

**PUBLIC TRANSPORT — NORTH EAST CORRIDOR**

*Grievance*

**MS R. SAFFIOTI (West Swan)** [9.13 am]: My grievance to the Minister for Transport is about the “Public Transport Plan for Perth 2031” that he released some months ago. I make a grievance today because on two previous occasions I have sought from the minister information about the transport plan for the north east corridor. I wrote to the minister in June before the transport plan was released asking for a briefing on the Liberal government plans for the north east corridor. I also wrote to the Director General of the Department of Transport in July asking for a briefing on the details contained in the 2031 plan. In reply to my letter to the minister in June, I received a response indicating that no briefing would be provided; and I have still not received a response from the Director General of Transport about a requested briefing on the assumptions and figures used to determine the modes of transport in and the plans for the north east corridor.

I want this morning to talk quickly about Ellenbrook and primarily about the assumptions of the Transport 2031 plan. This is a serious issue because the assumptions and forecasts in these documents are those driving the government decision-making process.

As we know, the government has broken its election commitment to the Ellenbrook train line; however, in the Transport 2031 document reference is made to a transit way. Catchment numbers are a key issue. On 9 August, Hon Ken Travers, in the other place, asked a question about the actual catchment numbers used to drive the Ellenbrook decision. The answer provided by Hon Simon O’Brien indicated that approximately 60 000 residents would be living in the entire catchment area for the Ellenbrook train line in 2031—assuming full development, and including the suburbs of Ellenbrook, Henley Brook, Caversham, Whiteman, Lockridge and Eden Hill. I believe that figure is entirely incorrect. Information provided on the City of Swan’s “forecast id” website shows that those numbers cannot be right. I want the minister to address this issue, because to say that only 60 000 people will live in the entire catchment area, when that is not the case, is a key issue.

I will now go over the particular areas. By 2031, the City of Swan “forecast id” figures show that 47 000 people will live in the Ellenbrook region alone—which includes Aveley and The Vines. In that region alone there will be 47 000 residents! The Altone area, including the suburbs of Lockridge and Eden Hill, will support 21 000 residents—a figure very similar to the number of people who live there today. However, the urban growth corridor figures appear to have been left out of the 2031 plan. Currently, 754 people live in the urban growth corridor and that number is predicted to reach 30 000 by 2031. This growth is happening now; these are not forecasts of what may happen. The houses are being built now. The Minister for Planning stated in his Swan urban growth corridor strategy that 33 000 will live in the corridor by 2035. The Swan Valley has approximately 5 500 residents today and it is predicted that 5 600 people will live there by 2031.

Looking at those areas alone, and being very narrow in our interpretation of the Ellenbrook catchment area, it appears that 100 000 people will live there by 2035. As I said before, these are not numbers that someone has “created”, but are the City of Swan forecast numbers, which the Minister for Transport referred to when he spoke in this place a few months ago about development in Ellenbrook. The minister has spoken about a population of 47 000 in Ellenbrook in just a few decades.

Altone, Ellenbrook, Swan Valley and the urban growth corridor, which is a very narrow definition of the catchment area, will therefore contain 103 000 people by 2031; whereas the minister claimed the number would be only 60 000. In addition to these, Bullsbrook is another significant growth area. Both the City of Swan and the state government have plans to increase the population at Bullsbrook to a forecast 21 000 residents. Bullsbrook is in the Ellenbrook rail line catchment. In addition, Ballajura residents will, depending on the route, use a train service provided in the north east corridor. Today, many people in Ballajura drive west to catch trains on the northern suburbs rail line. If there were to be a rail line in proximity to Ballajura, I believe the people of Ballajura would make use of it. All up, the figure for the catchment area is 141 000. The government figure of 60 000 is wrong. To say that there will be only 60 000 in the catchment area in 2031 when, as of today, the catchment area of Altone, Ellenbrook, Swan Valley urban growth corridor, Bullsbrook and Ballajura has a population of 81 000 is a crucial matter, because these numbers underpin government planning.

There is also the area of Malaga. I have not gone into any detail about Malaga, but it is the tenth highest employment centre in the metropolitan area. Again, that has not been included in these statistics and, of course, a rail line would help service that area. Therefore, as I said, I would like information about those statistics, and where the minister got them from, that underpin the 2031 strategy. In answer to a question, the Department of Planning said that it was updating its forecasts and they would not be available until October, so where did the Department of Transport get its figures from?

