




Speech By
Christopher Whiting

MEMBER FOR BANCROFT

Record of Proceedings, 17 October 2018

**MOTION: QUEENSLAND RAIL; NO CONFIDENCE IN THE MINISTER FOR
TRANSPORT AND MAIN ROADS**

 **Mr WHITING** (Bancroft—ALP) (5.24 pm): I stand to counter this motion and label it as a great farce in front of us here tonight. I worry if the member for Chatsworth and other LNP members actually believe what they have in this alphabet-busting motion in front of us tonight, but they have to try it because they have nothing else. They can offer nothing else with regard to rail. I heard the member for Nicklin say what he will say to baby Elizabeth on the Sunshine Coast. I would say this to her: do you remember when the LNP only offered fifty-fifty funding on the Sunshine Coast rail? That is how concerned it was in terms of getting rail in that area when it was listed for 80-20 funding from the feds.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr WHITING: Those opposite do not want to hear about the great success we have had in rail. Who was it that built the Redcliffe rail line? It was Labor—a joint state Labor government with the federal government with the Moreton Bay council. The Redcliffe line has made a huge difference to our area. Public transport has improved remarkably since it was implemented as it revolves around the stations in our area. Locals can get the train to access a whole range of study and work opportunities.

It is Labor that is delivering Cross River Rail—only Labor. This \$5 billion project will transform South-East Queensland and public transport. In my area Cross River Rail will mean 5,400 extra seats and I calculate commuters will save an hour and a half each week if they are commuting back and forth to the city. It is very clear that it is Labor that invests in rail. Only Labor understands that rail opportunities create the work and education opportunities that working Queenslanders need. That stands in very stark contrast to what the LNP has done. The public knows what the LNP did to rail in the Campbell Newman government. It knows that it got rid of 1,700 workers—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Members to my left, if you wish to make a contribution, rise to your feet and do so. Apart from that, cease your interjections, particularly those members who have already spoken on the motion. You have had your chance.

Mr WHITING: Members of the public know it was the LNP that got rid of the driver trainers. They know it was the LNP that abandoned driver recruitment, and in my area they know it was the LNP that chose a cheaper signalling option on the Redcliffe rail line—one that was not recommended by QR because it may not have linked in with existing systems, and it was absolutely right. That decision by the LNP led to a lengthy delay in the opening of the rail line.

We know one of the major casualties of LNP mismanagement was train driver training. QR requires a pipeline of driver recruits in training to ensure that if one retires or leaves for whatever reason that driver can be replaced with someone with a full suite of the skills required. How many recruits started the training process in the final 12 months of the Newman government? It was zero—absolutely none!

The Minister for Transport and Main Roads is now overseeing a rebuilding program that involves eight train crew training schools in 2018. More drivers commenced training this year than ever before in QR's history—more in one year than in the entire term of the LNP government. Since 4 October 2016, 105 drivers and 232 guards have been trained and are now fully qualified and working on the South-East Queensland network. This represents a net increase of 52 total qualified drivers operating on the Citytrain network. When recruitment was opened to external applicants with no previous QR driving experience in August 2017, there was an overwhelming response. More than 10,000 applications were received.

The numbers I have outlined do not represent a failure; they represent an overwhelming success that only Labor could deliver. As recommended by the commission of inquiry report, QR is now moving to an ongoing recruitment model and we will ensure the pipeline of train drivers never dries up again, as it did under the LNP government. It is very clear that, with Commonwealth Games trains running on time 95 per cent of the time and overtime coming down, this is what success sounds like when you run a rail network under the Labor government. I hope we never have to return to what we had to face during the time of the Campbell Newman government.