hearings, the head of the Western Australian Planning Commission said that it is very poor infill development. We need a plan that sits alongside that clearly says that we want high density in certain areas, mainly in the CBD, I would imagine; medium density; increased density; and a link to the public transport plan. Where will the people of the future live? Unless the government can tell us that as part of its transport plan, it will fail to bring in a plan that is accountable and able to withstand rigour. If the government wants bipartisanship, it needs to make sure that it tells us where the jobs will be and where people will be living. Arising from that, where will the demand for transport be? What will be the connections? Will people of the northern suburbs be travelling far down into the southern suburbs, as is currently the case, or will they be working locally?

As I said last week when I opened this debate, one of the benefits of extending the railway line to Yanchep that the government identified was that it would help create local jobs. In fact, one of its greatest benefits is that it will create local jobs in that northern corridor. Instead of hundreds of people travelling out of it, they will stay and work locally, which is why the extension to Yanchep and doing it early were so important. Doing it ahead of the 2025 date on which it would have been done otherwise was crucial, yet we received no explanation from the parliamentary secretary for why that has not been the case. We need to know where the demand will be and the mode share that we can expect to deliver that. Will it be people in a car on their own, people using buses and trains or people engaging in active transport? The best possible health and transport outcome is people walking or cycling to their jobs. That is the answer, Hon Simon O'Brien. I hope that we get a start by getting an explanation from the government of why it has not proceeded. Unfortunately, we have not had an explanation. I hope the new plan delivers it.

*Visitors — Nedlands Primary School*

**THE DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon Adele Farina):** Members, that brings us to the conclusion of consideration of this motion. I take this opportunity to welcome students from Nedlands Primary School to the chamber and to the Parliament of Western Australia. I hope you find your visit informative and interesting. I will now put the motion.

*Division*

Question put and a division taken, the Deputy President casting her vote with the ayes, with the following result —

Ayes (9)

Hon Alanna Clohesy	Hon Lynn MacLaren	Hon Ken Travers
Hon Sue Ellery	Hon Martin Pritchard	Hon Darren West
Hon Adele Farina	Hon Amber-Jade Sanderson	Hon Samantha Rowe ( <i>Teller</i> )

Noes (18)

Hon Ken Baston	Hon Peter Collier	Hon Col Holt	Hon Helen Morton
Hon Liz Behjat	Hon Brian Ellis	Hon Peter Katsambanis	Hon Simon O'Brien
Hon Jacqui Boydell	Hon Nick Goiran	Hon Mark Lewis	Hon Phil Edman ( <i>Teller</i> )
Hon Paul Brown	Hon Dave Grills	Hon Rick Mazza	
Hon Jim Chown	Hon Alyssa Hayden	Hon Michael Mischin	

Pairs

Hon Stephen Dawson  
Hon Sally Talbot  
Hon Robin Chapple  
Hon Kate Doust

Hon Nigel Hallett  
Hon Robyn McSweeney  
Hon Donna Faragher  
Hon Martin Aldridge

Question thus negatived.