




Speech By
Steve Minnikin

MEMBER FOR CHATSWORTH

MOTION: PUBLIC TRANSPORT

 **Mr MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (6.20 pm): I welcome the opportunity to speak to the minister's amendment. It saddens me from a democratic perspective that the 54th Parliament has come to this. The democratic socialists bunkered down in Peel Street are so delusional and inept that they really do believe their own propaganda.

I ran for public office in order to debate public policy in this august House, and the standard of debate has not elevated much over the first 12 months of my parliamentary career. This motion moved by the member for South Brisbane is big on pathos and emotion, but never let the facts get in the way of a great story for the idealistic left. I have read the background biographies on those seven economic illiterates opposite and it makes perfect sense as to why they are clueless. Simply put, they have no concept of the real world. Let us get back to some substance and facts as I only have around five minutes to speak and I could debate those opposite all night long.

I was truly honoured to be made the Assistant Minister for Public Transport shortly after being elected in March last year. Since July, I have been tasked with preparing the most comprehensive review ever undertaken of public bus transport in South-East Queensland. I have been delighted to work with TransLink staff, fellow colleagues and the minister. Unlike those opposite, we do walk the talk when it comes to consultation and have never seen this as a cost-cutting exercise but, rather, an opportunity to build a better bus network. In the public arena one must demonstrate compassion and empathy but one also needs to demonstrate an understanding of the essential project management skills involving the trade-off between time, quality and cost.

What was the ALP's contribution to public transport as a legacy of two decades in office? Falling patronage numbers and exorbitant fare increases! How dare those opposite get up and lecture us about having the strength of leadership to once again fix up another one of their policy train wrecks—although, in this case, it is bus wrecks. The democratic socialists opposite adhered to a public transport model known as a 'coverage model' which, from my background research of these intellectual geniuses, assumes that everyone needed to be approximately 400 metres walking distance from a bus stop. That warms the cockles of my heart except that there was only one tiny detail they overlooked: it did not work.

We started metaphorically with a blank sheet of paper and went through every single bus route in South-East Queensland—446 to be precise—without fear or favour and looked at the plain hard facts. It made for sobering data analysis. Here are the clear facts which outline clearly why we needed to change the bus network and refute the inane gestures of before. Forty-nine per cent of existing routes carry, on average, passenger loads of seven people or fewer. Just 14 per cent of total routes carry 57 per cent of passengers. Two-thirds of existing routes shared greater than 70 per cent of stops with other routes. Service costs were increasing, with Brisbane's operating costs up by 35½ per cent with only a 2.9 per cent increase in passengers between 2009-10 and 2011-12. There are

infrastructure constraints, with over 600 buses entering the CBD in 2011, and this current rate of operational projection will have over 1,070 coming into the CBD in 2021.

South-East Queensland has approximately 3.1 million people serviced by 446 bus routes. Yet the greater Melbourne area, which has a similar land area, has a population of 4.17 million people serviced by only 346 routes. The clearly stated objectives of the bus network review were to eliminate service duplication, manage the infrastructure capacity such as the Cultural Centre bottleneck, get more people on to public transport, get better intermodal connectivity and redirect resources to routes where there is overcrowding.

Unlike the pathetic record of the Beattie and Bligh Labor governments when it comes to public consultation, as evidenced by the forced local government amalgamations and asset sales, the Newman government is prepared to always listen to the community as any form of project management involving change requires one to take the people with you and actively listen to their concerns. For example, I have been on talkback radio as has the minister. We have had extensive meetings with fellow MPs and local councillors. We have outlined on the website the proposed network review changes and we have also made sure that we have had another two weeks on top of the initial two for the consultation period.

No government has a mortgage on the best ideas and getting things perfectly correct. However, one thing is for sure: as sure as night follows day when it comes to project management and fiscal responsibility in this state, those seven over there continue to follow the bouncing ball.

(Time expired)