

**MITCHELL FREEWAY — WIDENING**

*Grievance*

**MRS J.M.C. STOJKOVSKI (Kingsley)** [9.33 am]: My grievance today is to the Minister for Transport. I would firstly like to thank and congratulate the minister on the recent announcement of the Mitchell Freeway widening between Hodges Drive and Hepburn Avenue. As the minister is aware, I have advocated for this project since being elected as the member for Kingsley in March 2017. In fact, if my memory serves me correctly, it was the subject of the very first meeting I had with the minister's office and it has been discussed at a number of meetings with the minister and her office since. The residents in my electorate and in the other northern suburbs electorates of Joondalup, Burns Beach and Wanneroo are very excited by and happy with the prospect of the widening of the freeway southbound between Hodges Drive and Hepburn Avenue. They know that this project will have a positive impact on their commute times and give them an extra 40 minutes a week at home with their families. As a mum with young kids who lives in Woodvale and takes the journey down the freeway every week, like so many people in my electorate, I live the juggle. The extra time that this project will deliver will have an enormous impact on me and my community.

Again, I thank the minister and the Premier for listening to the concerns of not only my residents, but also others in the northern suburbs in announcing this much-needed additional lane to the freeway. This will not only alleviate congestion, travel time and accidents on this section of the freeway, but also create over 500 jobs. Although this congestion-busting project is welcomed by my community, some residents who live in close proximity to Mitchell Freeway are concerned. Over the years, as the population has increased further north, so too has the traffic, and train services have also increased to meet the demands of a growing population. This has meant that many of my Kingsley residents who live adjacent to Mitchell Freeway have had to live with the increase in traffic noise. It is not only noise pollution that is a problem, but also visual pollution. Some residents who live in a section of Greenwood along Buchanan Way have to look at the traffic and trains from inside their homes. In fact, I know that people travelling on the train can look right inside some of the residents' front windows. I am sure the minister will agree with me that this is not an ideal situation for people to be living with on a day in, day out basis.

My residents feel frustrated. They feel let down by the previous Liberal government and the former member on this issue. Unlike many major freeways and roads across Perth, the section of freeway adjacent to my electorate predominantly does not have sound walls. As members know, a sound wall acts as an important barrier between the residents and the noise and visual pollution created by the freeway traffic. It is my view, and indeed that of many local residents, that the construction of a sound wall along this section of Mitchell Freeway is long overdue. This issue has been the subject of a number of grievances and petitions pre-dating my time in this place back to 2011. Unfortunately for my residents, the former Liberal Minister for Transport, Dean Nalder, was not sympathetic to their concerns or pleas. Even though the former member for Kingsley assured the residents in 2015 that her message to key ministers was being noticed, it appears that either through neglect or arrogance my community was taken for granted. It was not heard and the amenity walls were not delivered. In fact, I believe that under the former Liberal government, the retrofitting of noise amenity walls was made even harder because it brought in a policy to link construction of those noise amenity walls to roadworks. That policy effectively left my residents stranded because the noise amenity walls had not been constructed previously in conjunction with roadworks or with the clearing of trees to accommodate additional car parking at the train stations.

Although there is a native vegetation barrier along much of the freeway reserve, residents have told me that it has been getting thinner and thinner over the years, resulting in adverse sound and visual impacts on them. In 2019, our government was required to erect a visual messaging board along the Greenwood stretch of Mitchell Freeway because of a contract entered into by the previous government. This required even more trees to be cut down, further reducing the already depleted native vegetation barrier. I have had many meetings with Kingsley residents who are concerned about the noise and visual impacts of living near the freeway. In many other aspects, those residents love where they live and enjoy the many benefits of living in the Kingsley electorate and being part of the wonderful community we have. For them, a noise wall is a much-needed amenity that will have a very positive impact on their lives. I have previously presented a petition signed by residents to respectfully request that the government build a sound wall along the Kingsley section of the freeway and I have continued to advocate on behalf of the Greenwood, Woodvale and Kingsley residents to ask that the appropriate noise amenity walls be built.

I believe a number of objectives from "State Planning Policy: 5.4 Road and Rail Noise", which came into effect in September this year, are relevant in this case. Some of the policy objectives are as follows —

- (a) protect the community from unreasonable levels of transport noise;
- ...
- c) ensure transport infrastructure and land-use can mutually exist within urban corridors;

- d) ensure that noise impacts are addressed as early as possible in the planning process; and
- e) encourage best practice noise mitigation design and construction standards.

