



Speech by

Hon. STEVE BREDHAUER

MEMBER FOR COOK

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Queensland Transport Call Centres

Hon. S. D. BREDHAUER (Cook—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads) (10.02 a.m.), by leave: Queensland Transport has been working tirelessly in recent months to improve its services to customers. Today, I can inform the House of substantial improvements in telephone call centre response times and of changes which will lead to reductions in waiting times for driver licence testing.

The growth in monthly call volumes gives an indication of the challenges faced by Queensland Transport call centres. Call numbers have risen from 58,000 per month in May 1997 to 133,000 per month in September this year—an increase of approximately 130%. This increase in call numbers had led to unacceptable call waiting times for customers. In May this year, the average waiting time had increased to well over 10 minutes. On occasions, individual customers waited 30 to 40 minutes to be answered. The number of complaints regarding call centre delays being received also increased.

Extra funding was made available from an internal reallocation of funds by Queensland Transport in January 1999 to recruit and train additional service consultants for the call centres based in Emerald and Fortitude Valley. An additional \$1m has been budgeted for this year for call centre operations. Significant improvement in the performance of call centres was achieved in October and continued in November as a result of the increase in resources, improved management practices and technological enhancements. Waiting times have been reduced by more than 75% on the waiting times in May. Indeed, waiting times for November are averaging three minutes. Complaints about call centre services received in Queensland Transport's customer feedback facility have similarly fallen by more than 86% between May and now, and further improvements are targeted.

I commend staff and management at the Queensland Transport call centres on the excellent effort they have made to improve service to customers. I might add that I visited the call centre in Fortitude Valley the other day to personally commend them for their efforts. Customers dealing with Queensland Transport by telephone can be assured that everything possible is being done to improve services and my Government is committed to ensuring staff and management will be able to meet customer expectations on an ongoing basis.

In recent times, driver licence waiting times in some areas have increased to unacceptable levels. For example, in south-east Queensland, wait times currently average between seven and eight weeks. This increase in waiting times has arisen in part as a result of the introduction of the new Q-Safe tests last year and the regular increase in the number of tests being conducted at this time of the year, largely due to the number of school leavers applying for their licences. The Q-Safe test provides a more comprehensive test of driver skill and has been welcomed by all stakeholders as a key contributor to improved road safety among new drivers.

Queensland Transport recently embarked on a wide-ranging consultation process with a view to reducing licence testing waiting times. As a result of this consultation, Queensland Transport will introduce a range of measures, which will see waiting times progressively improve over the coming months to a point where the average waiting time should be about two weeks. Some of the measures proposed include centralised test bookings, a streamlined testing process, the appointment of eight additional temporary driving instructors to south-east Queensland until the end of February, and consideration of relocatable relief teams. These measures will improve customer service for those

waiting to do licence tests without compromising the improved safety outcomes resulting from the introduction of the Q-Safe test.

Whether they are seeking information over the telephone or waiting to be tested for a licence, Queenslanders should see continuing improvements in waiting times in the coming months.
