



Speech by

**Phil Reeves**

**MEMBER FOR MANSFIELD**

Hansard Tuesday, 31 October 2006

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## **PUBLIC TRANSPORT**

**Mr REEVES** (Mansfield—ALP) (11.45 am): It gives me great pleasure in my first speech in the 52nd Parliament to be talking about one of my favourite subjects—public transport. I was thrilled when the Premier appointed me the parliamentary secretary for transport. As many members know, I am the No. 1 ticket holder of the South East Busway. When I became the first person to pay for a ticket on the busway, I knew that public transport in south-east Queensland would never be the same again.

The Beattie government's commitment to public transport has delivered a world-class public transport system for Queenslanders. The strength of this public transport system was never more apparent than during the recent temporary closure of the entire Riverside Expressway and the ongoing closures of the Ann and Alice streets on-ramps. Many Brisbane drivers were brought to a standstill, but nothing could stop our public transport system.

I commend the Minister for Transport and Main Roads on his response to the problems that were found in the structure of the expressway on-ramps. Closing the expressway was a hard decision to make, but it was the only option. The safety of drivers was always the utmost priority. I also wish to thank all the commuters who were stuck in the middle of this rather chaotic period for their patience and understanding. With starting and ending the working day in traffic jams clearly not desirable, drivers were quick to recognise the many advantages of our first-rate public transport system. The closures saw a spike in public transport patronage of 20 per cent on rail services, 10 per cent to 20 per cent on bus services and 23 per cent on ferries. This increase in the number of people who would normally drive their cars using public transport services resulted in a dramatic decrease in peak hour traffic congestion.

I commend the TransLink operators and staff who, during the initial closure of the entire Riverside Expressway, worked around the clock to ensure that extra services were provided along all the busiest corridors to meet this increase in demand. Additional train services and the upgrading of trains from three-car sets to six-car sets was scheduled for various peak hour services. In particular, QR Citytrain worked to continually increase the capacity of the Ipswich and Ferny Grove lines to alleviate pressure on Milton and Enoggera roads.

Extra bus services were also provided to meet passenger demand. The total number of Brisbane Transport buses on the road during peak times was 689. Usually, there are 679. Many bus services were diverted to take full advantage of the South East Busway. For example, all of the southern express services that would normally use the expressway were diverted onto the South East Busway. The volume of buses using the South East Busway increased by about 40 per cent. Despite this increase, the busway performed exceptionally well and beyond expectations.

To further deal with the increase in patronage, last week TransLink introduced \$3.5 million of additional bus services across Brisbane in an effort to get more people out of their cars and onto public transport. For example, the new 444 BUZ service introduced last week will deliver 74 extra services a day. This has the potential to carry an additional 2,035 passengers and take 1,480 cars off the road.

As the No. 1 ticket holder on the South East Busway, I can certainly say that no-one is as proud as I am of the busway's successful performance, which was evident during these past couple of weeks. The

Riverside Expressway is one of the busiest stretches of road in south-east Queensland. It is vital for incoming and outgoing traffic into our city centre. However, the South East Busway played a key role in ensuring that Brisbane would not be shut down. Instead, it was business as usual.

Still today it is noticeable that, even with the Riverside Expressway open, many drivers have opted to stick to travelling to and from work on our public transport services. The Beattie government's committed investment in developing dedicated transport infrastructure has ensured that Brisbane residents can feel confident in leaving their cars at home and travelling to and from the city with ease.

The recent closure has surely reinforced to many Brisbane residents that public transport is a viable and efficient first option rather than the last choice. Therefore, honourable members, it is quite clear that a dedicated transport network—the centrepiece of which is the South East Busway—averted what could have been a major transport crisis over the past few weeks. Its performance provides clear support and justification for the construction of other vital busway infrastructure such as the eastern and northern busways. As Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Transport, I am looking forward to working alongside the minister on these very important projects.