




Speech By
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ADJOURNMENT

Taringa Railway Station, Accessibility Upgrades

 **Mr BERKMAN** (Maiwar—Grn) (6.50 pm): Much has changed since the 1950s: we have had 16 different prime ministers—17 if you want to include Kevin Rudd's second go at it; the contraceptive pill was approved; Medicare was introduced; Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin landed on the moon; and First Nations people won the right to vote. However, one thing has almost stayed exactly the same. I am sure everyone here knows just what I am talking about. Any guesses?

A government member: The LNP!

Mr BERKMAN: I am looking at you, transport minister. Drum roll—Taringa station in my electorate! It was originally built in 1875. When the lines were quadruplicated in the late 1950s it was rebuilt with two platforms, an overpass and a whole bunch of stairs. So it is today, still completely inaccessible except by stairs. Let us put this into perspective. When Taringa station was last upgraded TV was in black and white, phones had rotary dials, Australians bought their groceries with the pound and Robert Menzies was prime minister. Those stairs have been shutting people out of the station for far longer than we have had computers or the internet. Yes, they do shut people out. Anyone who uses a wheelchair, a pram, a bike or has any mobility issue just cannot use Taringa station, which is pretty ludicrous given that it is right next to a private hospital, a supermarket, a church, allied health services and some really nice parkland.

The government says they use patronage numbers to prioritise upgrades, so I will remind them one more time—the transport minister in particular—that around 50,000 people use Taringa station each month, but the irony is that this figure excludes everyone who cannot use it because it is inaccessible. Taringa is an important and growing community hub and it deserves an accessible train station.

There is something else that has happened since Taringa station was last upgraded: the federal Anti-Discrimination Act was amended to include disability standards for public transport. Taringa station is about as far from meeting those standards as you could possibly get. More than 2,000 people signed my petition asking the transport minister to commit funding for an accessibility upgrade at Taringa station. With just a short few weeks left until the budget is delivered, I really hope I will be able to give them some good news at budget time.

I do not want to hear anyone tell them, like the former transport minister did, that they cannot access Taringa station but if they want to they should get a taxi to Indooroopilly and catch the train there instead. It is really just not good enough. We have waited long enough. Public transport accessibility is an essential investment, not a nice-to-have. Take the Taringa station out of the too-hard basket and include it for funding upgrades in next month's budget.