I am hopeful that during the scoping of the Mitchell Freeway widening project, consideration will be given to the detrimental impact of traffic on residents adjacent to the freeway between Hodges Drive and Hepburn Avenue and just south of Hepburn Avenue, adjacent to Buchanan Way.

Minister, please listen to the concerns of my residents. I believe that a sound wall should be included in the Mitchell Freeway widening project, in conjunction with the widening roadworks, to provide peace of mind and to improve the quality of lifestyle for my community.

**MS R. SAFFIOTI (West Swan — Minister for Transport)** [9.40 am]: I thank the member for Kingsley for that grievance. She has raised this and some other amenity issues with me on a number of occasions on behalf of her residents.

**Mr A. Krsticevic** interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Member for Carine, I will call you to order if you persist.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** I will start again. The member for Kingsley has raised this issue with me a number of times, particularly some amenity issues faced by the local residents. I am happy that she has been advocating strongly for her community on that issue and on the wider issue of road improvements to Mitchell Freeway.

I will talk a bit about the Mitchell Freeway works that the government has committed to and then more specifically about the sound wall and some other issues we are looking at as part of the scope of the project. As the member is aware and has raised with me a number of times, the Mitchell Freeway southbound widening between Hodges Drive and Hepburn Avenue was a massive priority for her community. Given how the network is operating, we are addressing many of the congestion hotspots across both Kwinana and Mitchell Freeways. Down south, a lot of work is underway in the area of Russell Road to Roe Highway, which has been a major congestion point for a number of years. Closer to the city, the Kwinana Freeway smart freeway project is also underway. A number of road widenings and improvements are occurring along Mitchell Freeway in the northern suburbs. We were very keen to address one of the congestion hotspots from Hodges Drive to Hepburn Avenue, knowing that the residents in that local area and further north were experiencing significant delays.

Last week, the projects we announced included an additional lane southbound on Mitchell Freeway between Hodges Drive and Hepburn Avenue, a distance of about 8.8 kilometres; the duplication of entry lanes at Hodges Drive, Ocean Reef Road and Hepburn Avenue, and a third entry lane at Whitfords; replacement of the existing wire-rope barrier with concrete safety barriers to separate the freeway and the rail reserve, which is a very important safety initiative, particularly for the rail operations; construction of a three-metre-wide emergency breakdown lane, as well as emergency stopping bays at strategic locations; and realignment of the principal shared path adjacent to the Hodges Drive on-ramp. Substandard and missing link portions of the PSP will be upgraded, totalling 3.7 kilometres. A new PSP will be constructed along four sections of missing links of 2.2 kilometres, and three sections of 1.5 kilometres requiring upgrades to the shared path will also be included. As the member can see, it is a significant amount of work that will increase the freeway capacity and improve safety and productivity for industry and commuters. The freeway widening will bring much-needed congestion relief for thousands of northern suburbs commuters, especially during morning peak time, when there is an average of over 15 000 vehicles.

As I said, the widening of Mitchell Freeway southbound between Hodges Drive and Hepburn Avenue will provide a third continuous traffic lane over 8.8 kilometres. It is a jointly funded program, with 50 per cent from the state government and 50 per cent from the federal government. We expect works to be underway either late next year or early 2021. Mitchell Freeway between Hodges Drive and Hepburn Avenue has recorded 560 crashes, which is a significant number.

As a result of her advocacy and the issues the member has raised about the area south of the proposed works, I have asked Main Roads to look at including that work as part of the project and at what else can be done about the PSP in that area. We will be looking at the principal shared path and other noise mitigation issues. I note also that a number of schools are in the adjacent area, so it is important that we look at how we can better link those schools through cycling access.

The member referred to local government controlling some areas into which works may need to encroach. I am working with the local government to see how we can potentially do some of this work while minimising the loss of vegetation. That is a balance we need to strike, particularly in that area. As the member said, some vegetation has been removed for advertising. However, more generally, noise walls and PSPs have an impact on vegetation along the road reserve. As part of the scope, we will look at what can be done to minimise vegetation

loss. I think we can do that by working with local government to see whether it can potentially give up some of its reserves.

I thank the member for her grievance. I have asked the agency to look at scoping, including this as part of the contract, and to see whether it is affordable and doable without too significant an impact on vegetation and the local community and making sure it is a positive for the local community.