

Question on Notice

No. 211

Asked on 7 March 2024

MR R STEVENS ASKED MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT AND MAIN ROADS AND MINISTER FOR DIGITAL SERVICES (HON B MELLISH)—

QUESTION:

With reference to the government's announcement on 7 December 2023 that it will be purchasing 200 rail replacement buses—

Will the Minister advise (a) where the vehicles will be deposited and whether this is a State owned facility, (b) the entity that will be hiring the drivers and maintenance personnel for the rail replacement fleet and (c) given the large number of Cross River Rail related rail closures scheduled for 2024, why the government did not plan to have these 200 buses in service by now?

ANSWER:

I note the Member's keen interest in the Miles Government's Rail Revolution.

The Miles Government's passenger rail network is undergoing significant transformation in response to unprecedented population growth and emerging demand. Over the next decade, various rail infrastructure investment projects and system enhancements will be delivered which will change the way people move.

(a & b)

The Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) has commenced discussions with its contracted Alternate Transport Service delivery partners, and contract details for the new fleet are underway. As such, the location and facility that vehicles will be deposited and driver hiring entity is still to be finalised.

(c)

The manufacturing of the new bus fleet in Queensland is to support network disruptions when other major rail construction projects get underway, like Logan and Gold Coast Faster Rail, Direct Sunshine Coast Rail and future accessibility upgrades to multiple train stations across South East Queensland (SEQ). It also ensures the ongoing sustainability of the local bus manufacturing industry.

Translink already has enough rail replacement buses to support rail service interruptions throughout the year, including Cross River Rail related impacts. For example, TMR has already introduced StationLink (route 109) to provide an alternative transport option for customers during these planned closures. These services run at high frequencies providing customers impacted by the closures with a reliable bus service.

In addition to that, TMR added another five routes this year alone, to support current station closures for accessibility upgrades across the SEQ rail network.

The arrangement for the new fleet will enable flexible deployment to ensure SEQ public transport users can travel across the rail network during track closures. TMR will continue to plan for rail replacement services to ensure it meets the increased demand as major rail construction projects continue in the coming years.