The last issue I will raise is the transit way that the government is, I think, committing to. Okay, the minister has indicated that the government is committing to it. The government has described the transit way as a

transformational project for the north east corridor. Given the broken election commitment for an Ellenbrook rail line, I think the minister owes the people of Ellenbrook some details of the time frame, the cost, the route and where those key stops will be. Although the government is out there trumpeting its transformational project, I think people need some sort of certainty about the government's plan for the Ellenbrook transit way. As I said, we need information on the route, the stops, the costing, particularly where the major stops will be and the time frame.

**MR T.R. BUSWELL (Vasse — Minister for Transport)** [9.20 am]: Firstly, can I apologise on behalf of the Director General of the Department of Transport for not responding to the member's letter. I shall take that matter up with him. He is a busy man, but, notwithstanding that, I imagined a response would refer the member to my office. Anyway, that is a matter for another day.

There are two issues around population in any area where there is potential growth. The first is what that potential growth is and the second is the extent to which that capacity is expected to be activated at certain periods in time. The advice I have is that although there is massive potential in the north east corridor, in the short to medium-term future the activation of that potential will not be high enough to justify the investment in heavy rail. But in due course —

**Ms R. Saffioti:** But can you just —

**Mr T.R. BUSWELL:** Can I just say, member, that there is absolutely no doubt in my mind that in due course there will be heavy rail servicing Ellenbrook and the areas to the north of Ellenbrook.

**Ms R. Saffioti:** Minister, I went through a bit of detail. I actually want you to explain those catchment numbers because I honestly think you've got it wrong. Those houses are being built now, minister.

**Mr T.R. BUSWELL:** The advice I have is that the activation of capacity on what was deemed the western route would be 57 per cent by 2031. The activation of capacity on what was going to be the eastern route would be 66 per cent. I am referring to the Parsons Brinckerhoff report that we commissioned when we came to government. The member is right; we made some election commitments in and around servicing Ellenbrook. However, funnily enough, when we came to office and asked for the reports that the former government had used to justify that investment, none existed. We commissioned reports, which were conducted by Parsons Brinckerhoff and others. The reports clearly recommended to government that there was not the demand to justify an investment in heavy rail at this time and, in fact, specifically recommended the introduction of a bus rapid transit system. That is what we are doing.

The member raised a couple of other points —

**Ms R. Saffioti:** The population numbers are the key and they're wrong! They're just wrong.

**Mr T.R. BUSWELL:** Do not worry; it is the member's seven minutes. I can just sit and listen.

**Ms R. Saffioti:** But don't you even want to go and investigate whether those numbers are wrong?

**Mr T.R. BUSWELL:** I have to say that I have confidence in the department providing good advice to us upon which we make decisions. Now, we have —

**Ms R. Saffioti:** But it's a key issue that underpins your whole transport policy—you don't really care if they're wrong?

**Mr T.R. BUSWELL:** Let me ask the member a question. I noticed in the local paper this week that the member said, "We're definitely committing —

**Mr P. Papalia:** So you're not going to answer!

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Warnbro!

**Mr T.R. BUSWELL:** I will get to it. The Labor —

**Mr P. Papalia** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Warnbro!

**Mr T.R. BUSWELL:** It seriously does not worry me; I can stand here all day.

**Ms R. Saffioti:** Of course it doesn't, because you don't care about the people in the suburbs.

**Mr T.R. BUSWELL:** I most certainly do care about the people of Ellenbrook.

**Ms R. Saffioti:** No, you don't! You can't stand there and just not investigate those numbers if —

**Mr T.R. BUSWELL:** I have visited a number of times with the member for Swan Hills. Let me read this into *Hansard*. The article in the local paper stated —

When the Opposition released its transport plan earlier this year, part of the 50 to 100-year vision included a new rail line to Ellenbrook. “I will ensure that what we promise, we will deliver,” ...

Is the member for West Swan promising to deliver a railway line in Ellenbrook as part of the opposition’s 50 to 100-year vision? What does the opposition plan to do for the people of Ellenbrook between today and 50 years’ time? I am interested to know!

**Ms R. Saffioti:** You’ve lied to the people of Ellenbrook. You’re lying again about the catchment numbers, so don’t try and take the moral high ground!

**Mr T.R. BUSWELL:** I reckon out in Ellenbrook —

*Withdrawal of Remark*

**J.M. FRANCIS:** Mr Speaker, the member for West Swan just accused the Minister for Transport of lying. I suggest that is unparliamentary and I ask you to instruct her to withdraw.

