



Speech by

## Fiona Simpson

MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE

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### QUEENSLAND RAIL, SERVICES

**Ms SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—LNP) (12.09 pm): Frustrated commuters who are increasingly left waiting for trains that fail to turn up on time or have been cancelled will receive no comfort from the transport minister's statement today. Just saying sorry is not enough when her apology is accompanied by her blatant denial of the extent of the problem. Minister Nolan's defence of the state of Queensland Rail's passenger system as nothing worse than 'a series of unfortunate incidents' demonstrates that the minister is out of touch or deliberately ignoring the issue. If she, as the minister responsible for public transport and the Queensland rail system, cannot see that the problem is bigger than a series of unfortunate incidents rather than a systemic failure which has been going on longer than October then she has no hope of delivering the service that Queenslanders deserve.

In the last two weeks Citytrain achieved on-time performance standards on only one day for peak services. The weather was not the main reason for the failure; infrastructure failures were. Latest figures published in the *Courier-Mail* show that in 2008-09 1,000 train services failed to turn up on time due to infrastructure failures; rolling stock failures affected 900 train services; and weather was responsible for delaying only 346 train services. If members were to ask commuters whether they thought that the service was world class, as the government continues to claim, they would say no because what they are seeing is an almost daily failure of services due to maintenance issues on the track as well as issues with rolling stock.

The performance standards of trains is one thing, but what is the ministerial charter of goals that the minister has received from the Premier? I asked the minister for that this morning and she refused to respond, which raises the question of what is in the minister's performance standards and whether, in fact, she is meeting those standards. What are the key performance indicators? Is a key performance indicator of a Bligh government minister the ability to deny that there is a problem? Well, this is a problem that involves more than just a few one-off incidents.

We know that there has been an increasing failure of the rail system which is unacceptable. We know that there is an increasing maintenance failure which is seeing points and signals failing and services closed down. We have not yet heard an explanation as to why a slow-moving train in the middle of the city fell off the tracks. That cannot be put down to a series of minor incidents. There is clearly an issue with the rail network when we see an ongoing problem with more and more days of lost time for commuters. Commuters in South-East Queensland, as well as all of Queensland, deserve a public transport system that works. They deserve honesty and transparency from the government about the real state of affairs and just what is affecting their services. What we have seen from the state government in response has been a push to blatantly put up fares and take more money from public commuters while denying that there is a problem with a service which is no longer reliable.

Today I have addressed the issues of Citytrain, but this problem is also reflected in freight and rail network services throughout Queensland. This is a problem which is not only affecting this particular service but is also having a huge impact given that we do need to encourage people to take public transport. That public transport has to be reliable, it has to be delivered; it is not good enough for the government to simply deny that there is a problem.