

day?



PHOTO: BRETT WORTMAN



HOME AT LAST: Kathy Sundstrom disembarks at Nambour at 7pm after leaving at 6.14am. PHOTO: BRETT WORTMAN

Once-passionate MPs have gone all quiet

WHAT'S happened to our once-vocal Sunshine Coast MPs who promised to fight for the infrastructure the region desperately needs?

Many rail commuters feel the response to the causes Sunshine Coast LNP members were so passionate about has been silence since they took government.

Member for Glasshouse Andrew Powell made the much-needed duplication of the railway line between Beerburrum and Landsborough his election issue.

But Transport Minister Scott Emerson's office said on Monday this was on hold.

"We have not yet committed to duplicating this line due to the debt left by Labor," the spokeswoman said.

Rail advocate Jeff Addison's response was this was "absolutely terrible".

Mr Powell sent the Daily a response yesterday, saying he remained "passionate about the need to provide Sunshine Coast commuters

with a more efficient rail service by way of the North Coast rail duplication project".

However, "as a Minister in the Newman Government, I am equally committed to delivering projects on time and within a budget, something Labor failed to do time and time again".

Mr Addison believed all six Sunshine Coast MPs needed to fight for rail infrastructure.

"If you look at Palmview and Caloundra South, there is a plan to bring another 85,000 people to the Coast within 10 years, but there is (no plan) to have the public transport network (updated) in that time," he said.

Mr Addison contacted Member for Fisher Peter Slipper last February in the hopes he could use his position as Speaker to help gain federal funding for the railway line in his electorate.

The Daily could not get a response from Mr Slipper.

Vandals blamed for dud toilets

By KATHY SUNDSTROM

VANDALS are the main culprits behind the lack of toilet facilities on some Sunshine Coast trains.

Queensland Rail general manager operations Kevin Wright said there were enough toilets to service all Sunshine Coast trains, but vandalism was an ongoing challenge.

Mr Wright invited the Daily for a meeting to discuss the toilet issue in Brisbane yesterday.

He said while every effort was made to ensure all trains on the Sunshine Coast route had toilets, at least "one a day" would go without.

Policing the toilet area had been almost impossible because of privacy issues and it appeared vandals knew this.

"They are attracted to the toilet area as there isn't the security in place," Mr Wright said.

"They throw things down the toilet and block it and then this has to be fixed."

He was confident Queensland Rail's maintenance schedule was sufficient to meet demand, but said there wasn't a maintenance department in Nambour which often resulted in the early-morning train going to the city broken.

He said "comfort stops" were offered in Caboolture, where people could get off the train.

He acknowledged the Caboolture stop was not long enough for a toilet break, but



ROAD TO NOWHERE

said trains ran regularly from Caboolture to the city during peak hour and it would not be a long wait before another arrived.

Queensland Rail also will consider placing notices on toilets and advising passengers of the existence of a second toilet on the train.

While the responsibility of train timetables, express routes and charges was with the Transport and Main Road Department and not Queensland Rail, Mr Wright said they did provide advice.

He said about 1000 people commuted from the Sunshine Coast each day, compared to the Gold Coast's about 4000, hence the need for more express services from there.

He also said the time difference between the two journeys was only around 30 minutes, but acknowledged this would make a difference to regular commuters.

which may be open, but to get there you have to get off the carriage and run at least three carriages down to hop on board again. Not possible on a 30-second station stop.

Acting on Queensland Rail's recommendation that passengers request a "comfort stop" won't work. To get to the guard, I would have to squeeze through the people packed on the train, push the emergency "call for guard" signal and then announce "I need the loo".

The guard would then have to stop a train full of people anxious to get to work

on time while waiting for me to relieve myself.

There are many issues commuters would like addressed, such as the toilets, the duplication of the railway line and cheaper fares.

But the main issue is length of time. An express service between the Sunshine Coast and Brisbane, such as is offered on the Gold Coast from Beenleigh, could cut 30 minutes from the journey.

Anything that can be done to make the two-hour journey shorter would be a welcome relief.



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