



Speech by

**Hon. Paul Lucas**

**MEMBER FOR LYTTON**

Hansard Thursday, 8 February 2007

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## **MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

### ***Sunlander Award***

**Hon. PT LUCAS** (Lytton—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (10.14 am): Queensland Rail's Queensland Class service on the *Sunlander* has been voted Australia's best long-distance train by the American based Society of International Railway Travellers. As a result, the Queensland Class on the *Sunlander* has been included in the International Railway Traveller's *Best-Loved Railway Journeys* 2007 edition. To be included in the 2007 edition, trains had to meet stringent standards of service, accommodation, scenery, itinerary, off-train experiences and passenger enjoyment.

In the last 24 years International Railway Travellers members have evaluated trains all over the world and given their critique to travellers around the world. Queensland Rail pipped other long-distance passenger trains, including the *Ghan* and the *Indian Pacific*, to be voted the top long-distance train in Australia.

Traveltrain Holidays' premium Queensland Class was launched on the *Sunlander* in April 2003 and offers a glimpse at travel in a bygone era with dedicated staff, exclusive dining featuring fresh Queensland produce and entertainment. The Queensland Class carried 3,285 passengers in 2004-05 and 3,888 passengers in 2005-06, which represents an increase in patronage of 18 per cent over the past two years. The *Sunlander* with Queensland Class travels along the east coast from Brisbane to Cairns and back again with set down and pick up stops at nominated stations along the way, as one would expect, including Mackay, Proserpine and Townsville.

Passengers on the Queensland Class enjoy first class accommodation, fine dining in an exclusive restaurant car, entertainment, commentary and a host of special touches such as a dedicated Queensland Class team, complimentary bathrobes, slippers and toiletries and a turn-down service complete with chocolate. Queensland Class on the *Sunlander* was also awarded Queensland's most unique accommodation provider at the 2006 Queensland Tourism Awards. Queensland Class has been nominated in the 2006 Qantas Australian Tourism Awards in the category of unique accommodation. The announcement of the national winner will be in Sydney later this month.

Queensland Rail anticipates that patronage on its Traveltrain service this financial year will be around 432,000. It has been difficult, with low-cost airfares and the like; however, I look forward to those passengers enjoying a relaxed, enjoyable and award-winning experience.