



Indian Ocean Drive finally opened

■ Shire of Dandaragan holds community function to celebrate

THE Shire of Dandaragan was finally able to organise a community function last Sunday afternoon to celebrate the long-awaited opening of Indian Ocean Drive (IOD).

While the official Main Roads dedication ceremony took place 26 kilometres south of Cervantes at 10.45am on Sunday, September 19, the Cervantes community welcomed Transport Minister Simon O'Brien with a fantastic celebration at the recreation centre with a free sausage sizzle, afternoon tea and family entertainment for the community and interested people.

Shire chief executive Tony Nottle said the towns along the IOD had been waiting for this day for nearly 15 years.

"With the help of local volunteers, the shire was able to arrange the family fun afternoon," he said.

"It is important that our local people who will be travelling down this road have an opportunity to celebrate this momentous occasion."

The completion of the Lancelin to Cervantes section of the IOD will now link the coastal communities and provide an economic boost to the area as it

will reduce the standard trip to Perth by 30-45 minutes.

The opening of the IOD was welcomed by Agricultural Region MLC Brian Ellis.

IOD includes 56 kilometres of new sealed road between Lancelin and Cervantes, 20 kilometres of side roads and improvement works on nine kilometres of Pinnacles Drive, six stopping places at prominent tourist locations and a viewing platform in the Nilgen Nature Reserve.

The new road will cut half an hour off the Perth-Geraldton travelling time and separate tourist and light traffic from heavy haulage vehicles, which will continue to use the Brand Highway.

"Despite Labor claiming the road was a funding priority at the 2001 election, only 10 kilometres had been constructed when they lost government more than seven years later," Mr Ellis said.

"By comparison, within two years of being elected the Barnett government has fully funded the \$95 million project and delivered it under-budget, nine months ahead of schedule and just in time for the school holidays."



History in the making: Member for Moore Grant Woodhams MLC, Main Roads managing director Menno Henneveld, Dandaragan shire president Shane Love, Aboriginal Elder Charlie Shaw, WA Premier Colin Barnett and Transport Minister Simon O'Brien MLC cut the ribbon at the opening of Indian Ocean Drive.



Plaque: The limestone rock with the commemorative plaque officially opening Indian Ocean Drive