



Speech By  
**Andrew Powell**


**MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE**

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Record of Proceedings, 5 September 2017

**MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST**

**Queensland Rail**

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (11.59 am): As the one-year anniversary of this Labor government's catastrophic rail fail fast approaches, one thing is abundantly clear to South-East Queensland commuters: it ain't going away anytime soon. In fact, it is fair to say that Annastacia Palaszczuk has about as much chance of fixing this rail fail as New South Wales does of winning 10 State of Origin series in a row. For the benefit of the House, I will recap. What began with the aborted attempt to open the new Redcliffe Peninsular line turned into a commuter nightmare when it was revealed that Labor had forgotten to recruit and train enough drivers for the new timetable. Even when Labor cut 1,800 services a month, they could not ensure that the trains turned up on time.

At Christmas 2016, two-thirds of what was already a reduced schedule was cancelled with no notice given to commuters. As a result, we had the Strachan commission of inquiry, a lame duck minister resigned and another lame duck minister failed to stand up to the unions and implement key recommendations. I remind the House that there was zero external recruitment, despite saying that they would initiate it immediately, and an inability to get the new generation rollingstock onto our lines. Now we are being told by Deutsche Bahn that we will need 18 new trains in time for the Commonwealth Games or that, to use the words of the member for Maryborough, there will be a debacle. The Palaszczuk Labor government's legacy on public transport is cuts, confusion, buck passing and packed trains and it ain't going to get any better, because it simply is not getting any better.

Three weeks ago, we had the debacle on the Ferny Grove line. I refer to reports from that event. Distressed passengers were trapped on a train for almost three hours in a horror trip that left scared children bawling to be let off and forced some travellers to urinate in open carriages. They sat in total darkness for about one-third of the three-hour ordeal. Eighteen-year-old Christian Berndt of Ferny Hills described it as follows—

We were told we were going to be evacuated, which was meant to happen after an hour-and-a-half. This never ended up happening.

They decided on a few other plans, which didn't work. The announcements were horrible. We'd go an hour without hearing anything.

In the time it took to fix the train and get going again, we all could have off safely, and reached a road to take a taxi, bus, Uber—literally anything would have been better than how it was handled.

My compensation for my three hours in the one spot was my \$1.95 fare refund and a verbal apology. I'm obviously not too impressed with that.

How did Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk respond? She got furious and we know what happens when she gets furious: absolutely nothing! Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk is calling for Queensland Rail to apologise to every passenger left trapped on the train for almost three hours, but stops short of calling for heads to roll because she knows that the only head that needs to roll is that of the Deputy Premier.

Nearly two weeks ago, we had the crazy episode when carriage doors remained open on a train travelling at speeds of up to 100 kilometres an hour on the Gold Coast line, horrifying passengers on their peak-hour trip to work. That occurred on the northbound train leaving Nerang for Helensvale station at about 7.45 am. Despite efforts to push the emergency assistance button for a Queensland Rail staffer to turn off the power to the doors, they opened again at the Nerang station. What was the minister's response? The Deputy Premier's response was that it is an extremely concerning incident. Again, zero responsibility, zero apology and zero effort to fix the rail fail.

Last week, the 5.59 am Caboolture to Roma Street service was stuck for more than an hour, south of Narangba station. To cap it all off, the Fair Work Commission has had to do what Annastacia Palaszczuk and Jackie Trad could not do, that is, stand up to the unions and put them in their place. Finally, 217 days after the Strachan report was handed down, we have advertisements calling externally for new drivers. As I said, at this rate Annastacia Palaszczuk has about as much chance of fixing this rail fail as New South Wales has of winning 10 State of Origin series in a row.