

Question on Notice

No. 221

Asked on 2 March 2006

MRS ATTWOOD asked the Minister for Transport and Main Roads (MR LUCAS)—

QUESTION:

What is the Government doing to ensure better use of public transport in south east Queensland?

ANSWER:

I thank the Honourable Member for her question-

It is a fact that South East Queensland is undergoing rapid population growth coupled with changing residential density and increasing urban growth. This growth presents opportunities and challenges for government. Public transport is a key element in effectively meeting these challenges and I must acknowledge the Honourable Member's own personal commitment to improving public transport across the region.

To succeed, experience elsewhere in the world tells us that public transport must be fast, efficient and easy to use. The Beattie Government is responding to the transport challenge with a coordinated and decisive approach. Some five years ago, we sat down with our local government counterparts and partners in industry to conceive an integrated public transport system for SEQ that would grow and develop with the region. We identified three essential elements – integrated ticketing, network and service planning including medium and long-term integrated infrastructure planning and eventually, electronic ticketing.

Integrated ticketing kicked off on 1 July 2004, with TransLink launched as the facilitating body at the same time. The main aim of integrated ticketing was to make public transport easy to use by standardising services, ticket prices and facilities across the entire network. The scale of this goal was unprecedented. It was the first time in the world a government had attempted to integrate so many different operators (17) over such a large area (10, 233 sq km) into one system.

TransLink's first 12 months of operation surpassed expectations, with patronage up 9.9 percent on the same period the previous year – that equals an extra 12 million passenger journeys across SEQ. Since then, patronage has increased a further 12.9 percent, with more than 220 million passenger journeys made on TransLink services throughout SEQ since July 2004.

Through TransLink, the State Government has produced the *TransLink Network Plan* (TNP) to improve public transport across SEQ, from Noosa to Coolangatta and westward to Helidon. The TNP represents one of the largest investments in public transport in Queensland's history. In addition to \$1.4 billion for rail and bus infrastructure upgrades, the Queensland Government has committed \$335 million over the next decade to boost public transport services in South East Queensland.

Since July 2004, the State Government has made significant improvements to public transport services across South East Queensland, through TransLink and its business partners. These improvements include:

- extending the hours of weekday bus services, improving connections with rail and adding extra weekend services in Ipswich (Western Region). As a result, Ipswich has seen major growth in services with a 66 percent increase in passenger trips.
- region-wide service improvements for Logan (Southern Region) and Redlands (Eastern Region). In Logan this represented a 60 percent increase in services. The first six months of these services have resulted in a 30 percent increase in passenger trips.
- restructuring Sunshine Coast's bus network in an effort to address late running and overcrowding issues by replacing long, unreliable routes with a greater number of shorter routes. Already, Sunshine Coast bus services have experienced a 32 percent increase in passenger journeys.
- For the majority of residents in SEQ living outside Brisbane, the introduction of a coordinated and integrated urban transit system through TransLink has meant cheaper, easier travel and more services, more often. This is essential to the continued growth of the region.

Brisbane residents have also benefited from new and improved services including four new BUZ (Bus Upgrade Zone) services to Carindale, Algester, New Farm to West End and Aspley. With services running every 10 minutes in peak hours and every 15 minutes off peak, timetables are not required and patronage is increased considerably.

TransLink has worked closely with special event organisers to provide extra bus and train services for special events such as Riverfire, Melbourne Cup celebrations at local race courses. Through TransLink, the Government was able to introduce event ticket packages for major sporting events at The Gabba, Suncorp Stadium and, for the first time in 2005, the Lexmark Indy 300. These packages mean public transport services are provided as part of event ticket prices. To date these initiatives have been very successful. In fact, more than 80 percent of people use public transport to travel to matches at Suncorp Stadium.

The Beattie Government delivered on its commitment for late night public transport services prior to Christmas 2005 to help people get to where they need to go at any hour of the day. To date more than 30,000 have taken advantage of NightLink bus and train services.

The State Government is also planning further major service enhancements for Brisbane, Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast, with additional service improvements outlined in the TransLink Network Plan also being rolled out in 2006. Peak-hour commuters will benefit from additional peak hour train services as new trains are delivered and line capacity increased from 2007.

The provision of high quality infrastructure also plays a vital role in increasing public transport usage.

The South East Busway, which runs between Brisbane's CBD and Eight Mile Plains, opened in 2001. In the first four years of operation, core service patronage has increased by 120 percent. Today, more than 100,000 trips are made on the South East Busway every day.

We are in an era of substantial infrastructure delivery. Through the release of the SEQ Infrastructure Plan and Program, the Beattie Government has committed to a level of investment that will deliver significant public transport improvements, including a network of busways for Greater Brisbane, the Petrie to Kippa-Ring bus priority project and the extension of the passenger rail line from Darra to Springfield.

For the Gold and Sunshine Coasts, it means additional rail tracks and upgrades from Ormeau to Coomera, Helensvale to Robina, and Salisbury to Kuraby; extending the rail line from Robina to Coolangatta; developing a quality public transport corridor from Helensvale to Broadbeach and Coolangatta; developing a bus priority corridor from Caloundra to Maroochydore and delivering the CAMCOS rail line from Beerwah to Maroochydore.

Other major initiatives include the TransLink smart card. The launch of smart card technology across the network in 2006 will take integrated ticketing one important step closer to ensuring fast, efficient and seamless public transport.

Through TransLink, the Beattie Government will continue to improve the integration of passenger transport services in South East Queensland - making it easier for the people of South East Queensland to get to where they want to go.