




Speech By
Hon. Andrew Powell

MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE

ADJOURNMENT

Sunshine Coast Hinterland, Public Transport; Queensland Plan

 **Hon. AC POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection) (11.39 pm): It is my privilege this evening to raise the concerns of constituents of Glass House and reassure them that I am on the case and doing everything I can to maintain a public transport service commonly now known as Hinterland Connect in the hinterland of the Sunshine Coast. This service currently operates from Nambour to Maleny. It is heavily utilised in the morning and afternoon peak hours by school students, people heading off to employment, those accessing public transport in Nambour and those accessing health services. Unfortunately, it is not heavily utilised during the rest of the day or, for that matter, over the weekend. The current patronage of this trial service suggests that it is unaffordable in the current format. The last thing I want to do for the constituents of not only Glass House but also the whole of the Sunshine Coast is have services that are unviable and that end up costing us so much that the costs of public transport increase for everyone who uses it.

I want to reassure constituents that I have received many requests for input into the review of TransLink services and this bus service in particular. I noted recently in a letter to the editor that I have collated all of the information I have received, along with what I have read through letters to the editor, and I have provided it to the minister. I have had a number of conversations with Minister Emerson and have recently been advised by him that he and his department recognise that there is a demand for a public transport service in the hinterland but that, as I said, the low number of passengers means we have to identify a more low-cost way to deliver the service if it is to continue.

The good thing is that I am now working very closely with councillors Greg Rogerson, Jenny McKay and Rick Baberowski and council CEO John Knaggs. They have recently written to the minister listing three options, all of which involve council support. I thank the council for their ongoing support in this matter. I am dedicated to ensuring that all of the constituents of Glass House continue to have access to a public transport solution in the hinterland and I look to resolving that very soon with the assistance of the council.

In the time remaining to me I will touch on the Queensland Plan. It is off and running in the electorate of Glass House. We had the first meeting of the 'Glass House Gang' last Friday—some 30 individuals who are passionate and excited about seeing the vision for Queensland developed but bringing a particular Glass House aspect to it. I particularly acknowledge year 12 students Aidan Titheridge, from Maleny State High School, and Riley Williamson, from Glasshouse Country Christian College, who came alone. Also in attendance were some of our more senior citizens in Peter Cavanagh from Palmwoods and John Wildman from Maleny. Particular thanks go to Ursula Starkovsky, a businesswoman from Glass House Mountains; Howard Walters, a great community volunteer and self-proclaimed mayor of Wamuran; and Ruby Scott, the Maleny State High School captain, who will be joining me in Mackay on 10 May.