




Speech By
Hon. Mark Bailey

MEMBER FOR MILLER

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Rail Infrastructure

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Miller—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (10.03 am): More than 70 per cent of eligible Queenslanders have been fully vaccinated against COVID-19. In the weeks ahead, we need vaccination rates to climb even further. Getting vaccinated is the best way to drive Queensland's economic recovery and the best way to reunite families for Christmas. As other states and much of the world have gone in and out of long lockdowns, we have been able to live relatively normal lives in Queensland thanks to our strong leadership. However, there is no denying that our tough, necessary and effective health measures to keep Queenslanders safe have presented challenges for some of our regions.

While parts of the state have recorded a spike in domestic tourism visitors, other areas which rely on international tourists have done it tough. As our state border reopens and Queenslanders get away for summer, the Palaszczuk Labor government is doing everything we can to support our regions through our rail network, including by quickly repairing the North Coast line after it was damaged recently by torrential rain and flooding, washing out in 18 places along an 11-kilometre stretch. Queensland Rail led the recovery works with help from local contractors including Rhomberg Rail and Schwarz excavations from Gracemere, Hopkins Brothers from Rockhampton and JWB Constructions from Gladstone. Fifty staff and contractors worked day and night to reopen the line in less than a week, and I thank them for their excellent work.

The North Coast line is now open and we want tourists to head west for less and make the most of the far north. Right now we have two-for-one tickets on the Inlander, the Westlander and the Spirit of the Outback tourist trains going to Longreach, Charleville, Mount Isa and everywhere in between, and people can take a mate for free. The Palaszczuk Labor government also waived the licence fee for Sky Rail in the far north, which is now offering a 50 per cent local discount. We have applied the same locals discount to Kuranda Scenic Railway and are giving free travel to our frontline workers.

We even had a colouring-in competition for Kuranda Scenic Railway's 130th birthday. Mr Speaker, I understand that you yourself crowned the winner, 11-year-old Cooper from Gordonvale State School.

Mr SPEAKER: He coloured within the lines.

Mr BAILEY: Cooper is now taking his class for a very special excursion on the Kuranda Scenic Railway. As people hit the road and our railways to regional Queensland for the festive season, they need to get vaccinated. Vaccination protects everyone around us, not just the individual. Remember before a jaunt, before a cab, get the jab. Travel to the max but listen to the facts and get the vax.