



Speech by

## Hon. Rachel Nolan

MEMBER FOR IPSWICH

Hansard Tuesday, 10 November 2009

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### MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

#### Citytrain

**Hon. RG NOLAN** (Ipswich—ALP) (Minister for Transport) (10.16 am): In recent weeks there have been a number of delays which have inconvenienced commuters on the Citytrain network. While in the last financial year 91.74 per cent of trains ran on time, this figure had improved to 94.3 per cent in the September quarter this year. In the last couple of weeks, however, the performance of the rail network has been poor. In October, 4.8 per cent of trains were delayed due to track issues, and last week this was 8.5 per cent. This is not good enough. I apologise to commuters for this recent and unacceptably poor run.

On their behalf, I have demanded answers from Queensland Rail and we are taking steps to improve performance. My advice from Queensland Rail is that the recent performance is the result of a series of unfortunate incidents at critical locations and is not indicative of a systemic maintenance issue. In the last week, for instance, one major delay occurred on the Cleveland line because a storm disrupted power. Another unacceptable delay occurred when a worker severed an optical fibre at South Brisbane and a third resulted from a police incident.

I am advised that there is no evidence to indicate an overall deterioration of the network. Queensland Rail conducts visual inspections three times a week and regular track audits using computer technology. That auditing indicates that the 'overall track condition index'—a technical measure of track quality—has been constant for the last five years, notwithstanding an increase in services. To maintain this standard, the government funds QR for track maintenance. This year, at \$56 million, the Citytrain track maintenance budget is at its highest level ever.

It is true that QR has recently introduced new rules to enhance safety on the network. This has led to some increase in the time taken to respond to incidents in some cases. Safety is and always will be our No. 1 priority, but these new measures will take a little while to bed down. I have directed Queensland Rail to meet with unions and work with them to get the balance right between safety and responding quickly to incidents.

No-one likes delays, and again I apologise to commuters. I can assure them that our network is maintained appropriately and that we are continuing to work towards building a better public transport system.