



Speech by

Michael Crandon

MEMBER FOR COOMERA

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GOLD COAST RAIL LINE

Mr CRANDON (Coomera—LNP) (6.09 pm): It appears that the transport minister is relying on frustrated Gold Coast commuters abandoning the 'Bombay Express' as the solution to overcrowding on Gold Coast trains. The latest TransLink Tracker data confirms that Gold Coast commuters are giving up in frustration. The Gold Coast rail line, or the 'Bombay Express', could have lost as much as, indeed more than, 20 per cent of commuters since March 2009 when comparing the latest figures available. But even on these reduced numbers, Gold Coast trains are still the most overcrowded trains on the TransLink network during peak times.

The latest TransLink Tracker was released by the minister just before Easter. It shows that, although there was no increase in train services to the Gold Coast during the period, the number of overcrowded trains in morning peak hours has dropped from six out of seven in the March 2009 survey to just four out of seven in December. On afternoon peak services, overcrowding has dropped from five out of eight in March 2009 to four out of eight in December.

The minister could point to a few other possible explanations for the reduced commuter traffic. An increase in unemployment of Gold Coast commuters is one possibility, but that is not something this government would want to suggest. It would mean unemployment had increased by up to 20 per cent on the Gold Coast, and clearly that is not the case. The reduction in overcrowding during a period when an estimated 8,500 new residents have moved in to the Coomera area in the past nine months can only be put down to one thing. The real answer is that commuters are walking away from Gold Coast trains because they are sick and tired of standing for over an hour every day just to get to work and then experiencing more of the same in the afternoon. Standing for two hours every day to get to work and back is just not on. Is it any wonder locals call it the 'Bombay Express'?

Commuters deserting the train is bad news for traffic congestion on the M1, too. We see entry onto the M1 heading north becoming gridlocked every morning and it is repeated in reverse every afternoon. It is all-round bad news for everyone living on the northern end of the Gold Coast when it comes to getting to work in Brisbane. The choice is between standing up for two hours every day or fighting to get on to the M1 and then heavy traffic all the way to Brisbane and back.

We have got the Coomera Town Centre planning proceeding on schedule, but there is no plan from this minister or this government to fix the already overcrowded trains. What I fear is that this could become a deal breaker for the developers. What is the point in developing the Coomera Town Centre as a transport hub around the Coomera Railway Station and encouraging the use of public transport if there is no plan to fix the already overcrowded trains?

The transport minister admitted to me that Gold Coast trains are the most overcrowded in the TransLink network, but she said that she does not have any answers to the overcrowding problem. I call on the minister to get serious about this—get a plan together and show the people of the northern Gold Coast that she does not consider them second-class citizens.