

## COCKBURN CENTRAL TRAIN STATION — PARKING AND TRAFFIC CONGESTION

### *Grievance*

**MR J.M. FRANCIS (Jandakot)** [9.27 am]: My grievance is to the Minister for Transport and is along similar lines to the matters I spoke about in Parliament just yesterday afternoon. Firstly, minister, I will touch on the issue of parking at Cockburn train station. When we won government in 2008, we inherited an absolute dog's breakfast when it came to parking at train stations. There were just not enough bays planned by the previous government and people could not park at the station.

**Dr A.D. Buti** interjected.

**Mr J.M. FRANCIS:** This is not the member's grievance; does he mind?

**The SPEAKER:** Grievances give members an opportunity in this place to make a grievance in whichever fashion he or she determines. Member for Armadale, I formally call you to order for the first time, and there will be no more interjections.

**Mr J.M. FRANCIS:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. In 2009, this government constructed 210 new bays as part of the stage 1 expansion at Cockburn train station, as well as temporarily leasing another 144 bays. I know the minister knows this area very well because he was down there a few weeks ago with me looking at exactly this problem. As an unintended consequence of fixing this problem, traffic congestion has increased at peak hours at the intersection of Knock Place and Solomon Road, which commuters use to access Cockburn train station parking. Congestion at the intersection of Solomon Road and Armadale Road is becoming a massive issue as well. I thank the minister for the recently started construction of a new parking bay at the westernmost end of Knock Place on the site of what is known as the old chicken farm. Unfortunately, there were delays in proceeding with that, one being that that chicken farm was built out of fibro, and it took some time to pull it down in accordance with the regulations for handling asbestos.

I am also a little concerned that the City of Cockburn may be putting the brakes on the process of alleviating the problem. I would not suggest that it has an interest in continually fining the residents of my electorate who use the car park, but it is of particular note that there seems to be some reluctance in assisting with this matter because of the traffic in and out of Knock Place, as I mentioned.

One of the reasons Cockburn station is so busy with people looking for car parking is that it is the southernmost railway station on the Mandurah line, until Kwinana. The geographical collection area for Cockburn station is just absolutely massive—people come from 10 or 20 kilometres away. I know the department has done numberplate sampling, I think it is called, and looked at a selection of numberplates at the car park so it can work out how far people have come to park; I am sure there is also an issue of people parking at the station having come only a very short distance. I have mentioned this issue countless times in this place, and I would very much appreciate some further information on how the government is addressing this issue in the short and long term.

The other issue I seek input from the minister on is the traffic in that area. In the 1990s, there was an idea to build a road across the Kwinana Freeway—North Lake Road, basically—which would pass just north of where Armadale Road currently cuts the Kwinana Freeway in two east–west, but to the north of it on the northern side of the Cockburn train station. With the rapid growth in Atwell, Aubin Grove and Success, plus the commercial development at Cockburn Central, the necessity for this road has probably arisen a decade earlier than first anticipated. The problem with traffic going east and west along Armadale Road and north onto Berrigan Drive has created a massive issue with traffic even along Jandakot Road to the north of Armadale Road in my electorate as well, especially around peak hour because of traffic getting in and out of Cockburn Gateway shopping centre. A lot of that traffic would be just on its way east and west from North Lake Road through to Armadale Road. I think the most sensible solution—I am sure there are smarter people who are better at this than I am—would be to build the North Lake Road flyover sooner rather than later, to allow cars to avoid that intersection around Cockburn Central and Cockburn Gateway. I suggest that building the North Lake Road flyover would be the biggest single project that would have the greatest impact in relieving traffic congestion around Cockburn train station.

As I have mentioned, Cockburn is the southernmost train station on the Mandurah line before Kwinana, and it draws from a huge geographic footprint, which is why I flag that the government should probably give consideration to building another train station to the south of Cockburn—around Success or Rowley Road somewhere—to alleviate the massive traffic and parking problems around Cockburn train station. I note that the Treasurer was paying attention when I mentioned that!

Basically, minister, population growth is absolutely booming on both sides of the freeway down south. The population of Aubin Grove, alone, has increased from 300 people to almost 3 000 in only three years; on the

western side of the freeway—in the member for Cockburn’s electorate—Success–Hammond Park is also booming. These areas, by the very nature of their population, require additional transport infrastructure. I thank the minister for all the work he has done so far, and I ask the government to consider the feasibility of bringing forward some of these projects for the people of Jandakot and Cockburn.

**MR T.R. BUSWELL (Vasse — Minister for Transport)** [9.35 am]: I thank the member for Jandakot for his grievance and his comments. He is right; we were out there a few weeks ago, and I had an opportunity to look around the suburbs and the intersections the member mentioned. He is right; Atwell and Aubin Grove on the east of the freeway and Success and Hammond Park on the west, which is where we visited, are subject to tremendous growth at the moment. That growth is putting a lot of strain on transport and other infrastructure. We saw the new school that is under construction in that area, which is perhaps an indication of growth.

