



Speech by

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MEMBER FOR CLAYFIELD

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PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Mr NICHOLLS (Clayfield—Lib) (11.54 am): What is happening with public transport in south-east Queensland? This is increasingly the question being asked by commuters as they suffer yet another train cancellation, as they struggle to find space on overcrowded trains and as they wonder whether they are going to get to work on time or home to see their kids and families.

Now we have the debacle of the new electronic smartcard ticketing system. What do we know about this system? We know it has cost a lot—at least \$134 million. We know it is four years late. We know there are two trials underway. We know the government does not want to tell anyone too much about how it will work.

What we do not know is this: why is the government not revealing details of how the ticket will work? There are some questions that need to be answered. Will the new smartcard be available at as many places as the current paper tickets, including newsagencies? Why are 10-trip tickets being dropped? Will they be dropped in the biggest commuter market of Brisbane? How will this so-called frequent traveller discount work? Will there be a daily fare cap? Will the discounts be the equal of the current weekly and monthly discounts? Can the minister guarantee no commuter will be worse off under the smartcard system? How long will paper tickets remain available after the smartcard is introduced? Will fares for paper tickets be increased to drive people to the smartcard? How will penalty fares be calculated? How can it be challenged?

The government has failed to answer these questions on numerous occasions over the past couple of months. What do the commuters of south-east Queensland say? Up to 82 per cent of them in a recent *Courier-Mail* blog said that public transport leaves much to be desired. Only four out of 84 responses said that it was not too bad. What did they say? They said—

At a time when our roads are congested on a daily basis what a clever idea to get people to use public transport by increasing fares.

What about this one from Anna of Dutton Park—

The only way this electronic system will be taken up and not be seen to be the overbudgeted, overpriced, overrated debacle that it is is to have electronic tickets at considerable discounts to normal prices. No-one in their right mind would use it otherwise. Yet another ALP bungle up there with hospitals, water, infrastructure et cetera.

The minister must come clean and reveal the answers to these questions.

Time expired.