



Speech by

## Fiona Simpson

**MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE**

Hansard Wednesday, 5 August 2009

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### CATTLE TRAINS

**Ms SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—LNP) (11.39 am): I welcome the statement this week from the transport minister that Queensland Rail's cattle train and grain services will continue. I hope she is genuine about supporting our cattle and grain producers and our meat processing industry, which employs thousands of workers around Brisbane and indeed in her own electorate. These services are vital to our cattle industry and particularly for the safe and efficient transport of cattle from the vast western pastoral regions.

Our producers and processors need certainty of service and reliability. That means that if cattle trains are ordered they should be available and not cancelled without warning—and this has been the disgraceful situation that has been ongoing. I understand that the Minister for Transport will be meeting with western mayors tomorrow and with our member for Gregory, Vaughan Johnson. I hope the minister listens to their real and genuine concerns and gives them an ironclad guarantee that these vital services will continue and, importantly, will be better managed. It is one thing to issue a statement saying that those services will not be withdrawn but it is something very different to guarantee that services will be improved.

This is not just important to cattle producers and grain growers; this is a vital issue about jobs. And I note that our leading meat processors have confirmed that at least 900 and up to 1,200 jobs could be lost from south-east meatworks if cattle trains are not guaranteed. The protection of these jobs is vital. I note the latest unemployment figures show that the minister's own backyard has become a hot spot for unemployment in Queensland. This is a vital issue for regional Queensland. It is a vital issue for sustainable, labour intensive meat processing in this state. It is a vital issue for jobs, and I encourage the minister to give cattle producers, Queensland Rail workers and meatworkers an ironclad guarantee that these services will continue and indeed will be better managed.