I will deal with the issues the member has raised. As the member rightly pointed out, we have invested a lot of money in parking. There are now 3 000 bays up and down the Mandurah railway line that were not there when we came to government. As the member indicated, work is now underway on another 470 bays located in the old chicken farm area. I have not seen what happens at the end of Knock Place in the afternoon; when we were there we discussed that people generally trickle in in the morning, but in the afternoon people are trying to get out of there in a short period. I accept what the member said when he said that it is a bit of a shemuzzle—to put it bluntly—as people try to turn right out of Knock Place onto Solomon Road, and then are held up at Armadale Road. It is true that one of the development approval conditions for the extra parking bays was that the Public Transport Authority had to provide a satisfactory traffic management plan to the City of Cockburn. The PTA employed a consultant to develop that traffic management plan and it considered a number of options. The preferred option was, as I think we discussed previously, to basically force all the vehicles out of Knock Place to turn left, then to put in a roundabout at Avior Avenue, and then people work their way around onto Tapper Road and access Armadale Road from Tapper Road, where there is a set of traffic lights. It would be fair to say that that is not the preferred position of the City of Cockburn, so it is subject to ongoing discussion.

My understanding is that Main Roads Western Australia, in a spirit of cooperation, has agreed to co-fund, with the City of Cockburn, another traffic study. I am hopeful that the traffic study will provide an outcome satisfactory to government and the City of Cockburn. I would hate to think, member, that the City of Cockburn would delay the opening of these car park bays because it is unable to resolve issues around access through Knock Place; I think that would be doing an incredible disservice to the member’s constituents, including that lady we spoke to when we were at the car park who waits at the train station for someone to get off the train and follows them to their car so that she can get their parking spot.

**Mr J.M. Francis:** I would even suggest that if I parked at that train station—this is why the current situation is not ideal—I would prefer to have somewhere to park and sit in a queue for 15 minutes and get out later than get a \$100 fine.

**Mr T.R. BUSWELL:** That is right. That work is in progress, and I am hopeful that the City of Cockburn and Main Roads can come up with a solution that will deal with the Knock Place local traffic issues.

As the member pointed out, in the long run the very best solution would be the continuation of North Lake Road, which would cross the freeway to the north of Knock Place, and cars exiting onto Solomon Road could then, effectively, turn left, travel to the north, and access North Lake Road with a whole range of alternative options. Of course, the extension of North Lake Road and its passage over the freeway would also do a lot, as the member has rightly pointed out, to deal with that incredibly complicated intersection of Armadale Road, Kwinana Freeway and Beeliar Drive, which is complicated by the massive growth in people using that intersection and by the popularity of the Cockburn Central shopping centre, which is a massive shopping centre. In relation to that, Main Roads is now formally conducting an options analysis. I think I showed the member some of those options, and I understand that, if it has not already, Main Roads will be briefing the member on that shortly.

I think that simply building a flyover at North Lake Road is not going to deliver the best outcome. There is an opportunity to provide people with access to and exit from the freeway as part of that construction. If that is possible, it conceivably could take some significant pressure off that existing intersection. In other words, I am not sure that there can be full access from the north and the south, but I imagine it may look something like the Farrington Road intersection, which means people can exit off the freeway south and enter the freeway north. I think, with the connectivity through to Beeliar, it is just too close. However, they will work through that. That is certainly one of the options they are looking at. Main Roads will finish those options and we can then have a look at the costings and how it can be funded. Thanks to the efforts of the member for Jandakot, that work has now been brought forward. As he pointed out, that work was not on the horizon a couple of years ago but, for all

those reasons, it is now clearly an issue that we have to deal with, and we will deal with it. But it is important we do that planning first.

Main Roads' engagement with the City of Cockburn will hopefully deal with the localised traffic issues at Knock Place, and the work that we will be doing around North Lake Road will ultimately lead to an investment that will significantly improve it. I note the member's comments about the railway station, and that is clearly something that will have to be examined.

Another issue, in the short term, is the potential to construct the bus underpass to help service Cockburn Central. There are currently 10 bus routes, as I understand it, that could use that bus underpass to get into Cockburn Central. The other complicating factor is the significant amount of other commercial activity, including the new Fire and Emergency Services Authority house, and other residential activity —

**Ms M.M. Quirk:** Inadequate parking.

**Mr T.R. BUSWELL:** It is right on a train station, member.

**Ms M.M. Quirk** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Girrawheen!

**Mr T.R. BUSWELL:** With all the extra residential activity going on out there, it is critical that this happen, so I appreciate the member for Jandakot raising this issue. I think we are well on the way to getting the parking bays in and doing the planning we need to fix that intersection, which will involve upgrades at the North Lake Road interchange.