**Mr P. Papalia:** When she did that, you broke your promise!

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Warnbro, I formally call you to order for the first time today. It is the member for West Swan’s grievance; it is not your grievance. You are formally called to order for the first time. Member for West Swan, if you did in fact accuse the minister in this place of being a liar, I ask that you withdraw that comment.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** I withdraw.

*Debate Resumed*

**The SPEAKER:** Minister for Transport.

**Ms R. Saffioti:** You broke a promise, minister, in relation to Ellenbrook, so don’t come in here taking the moral high ground. You tell people what those numbers are and you tell them when you plan to build your transit way.

**Mr T.R. BUSWELL:** All I am going to say is this: the next time I go out there, I will take that comment and show people that the member has committed to build a railway line in between 50 and 100 years’ time. What on earth is the member’s plan between now and then?

**Ms R. Saffioti:** When are you building your transit way?

**Mr T.R. BUSWELL:** I will get to that in a second.

**Ms R. Saffioti:** You’ve had three years. How many millions of dollars —

**Mr T.R. BUSWELL:** I will get to that in a second. I reckon that when I go to Ellenbrook, they will be celebrating in the streets that the member for West Swan has given an undertaking that at some time between 50 and 100 years, there will be a railway line to Ellenbrook. Blind Freddy knows that some time in the next 100 years there will be a railway line to Ellenbrook. The best thing is that the member will ensure that we deliver! I can see the member for West Swan’s bones rattling from beyond the grave in 75 years’ time and she will be saying, “Get out there and build that railway line because back on 19 October 2011 I said I’d deliver within 100 years.” That is a fantastic commitment! I think the ultimate test of the member for West Swan’s commitment to the people of Ellenbrook for this railway line will be —

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Rockingham!

**Mr T.R. BUSWELL:** — what is in the Labor Party’s election commitments. I bet the member my left leg that when I open up the Labor Party election commitments at the 2013 election, it will say, “Railway line to Ellenbrook, dollars available—zero.” I bet that is what it will say.

**Mr P. Papalia** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Warnbro!

**Mr T.R. BUSWELL:** Every time that the member for West Swan raises this issue, she just digs a bigger and bigger hole that she is going to have to dig herself out of!

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** A grievance is an opportunity for one member in this place, one member and one member alone, and that is the member for West Swan. The minister seemed to indicate to me by what he has said that he is prepared to take interjections from the member for West Swan. I am not prepared to take interjections in this grievance from anybody else in this place.

**Mr T.R. BUSWELL:** Moving on to the bus rapid transit way that will service Ellenbrook in the short to medium term —

**Ms R. Saffioti:** When are you going to build it?

**Mr T.R. BUSWELL:** Preliminary planning is underway. I imagine that we will be in a position early next year to answer the questions the member has asked for the people of her constituency.

**Ms R. Saffioti:** So you've had three and a half years, a broken election promise, a transport plan built on dodgy numbers and you still can't come in and tell us what you're doing for Ellenbrook!

**Mr T.R. BUSWELL:** The transport plan was released in July, member for West Swan. Does the member know what? The other thing that we are doing for the people of her electorate is fixing some of those very important intersections in and around that area—Gnangara Road—Drumpellier Drive, Reid Highway—Lord Street—and a few other pieces of road that they have been crying out for attention for years. I think the member will find in the not-too-distant future that we will turn our attention to Gnangara Road and West Swan Road. I think that people will also be pleased to know that we have committed \$10 million to start planning work for the Perth—Darwin highway from Gnangara Road through to Muchea. Next week I will meet with Anthony Albanese—we will be at the train station—and raise the issue with him because I think it is something that we need to start advancing.

**Ms R. Saffioti:** Gee; have you done the plan for it?

**Mr T.R. BUSWELL:** The \$10 million, member, pays for the plan. I was out at Ellenbrook and the member had better get over there and start meeting a few people. When I was out there talking to people, they did not seem to mind the issue around the train; what they want in Ellenbrook is the Perth—Darwin highway, because a lot of the residential development that the member talked about will not happen unless the Perth—Darwin highway goes in. The first leg will go from Lord Street to Muchea. If the member understood that area, she would know that is a great enabler to open up land to the north of Ellenbrook, particularly industrial land to drive employment generators.

Therefore, to help dig the member for West Swan out of this big hole, I look forward to the Labor Party's commitment when its election commitments are released next year.