

Hon Matthew Swinbourn MLC
Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs
Legislative Council Committee Office
18-32 Parliament Place
West Perth 6005

Dear Mr Swinbourn,

RE Petition No.163 – Midland Railway Workshops

This petition is singularly the most important issue in Perth in general and in Midland in particular.

The Midland Railway Workshops were Western Australia's working engine room and the biggest single employer in the entire state. Even after 26 years since closure, thousands of people in Western Australia have fond memories of the Workshops.

Mr Swinbourn please do not just take my word for it. I invite you to just ask anyone on the street where you live or ask your friends and networks and someone will say they had family or friends who worked at this great manufacturing site. I understand amongst others, current and former WA Labor Members of Parliament including the former Premier of Western Australia Dr Geoff Gallop's uncle worked at the workshops.

Midland's very own local Member, The Honourable Michelle Roberts MLA has staff who have direct links to the workshops. Yet most disappointingly, I am greeted by this office in particular by a brick wall of silence when I enquire into obtaining support for this issue. It is also worth noting Mr Barry Watts former Australian Railway Union convenor hand delivered a letter to the Member for Midland regards the workshops.

I would like to recount to the Committee a short personal story regards my efforts to raise the profile of the workshops.

On Labor Day 2019 on the 25th Anniversary of the closure of the Workshops the negative tone was set. On attending a small commemoration, I and my workshop comrades were denied access to the workshops. Why? Nobody can tell me.

I requested Dr Butti MLA send an email to Hon Michelle Roberts MLA Member for Midland asking for permission to hold a flagpole meeting as part of the Workshops Union History and on attending we were simply locked out.

Not bad for a Labor Party on Labour Day you might say.

On 5 March 2019 Hon Dr Tony Butti kindly wrote to Transport Minister Saffioti regarding a Museum. When the reply came there was amongst the jargon saying that the redevelopment does NOT include plans for a dedicated Rail Heritage Centre.

On April 8 2019 I sent an email to Hon Ben Wyatt MLA who forwarded it to the Tourism Minister. The Hon Paul Papalia MLA stated in his reply that it had a great tourism opportunity and supports the concept. He then forwarded the email to the Hon David Templeman MLA for comment.

Sometime later I thought I was on the right track when I was invited to a meeting with Mr Julian Hilton Chief of staff to The Minister who stated they support the workshop museum concept.

During this meeting Mr Hilton promised Minister Templeman would lobby Minister Saffioti and the Premier. At this meeting he also promised to give feedback and update me. Unfortunately, in over twelve months I heard nothing.

When I took it upon myself to contact Minister Templeman's office, they referred me to contact Development WA and the City of Swan. Once again this was a very disappointing experience with leading government cabinet Ministers.

Mr Barry Watts then contacted Ms Cecelia Smith, Principal Policy Adviser for Hon Ben Wyatt MLA and agreed for a meeting in the New Year. When I followed this up in the New Year The Minister's office denied any mention of a meeting and even Hon Michelle Roberts MLA stated she hasn't heard anything or seen anybody regards my efforts with the Workshops.

It is worth noting the Member for Dawsville Mr Zak Kirkup MLA is in possession of these email chains and Opposition Leader Ms Liza Harvey was handed documents at the crime rally in Mandurah.

Mr Swinbourn I hope this submission shows a clear picture how I have been pushed from pillar to Post. Even Emails have been sent to the Premier with just an automated reply. I could go on for ever but maybe this question can be asked to the Premier, what was the outcome of the WA Labor Parties Executive meeting at The Woodbridge Branch where not one but two motions were passed that "the Premier retains land at the Midland Workshops for a Rail Heritage Centre."

I would also like to ask the Premier to be upfront of his intentions. A Rail Heritage Museum or sell them to developers?

Yours sincerely,

Brad Bedford