




Speech By
Samuel O'Connor

MEMBER FOR BONNEY

Record of Proceedings, 17 October 2018

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

 **Mr O'CONNOR** (Bonney—LNP) (5.29 pm): I rise to speak in support of the motion moved by the member for Chatsworth, in particular that part of that motion that expresses no confidence in the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. I might be an optimist but, based on his performance, I suspect that there may even be members on the other side who support that notion.

The area that I represent lies just under an hour's drive from Brisbane—on the rare occasion that people get a clear run on the M1. That means that many of the people I represent can expect to work in Brisbane but still live in what is my opinion the best part of the Gold Coast. A survey that I have cited before from the *Gold Coast Bulletin* found that 77 per cent of people would rather take the train to Brisbane than drive on the M1, but they do not mainly because of the cost and the perceived lack of reliability.

This motion has been moved around the time of a very sad anniversary. It will be two years since the start of Labor's rail fail on 21 October. We have all heard the reports of this rail fail and experienced it ourselves. As such, our expectations of the quality of public transport that this government will provide Queenslanders are pretty low.

On the Gold Coast, leading up to the Commonwealth Games there were station refurbishments, but obvious failings have not been addressed at my local train stations. Helensvale station is the only station in the state that has bus, train and light rail connections, yet the number of car parks at that station has not kept pace with demand. The only thing stopping users from copping a \$157 in fines from the council is the council's reluctance to enforce the laws. Every day, easily 150 to 200 commuters have to park illegally on the verges or at the neighbouring Westfield shopping centre. On a workday, just driving around Helensvale shows the lengths that some people go to to get a car space.

With the M1 being in the condition that it is and the congestion that commuters face, I would have thought upgrading the park-and-rides at the Gold Coast a no-brainer. Yet, once again, this year's budget was all about Brisbane stations, with \$12.4 million for upgrades to their parking facilities and only a measly 150 car park spaces promised for the Gold Coast between Ormeau and Varsity Lakes. Further, reports that \$1.5 million was spent by QR during the games as a show-up-to-work bonus is completely outside of community expectations. The taxpayers who fund that money do not get paid any extra just for turning up to work.

The light rail has proven itself to be vital infrastructure for the Gold Coast. I am delighted that the minister notes my strong support for the trams at every opportunity, particularly for a future spur line to Harbour Town. However, with stage 2, the Gold Coast has its own rail fail of sorts, with the trams not following the rest of the timetable and instead finishing at midnight. I have had many people tell me of their experience of using the tram on a Saturday night only to find themselves stranded at GCUH where it terminates. From there, they are forced to get a taxi or Uber to their car, or take a dangerous walk

home in the dark. That has turned many people away from seeing the tram as a viable mode of transport.

When answering why this is the case, TMR said that it looked at bus data before stage 2 was put in place. That is hardly a comparison for usage of the tram. Many people who never got on a bus are keen to use the tram and the bus routes TMR looked at did not run past even 11.30 at night. We have the line now. It was expensive to build, so why are we not using it to its full capacity? A petition that I have run over the past few weeks on the issue has had over 300 people sign it, clearly showing that there is a need for this service. We need our public transport system to be a viable option, but just yesterday many Gold Coasters were again delayed in getting to work.

Last night, I had the great pleasure of having the Rotary Club of Parkwood visit Parliament House.

Mr Stevens interjected.

Mr O'CONNOR: I recognise the member for Mermaid Beach for visiting. He was at their inaugural meeting. Last night, while we were in the lift, we ran into the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. Being polite, I introduced my guests to the minister. One of the particularly cheeky members of the group had caught the train up to work in Brisbane that morning, leaving the Gold Coast at 7 am and arriving at Northgate just before 10 am. I can assure the House that he took the opportunity to provide the minister with some thoughts on his experience.

During the 2017 election campaign, Labor made a number of rail commitments to the Gold Coast, including a proposal for three new stations. Perhaps Labor meant to promise these stations during the 2020 election campaign, because the budget papers show that there is no money arriving until 2021. It is unfair to make these promises and force Gold Coasters to wait for these stations until Cross River Rail is completed in Brisbane. It is really a hollow promise. I commend this motion to the House.