



Speech by

Fiona Simpson

MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE

Hansard Wednesday, 18 August 2004

SUNBUS

Miss SIMPSON (Maroochydore—NPA) (10.28 a.m.): After the tragic disappearance of young Sunshine Coast schoolboy Daniel Morcombe, after a public bus failed to pick him up, there have been great concerns about some bus's practices and also what the government is doing to address these policy issues. After the promises that this would not happen again from Sunbus and the assurances from the government that it would crack down on this, one would have thought that it would not occur again. Yet we see a report in the *Sunday Mail* of yet another young schoolboy who was left waiting at a bus stop after another Sunbus apparently refused to take him on the bus.

Understandably, people on the Sunshine Coast and throughout Queensland are concerned about what is going to happen if these buses fail to pick up young children when they legitimately need to be taken somewhere in a timely way. The government gave a commitment that this would not happen again. I had a meeting with Sunbus and also with the minister's staff only a couple of weeks ago and they again assured me that this would not happen. What is the minister going to do to ensure that these bus companies do the right thing, that they do not leave children in a vulnerable situation?

I am calling on the government to also outline what the policy is for all bus services throughout Queensland, because it simply is not good enough. In this case a young lad, Luke Lanham, a year 8 student, was involved. His father had actually rung up TransLink to find out whether his ticket was going to be satisfactory for him to be taken on this bus. Yet when the boy tried to board the bus, apparently he was told that, no, that ticket was not suitable. This clearly is of concern. We do not want to see vulnerable children being left at bus stops. It is something that is still happening on the Sunshine Coast. We are concerned as to what the policy is throughout Queensland. These services are contracted to the government, and there have to be clear and large penalties when children are left at bus stops. We do not want to see it happen again. This is a concern which I call on the minister to address.

Time expired.