



Speech by

## Fiona Simpson

MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE

Hansard Tuesday, 2 December 2008

---

### RAIL SAFETY

**Miss SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—LNP) (12.12 pm): Under the parliamentary rules, I cannot talk about the Transport (Rail Safety) Bill, which is listed last on the *Notice Paper*, even though it was introduced on 12 February 2008. However, I can talk about rail safety even if the government does not. QR's waning safety record could immediately be improved if the Bligh government introduced an electronic safety system to stop trains running red lights on the Citytrain network. The LNP announced plans yesterday to introduce an automated train protection system—ATP—that would automatically stop trains from running red lights and would reduce the time needed between trains from three minutes to only one minute. That would put an end to QR's appalling track record of red light incidents.

Last financial year QR experienced a 46 per cent increase in signals passed at danger—or SPAD—incidents where trains ran red lights. For whatever reason the drivers overlooked the red light and overran these areas. This is a major safety concern. The minister tried to make light of it this morning but, as I have outlined, drivers have been stood down and there are concerns in the industry that there needs to be a safer signalling system. A leaked QR safety report also revealed that the rate of SPAD incidents is nine per cent higher in Queensland than the normalised national rail average. The LNP believes that QR can be the safest rail network in Australia. That is why we have committed to installing an ATP system on the Citytrain network.

We are talking about a network which is highly congested but has a problem not only with inadequate signalling but also with congestion points. We will focus on the rollout of this protection signalling firstly at those congestion points which will have the most benefit, starting in zone 1. It is a government's responsibility to ensure that its public transport systems are safe for commuters and staff. The LNP's plan will see the Citytrain network join cities such as those in Japan, America, England, Europe and Korea in providing a state-of-the-art rail system. Today the minister has made out that there are problems. He is trying to throw hurdles on the track to stop a safer system. Yet other countries such as Japan and Korea have these systems in place. Why can't Queensland also do this?

I call on the Bligh government to support the LNP's initiative to see QR lead other states in this critical safety area instead of lagging behind, as has been the case under Labor's leadership. There were 109 passenger and freight SPAD incidents, up from 73 the year before. Six QR drivers are currently suspended as a result of these incidents, while another 10 drivers have been permanently dumped in past years. The last fatal SPAD collision occurred at Trinder Park in 1985, when two people died and 30 were injured. SPAD incidents risk lives. We do not want to wait for another disaster before there is action, which is why the LNP has committed to start implementing the ATP system immediately should we win the next election. The ATP system will also allow more trains to operate on the network, helping to reduce congestion during peak hours. It is a creative solution, it is a safer solution, to get more capacity out of our existing rail network.

I want to address other issues in our rail package such as bigger trains to travel more often, passengers paying less and commuting in greater safety, and greater connectivity with feeder buses and park 'n' ride. I heard the Deputy Premier rise this morning to talk about eight-car sets. He is wanting to write things into our policy that are not there. We have talked about seven-car sets. As we announced, the doors

in the end carriage would be closed off. That would be able to be done with the systems we are talking about. Passengers would know that they have the chance of getting a seat and they are able to move through to those cabins. There will still be doors available to them in those carriages, but the end carriages will be closed off because we know that is necessary with the current infrastructure.

We think that commuters are smarter than the government is. They have certainly been critical of the government's absolute failure to address congestion within the Citytrain network. It is no accident. We have heard the government say that it has a plan, but it has failed to release the network plan. That plan has been sitting on the minister's desk for how long? Three or four months. Why is he hiding it?