

**Question on Notice**

**No. 856**

**Asked on Wednesday, 6 June 2007**

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

**QUESTION:**

Will he outline how the Westside Bus Service can improve its service to the people in the Bundamba Electorate?

**ANSWER:**

I thank the Honourable Member for her question.

Westside Bus Company provides approximately 140,000 urban bus trips and 13,000 school trips per year. In the three years of TransLink operations since July 2004, there has been a 90 per cent increase in service kilometres travelled by Westside buses and a 97 per cent increase in patronage in the Ipswich region.

TransLink advise there have been a number of factors contributing to Westside's service delivery performance:

- the rate of growth in services;
- difficulty in attracting and retaining sufficient bus drivers;
- impact of increased service operations on older vehicles;
- impact of major road projects and congestion for on-time running;
- operator performance.

Since July 2004 Westside has purchased 20 new buses with and 12 replacement buses. All new buses are air-conditioned.

TransLink have made a number of service improvements in the Ipswich region. These service improvements have been implemented in stages at a cost of \$4.4m.

Some minor changes were made in the Ipswich region on 31 July 2004 and again on 19 November 2004. The most significant round of service changes for the western region was implemented in April 2005. These aimed to build on the network wide changes and reflect customer feedback. These changes prompted a range of comments from customers and stakeholders in the region. In response TransLink undertook minor network enhancements in December 2005.

On 27 February 2006 changes were made to two services (routes 522 & 530). In November 2006 further adjustments were made to 11 Westside Bus Company services and 1 Laidley Bus Service in the western region. Restructure services to improve on-time running and extend services into new developing areas

Then on 15 March 2007, TransLink implemented another major restructure which greatly improved links between the Ipswich CBD, North Ipswich and Springfield. The new routes service the new Orion Springfield Town Centre, the Riverlink Shopping Centre at North Ipswich, and regional education centres.

Westside is conducting a review of bus schedules to improve service reliability. The present bus schedules have insufficient layover time between trips to accommodate road construction projects and congestion, resulting in later trips.

The Government has approved additional funding for enhancements to bus maintenance which have been completed. Approval has also been given to accelerate the replacement of five buses this month.

Westside is also actively seeking new drivers and assistance has been provided by TransLink for promotional material and with sourcing of temporary drivers from other operators.

An assessment has also been conducted of Westside's overall performance under the contract. Westside's performance, particularly in areas of service reliability and complaints handling, was not considered to be meeting the contracted obligations.

TransLink has imposed financial penalties on Westside for performance breaches under the contract. Westside have also been instructed to:

- address service reliability issues;
- improve complaints handling processes;
- improve consultation with schools and the local community and its representatives;
- improve driver training.

Westside is implementing strategies such as:

- engaging additional staff to address complaints handling;
- engaging additional staff for driver training;
- sourcing assistance to review the service schedules with a view to improving service reliability; and
- reviewing community feedback processes and arrangements.

Westside's performance will continue to be closely monitored to assess progress.