



Spearwood residents have appealed for more safety measures at the Rockingham Road rail crossing. Picture: Ben Smith

Crossing point

Ben Smith

SPEARWOOD residents want more safety measures at a notorious freight rail crossing along a major arterial road, despite the rail line operator claiming it already has "the highest level of protection possible".

The Rockingham Road rail crossing near Edline Street and Goldsmith Road has drawn the ire of residents due to concerns for pedestrian safety and a lack of buffers for the houses backing on to the rail reserve.

Local resident Monique Gray has started a petition calling for action to improve safety given the habitual use of the footpath by pedestrians which has amassed almost 300 signatures.

There are no barriers between the rail reserve and the footpath, with a boom gate and lights separating vehicles from the tracks. No more than 10 trains each day use that section of the track.

Rockingham Road is considered a primary distributor road and the crossing is close to two bus stops, while Spearwood Alternative School is about 600m away.

Ms Gray said the community wanted maze barriers similar to those at rail crossings at North Lake Drive in Bibra Lake and Wattleup Road in Wattleup.

"The pedestrian crossing is mediocre at best, with no maze pedestrian fencing and yellow squares," she said.

"This specific road has and will continue to be an

issue until something is done."

While the Public Transport Authority is responsible for the freight rail network which connects South Fremantle to Rockingham and out to Perth's eastern suburbs, day-to-day management falls to Arc Infrastructure which operates the system under a lease agreement.

An Arc Infrastructure spokeswoman said there were no plans to install more safety measures at the crossing.

"This level crossing has the highest level of protection possible (flashing lights with boom gates)," she said.

"Arc Infrastructure is not subject to the Dividing Fences Act, under the Rail

Freight Systems Act, however we are currently in conversation with relevant residents to address the fencing concerns that have been brought to our attention. The business is reviewing the timing of works planned at this level crossing, given community concerns."

Ms Gray said there were also concerns about the lack of barriers between the railway and the homes backing on to the rail reserve from the Edeline Street side.

Temporary fencing was erected by Arc Infrastructure earlier this year after the previous fence collapsed and the company plans to meet residents in coming weeks about fencing.

Chamber rails against lack of transport

THE Fremantle Chamber of Commerce wants a passenger rail corridor to connect Fremantle with South Beach, North Coogee and the industrial precincts at Henderson, Kwinana and Garden Island.

The call comes in the wake of the State Government's decision in August to endorse Westport's recommendation to build a future container port at Kwinana.

In a report obtained by the Gazette, the Chamber said the loss of the Fremantle Port from the inner harbour had to be offset with appropriate southern corridor transport links.

"The lack of coastal corridor transport - north and south - limits access to the city for its growing number of workers and those wishing to visit and recreate in the area," it said.

"This is having a negative impact both on future growth for the city and parking limitations within the city".

Fremantle Chamber chief executive Danica Quinlan said an existing rail corridor used to move freight between the industrial precincts and Fremantle should be considered for passenger rail.

"The roads down this corridor are at capacity and extremely congested at peak times, the bus routes irregular and spasmodic and there is an existing rail corridor through this area," she said.

"Rail or light rail would make sense, especially given the growing residential area currently completely unserved, the demographic and individuals' general preference to take trains over other forms of transport."

Ms Quinlan said since the

Westport announcement neither the State or Federal government had given any consideration to a transport link to the growing southern corridor.

She said this was also affecting South Beach's residential growth and the city's ability to target Fremantle for events and conferences.

"We have met the Minister's office and the Opposition to present this important consideration," Ms Quinlan said. "It was welcomed, but all indications are that it hasn't been considered to date."

"The City of Fremantle's visitation data confirms our residential visitors' heartland sits to the south, from South Beach down and across to Cockburn and surrounds."

"These residents have no way to get to Fremantle other than by car, which puts significant pressure on parking in central Fremantle."

The Chamber's report said the Kwinana Industries Council, Australian Marine Complex and Defence activities were all on track for significant short-term growth.

"As the closest urban centre to the project, we would like the opportunity to promote the benefits that a Fremantle residential base can provide to these workers," it said.

"Yet there is no consideration to the role of effective transport links for residents and employees to help facilitate this growth."

Transport Minister Rita Saffioti said the State Government was "always open to exciting new infrastructure ideas" but had other priorities, such as stage 1 of Metronet.

Lotto lovers

YOUNG love just got a whole lot sweeter for an engaged couple, who will start married life in style after a big Lotto win.

The pair, aged in their 20s, say they'll "start married life right" thanks to a Saturday Lotto windfall.

Their Slikpik 25 from Nextra Harrisdale was one of four Saturday Lotto tickets from September 26 that had all six winning numbers.

That ticket has given them a \$511,000 pre-wedding boost.

Chopper down at Jandakot

A HELICOPTER pilot and passenger were fortunate to escape serious injury when their chopper crash-landed at Jandakot Airport last week.

The aircraft, which was said to be flying at low alti-

tude, "landed very roughly" in a airport training field last Thursday morning.

The hard landing attracted a large number of fire-fighting crews to the scene and a Department of Fire

and Emergency Services spokesperson said there were no fuel spills.

"An aircraft has crashed from the air... at Jandakot Airport. They have landed very roughly... It was a very hard landing," they

said. A St John spokesman said the aircraft involved was a training helicopter and confirmed neither of its occupants had required hospitalisation.

Jandakot Airport refused to comment.

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