



Speech by

**LEX BELL, MP**

**MEMBER FOR SURFERS PARADISE**

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**OVERCROWDING, GOLD COAST RAIL SERVICE**

**Mr BELL** (Surfers Paradise—Ind) (10.24 a.m.): A few years ago Gold Coast residents and the tourism industry were delighted at the opening of the Gold Coast rail service. It has been a success beyond all expectations, even though the government of the day was not persuaded by the local community and the Gold Coast City Council to construct spur lines into Southport, Surfers Paradise and Broadbeach, where so many of the travellers wanted to go. However, overcrowding at certain hours of the day on that service has become chronic, to such an extent that it is now a limiting factor and many people are shying away from using that service.

It is very sad to see elderly people standing for the long trip from the Gold Coast to Brisbane or the return, hanging onto rails or straps. On one day when I was standing on the service I had an opportunity to speak to an employee of the minister's office on that subject. I know that efforts have been made to massage the problem. I give Queensland Transport credit for that. I know also that there is a limited amount of rolling stock appropriate to this line and that a lot of the line is just single track. It would cost a lot of money to ensure that the route is used to capacity. However, I urge the minister and the government to start making plans now. If plans are not made for duplication of the track where there is one line and for the acquisition of additional rolling stock, this matter will never be on a list of priorities.

It is essential for the Gold Coast that this line be used to its maximum efficiency, that it be effective and that even more train travellers are attracted to the service. It is a feather in the cap of the department. We do not want a second-rate service.

Time expired.