Speech by

Hon. Rachel Nolan

MEMBER FOR IPSWICH

Hansard Wednesday, 17 June 2009

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Rail Services

Hon. RG NOLAN (Ipswich—ALP) (Minister for Transport) (10.11 am): The Bligh government is prepared to make the tough decisions in these tough times. We are committed to continuing our investment in new trains, services and rail infrastructure to provide first-class public transport for Queenslanders. The 2009 Queensland Rail Passenger Load Survey, which I released on Monday, shows that South-East Queensland trains are less crowded now, despite more people catching them. This confirms that our investment in new trains, services and rail infrastructure is having an impact on the results at a passenger level. We have reduced crowding levels during peak periods from 43 per cent to 33 per cent, even though rail patronage is growing at about seven per cent a year.

We acted on the results of the 2008 survey that indicated that the greatest need was on the Ipswich and Caboolture lines on weekday mornings. The Bligh government added five new morning peak services to the Ipswich line and three to the Caboolture line, since they were identified as priorities last year. The introduction of these eight extra morning services on the Ipswich and Caboolture lines provided capacity for an additional 6,000 people each weekday, and this investment is successfully reflected in the latest results. The Ipswich line morning peaks improved significantly—they more than halved—with a reduction in crowding from 58 per cent to 23 per cent. That is an enormous improvement on the Ipswich line in the morning peak as a result of us rolling out new trains. Again, the results on the Caboolture line were similarly encouraging, with a drop in crowding from 56 per cent to 33 per cent.

The Queensland government, through TransLink and Queensland Rail, is adding extra rolling stock at the rate of one three-car set each and every month. We have invested heavily in the infrastructure needed to address congestion. While the opposition wants to cut jobs and services, including new trains, the Bligh government is getting on with the job of building new trains and infrastructure to provide the extra seats and services required to meet growing demand. South-East Queensland is the fastest-growing urban rail network in the world, aside from Melbourne, and this is because the Bligh government is making the tough decisions to continue our investment in new trains, services and rail infrastructure for Queensland.

Mr Crandon: The Gold Coast is the fastest growing rail network and you haven't increased trains on that line at all—not one, and it is 86 per cent full.

Mr SPEAKER: The member for Coomera is way out of line with that.

Mr CRANDON: I withdraw.