




Speech By
Michael Berkman

MEMBER FOR MAIWAR

Record of Proceedings, 14 September 2023

ADJOURNMENT

Taringa Railway Station, Accessibility

 **Mr BERKMAN** (Maiwar—Grn) (6.17 pm): I want to take a moment this evening to talk about the Taringa train station. I, along with my team and a bunch of west-side locals, have been advocating for years now for an accessibility upgrade at the Taringa station. Just this morning a petition we are running clocked over 1,500 signatures, which is great to see. I have to confess that I am not at all surprised that there is that level of interest, given how many folks rely on Taringa station. It is close to hundreds if not thousands of residences, our indefatigable federal MP's office, a private hospital, a medical centre, a pharmacist, a couple of pathology services, local shops, a church, a park—I could keep going. I have not even got to the Persian Star grocery store or Saccharomyces Bottle-O. What an incredible range they have there!

Importantly, with no busway on the west side or bus lanes on Coronation Drive—thanks kindly to the Newman LNP—it is even more important that we have accessible train stations. For those who do not know or have not been there, Taringa station is only accessible by very steep flights of stairs, which makes it entirely inaccessible for people using wheelchairs, those with mobility issues or most parents or carers with prams. For years I have heard stories from residents about the great difficulty they have lugging their bikes or prams or children up and down the stairs. I have heard from folks trying to access the relatively new private hospital who have been forced to drive because they cannot walk up and down the stairs with their injuries. I have also spoken to people in wheelchairs who are forced to get off the train at the neighbouring Indooroopilly or Toowong stations and hope that there is an attendant available to help them get to Taringa using alternative transport. The very fact that the neighbouring stations at Indooroopilly and Toowong are accessible has been presented as justification for delaying an accessibility upgrade at Taringa. For local residents or anyone relying on that station, it simply is not good enough.

For years the state government has put upgrading Taringa station into the too-hard basket. They have blamed constructability issues. It is a difficult site, but, if memory serves me correctly, I recall that that was a barrier to upgrading the now beautifully upgraded and accessible Auchenflower station. Everything is impossible until it is not anymore.

It is 2023 and my community is starting to get sick of the excuses. Investment in accessibility is not a nice to have; it is an essential investment in our communities. Everyone should be able to access our public transport system, and it is about time the government made that a clear priority. I was obviously pleased to hear in estimates from Queensland Rail that Taringa is definitely being considered for the next round of accessibility upgrades. I urge the transport minister to stop putting off this essential upgrade and add it to the accessibility upgrade program.

Given I have eight seconds to spare, I should embarrass my son who is in the gallery. Hi Noah, thanks for joining us. Members will be pleased to know that he came in from Indooroopilly on the train to wait for dad to finish work.