

John Castrilli MLA



Representing the people of Bunbury

At long last, there is light at the end of the tunnel for our future public transport system in the South West.

And while that light is most likely many years away – we must hold onto this recent prospect of a fast train to Perth and hold the State Government to it. As the feasibility study conductors begin their initial investigations, I believe we must reignite the flame of the ‘Save the Australind’ fire and keep it burning until we get, not only what we need, but what we deserve.

The likelihood of a fast train to Perth is great and I welcome the State Government’s long-awaited acknowledgement that we need a more reliable and faster rail link with Perth.

Sadly, Planning for our future transport needs has not been a strong point of our governments.

For many years I have lobbied both the State and Federal governments on this matter.

In 1999 when I was Mayor of the City of Bunbury, I introduced the Integrated Transport Strategy which looked at the long-term transport needs of the South West.

It included the option of a fast train service to Bunbury from Perth and for a possible expansion to Busselton, Margaret River and Manjimup.

Unfortunately, that and other reports by the State Government’s own departments have gone no further.

In 2002 and 2003, the South West Passenger Rail Transport Study detailed costings and options for building a fast rail service.

Now that a new feasibility study has been announced, we must make sure it is not plagued by delays and we must make sure the report is actioned once complete.

We must remain vigilant on the time frames to ensure this project becomes a reality.

I also issue an early warning to our State Government that we will not accept neglect of the Australind during this time.

The Australind’s rolling stock is more than 20-years-old and is at best, unreliable.

While we wait for the outcome of this feasibility study for a new fast train, the Australind must receive its previously promised and much-needed upgrades.

Given that we contributed more than \$9 billion in gross regional product to the State’s economy in 2006-07, we have earned our right to a fast, reliable, country rail service to Perth.

www.johncastrilli.com.au

Ph: 97913636

Fax: 97913313