




Speech By
Andrew Powell

MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE

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MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Minister for Transport and the Commonwealth Games

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (11.56 am): The transport minister might be the ‘Sergeant Schultz’ of this government, but commuters are far from impressed with his claim that he knew nothing. Today we have learned that Queensland Rail has been working on the driver shortage for most of this year. In February a report was compiled which revealed the lack of drivers and the chaos this would cause on the new Redcliffe line, but apparently the minister knew nothing. The minister responsible knew nothing!

Nearly two weeks ago we saw rail chaos when 100 train services were cancelled without notice. Commuters were left at stations while the transport minister went into hiding and refused to face the media and angry commuters. The Queensland Rail board held an emergency meeting over the weekend, but still there was radio silence from the minister. If anyone was wondering where he was, you only had to look in the VIP tent at the Gold Coast 600. Champagne and canapes are no use to Queensland Rail commuters who are worried about getting home at night or to work on Monday morning. The minister subsequently released an interim timetable, if you can call it that. What the interim timetable means for South-East Queensland commuters is cuts, cuts and cuts. Across the week 200 services were cut, and the transport minister had the nerve to pat himself on the back. You should not be congratulated for running fewer services on time. The minister introduced a reduced service timetable, he let three Queensland Rail officials fall on their swords, and he again refused to front commuters as Queensland Rail prepared for more chaos last Friday. The interim timetable did not even last a week. How does the minister still have his job?

The minister’s solution to the train driver shortage was to hire 100 more drivers, but he could not even recruit the first 100 and admitted that only 79 have been hired. We then learned there are enough drivers but they have not been trained yet. Last week the minister said we would have the required number of drivers trained by December, but instead we learned that this rail crisis could continue until 2018 while drivers are trained. Minister Hinchliffe has duded commuters, and unfortunately service cuts and train delays are becoming the norm across South-East Queensland.

In case those opposite are confused as to what good government and a good transport minister look like, I will jog their memory. Those opposite can throw as much mud as they like, but our LNP government’s record speaks for itself. Under the LNP Queensland had the most efficient trains in the entire country. We turned around the mess we inherited from the Bligh government, of which this transport minister was a member.

The last time we saw our rail network being run this badly, the Premier was the minister responsible for transport. She oversaw a three-year low in rail reliability. Under Labor, 86 per cent of trains ran on time. This was occurring as the now Premier hiked fares by 15 per cent, year after year after year. The LNP was able to turn that around, getting Queensland Rail’s on-time performance to a

record high of 96 per cent. We commissioned the Springfield line, we put on more services and more drivers and we got construction of the Moreton Bay Rail Link started. This transport minister is taking us back to the bad old Labor days.

So far, Queensland Rail's CEO and chair have taken responsibility and resigned, but the buck stops with the minister. The Premier said that heads would roll, but Minister Hinchliffe is still here. The Deputy Premier summed it up best last week when she threw the transport minister under the bus—or train, for that matter. 'The minister of the day is responsible,' the Deputy Premier said. We are now in our second week of timetable cuts and this minister still will not take responsibility. Commuters are sick and tired of this chaos.

(Time expired)