



Speech By
Mark Robinson

MEMBER FOR OODGEROO

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**MOTION: QUEENSLAND RAIL; NO CONFIDENCE IN THE MINISTER FOR
TRANSPORT AND MAIN ROADS**

 **Dr ROBINSON** (Oodgeroo—LNP) (5.19 pm): I rise to speak in support of the motion. The prolonged ‘rail fail’, in all its aspects, has gone on for far too long. Under this Labor government, frustrated commuters can be forgiven for wondering if there is ever going to be light at the end of the tunnel. The state has witnessed a revolving door of failed Labor transport ministers, each coming into office with an enthusiastic reassurance that they are going to fix the shattered system and get everything back on track. We are still waiting, and it appears we will continue to wait under Labor. It is not surprising that confidence is deteriorating to record lows under the current minister. He has overseen one dilemma after another, culminating in so much angst and uncertainty in the community.

Labor’s track record of rail fails is growing faster and longer than Jack’s beanstalk. Going back to the Premier’s time as minister, we saw 15 per cent increases in public transport fares year after year after year. It is unacceptable that the patronage base for public transport is still recovering to this day. Then along came ministers Trad, Hinchliffe and Bailey. With each of them taking a turn at holding the wheel, the continued tradition of Labor failure in this vital portfolio has steered along its unaltered and disastrous course. There can be no denying that the system is still badly broken. Media headlines announce failure after failure and within the last fortnight it has been reported that QR chair Phillip Strachan resigned along with two other board members. Remarkably, these resignations—one being the Premier’s hand-picked ‘Mr Fix It’—have followed on from earlier departures by the then QR chair and CEO in October 2016. Such high-level partings of the way surely spell it out loudly and clearly to anyone who is listening that something is incredibly wrong.

It is well documented that Labor in its wisdom ignored the warnings of GIRO and Indec of driver shortages once the Redcliffe peninsula line opened. In fact, when the line opened in October 2016 there were fewer qualified drivers than in January the year before. It simply does not equate and it is far from rocket science to realise that the opening of an additional rail line with additional services is going to require an appropriate number of additional qualified staff to operate it. Most disturbingly, timetable changes and cancelled services have become part of the everyday life for long-suffering rail commuters, including my constituents on the Cleveland line. Who can forget Christmas Day 2016 when no less than 261 scheduled services were cancelled? People were forced to wait on platforms when they should have been enjoying the festivities with their families. This is just one example of the rail chaos under Labor that has had a huge impact on a very special day.

As I have mentioned before, the Cleveland line has been dubbed ‘the misery line’, with 42 cancelled services cut by Labor. Commuters are fed up with the unreliability of services, so much so that our roads are now heavily congested each and every day as people get back in their cars because of the rail uncertainty. It seems that Labor is all talk and no action when it comes to encouraging the use of public transport. Rail services have to be efficient, cost effective and, most importantly, reliable if there is going to be any hope of easing the current trend of increasing vehicle numbers. Locals know that Cross River Rail, which is being promoted as the solution by Redlands Labor members, will do

nothing for many years, and that is if it is ever built! Commuters need and want services restored and more investment committed to upgrading the line and rail station parking facilities.

There has long been a plea to duplicate the line from Cleveland to Manly. Again in this House I call on the government to do so and to do it sooner rather than later. Not surprisingly, this important infrastructure project rates highly in every community survey undertaken. However, Labor continues to not be listening or, if it is, it is more content to put it in the too-hard basket. In contrast, the LNP cares about public transport needs. We care about ensuring commuters are provided with the services they so rightly deserve—services to get them to work, school, to attend business and appointments and to participate in everyday life.

Yesterday I met with departmental officers after seeking a Transport briefing because we care. We want to work towards solving the issues and do not accept the minister's poor excuses and constant playing of the blame game. The Leader of the Opposition came out to Cleveland station recently and spoke to people using the rail service. I thank the opposition leader for caring and showing her interest. Under the LNP, our rail network was considered the best managed in Australia with on-time running at 96 per cent. I support the motion.