

BUNBURY WATERFRONT DEVELOPMENT — IMPACT ON FAST TRAIN SERVICE

397. Hon ADELE FARINA to the Minister for Transport:

I refer to the Perth–Bunbury fast train feasibility study, which was completed in January 2010.

Does the minister support the government's proposed Bunbury waterfront development, which, if it proceeds, will cut off the least-cost option of getting a passenger train service into the Bunbury CBD due to the proposed Koombana North development?

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN replied:

I thank the honourable member for her question and for her interest in this matter.

The government is yet to finalise its position on the waterfront. That process is under the very capable stewardship of the Minister for Planning, Hon John Day, MLA, and the member may wish to direct further inquiry to him. My understanding of the issue is just the same as the one that the member proposed in her question; that is, if there were to be a future fast train service to what we might call the centre or the CBD of Bunbury, it would be imperative to set aside land provision now so that that is available in the future, because these things are highly problematic to retrofit perhaps many years or decades down the track—no pun intended.

In respect of the Bunbury feasibility study—a great deal of work has been done, as the member would be aware—two specific options are put forward. One is whether a future line might be terminated at a large Park 'n' Ride interchange facility in the Eaton area, in the north-east quadrant of the main built-up area of Bunbury, or whether, in addition to that—not instead of it but in addition to it—the railway should then proceed along the waterfront ultimately to what most of us would recognise as a far more central Bunbury position. I cannot help but think that whatever happens, as the Minister for Transport, I would like to see options available to explore that prospect into the future so that it remains an option, if not for the near future and our generation—it remains to be seen whether that is likely—but for other generations that might follow. They might judge us harshly if we were to take the view that a train service from Perth to Bunbury just meant a service from Perth to Eaton. With that in mind, I have certainly put it forward for government consideration. As I said, this is a matter for deliberation, consultation and consideration at this time under the Minister for Planning's management. I am encouraged that we might be able to find a solution that meets all needs in the advice that has been provided to me by Mr Peter Martinovich from the Public Transport Authority, who is known to most of us, I think. He has done some great work with railways and is a fearless, frank source of advice about these matters. It comes down to a question of what size reservation we would need to build into the region scheme to ensure that our options are covered for the future. He encourages me with the advice that he has given to me. I would be delighted to arrange a briefing on it for the member and any of her colleagues if they would like. In fact, we do not necessarily need the traditional full-width, heavy rail, dual-track corridor complete with a wide easement, a big pile of ballast, a couple of tracks and the rest of it; we might be able to achieve the outcome that is desired with a single track at road level that would be much less intrusive. Obviously, it would not be for a high speed at that point if it were to mix in with the rest of the waterfront activity. That gives me some confidence that the options can be preserved. I think that is the sort of answer the member is looking for, because there is no definitive answer at this stage. If the member wishes to take it up with me, I would be more than pleased to arrange for a briefing for her on the position of the feasibility study.