



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Main Committee

CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS

Swan Electorate: Transit Guards

SPEECH

Thursday, 24 November 2011

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Questioner
Speaker Irons, Steve, MP

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Mr IRONS (Swan) (09:50): On this fourth anniversary of my election to this parliament—and I hear the members on the opposite side cheering in remembrance!—I rise to speak about two transit guards who suffered some horrific injuries at the Beckenham train station in my electorate of Swan in the early hours of Sunday morning. After being alerted to troubles on the train, the transit officers were called on to deal with problems as the train made its way through my electorate before evicting large groups of troublemakers at Beckenham station.

In the local news it was reported that, after shepherding them off the train, the female officer turned around to face the other side of the platform. At that moment a man ran from behind and glassed her face. A male transit officer was subsequently knocked unconscious and fell onto the tracks. The female transit officer has received 17 stitches to her face after suffering severe lacerations, and the male officer will be off work for several weeks with severe injuries. This was a horrific and cowardly attack on people whose job is to try to protect the people of Perth in Western Australia.

As members would be aware, I have a long-running local community campaign for safety improvements on the Armadale line. As my constituents know, I have been consistently calling for permanent guards to be positioned at all stations on the line in my electorate. The Thornlie-Armadale train line consistently records the highest number of assaults of any line in Perth, and the last year has been no different, with a number of troubling incidents. We call it the 'Crime Line'.

I began my campaign after a 16-year-old was assaulted by three youths when leaving the Burswood station on 21 June 2009. Since then I have met communities at all train stations on the line, spent a morning at the CCTV monitoring station in Perth, held meetings with the police and distributed railway crime surveys to gauge public sentiment. Responses to my rail line survey strongly show that the people want to see these stations guarded at all times, and this is what I have been campaigning for on behalf of the community. I presented those survey results in person to the authorities—to the PTA, the police and the state government. I renew these calls again today.

It is my view that we need to look at the Victorian model that will soon be put in place by the Baillieu government. In my view this is what the WA state government needs to move towards, and I presented this idea to them earlier this year. I am encouraged that the state government is to launch a four-week blitz and that Minister Buswell will go on some night patrols with transit officers to assess the situation. However, we do need a longer term solution, and I urge the government to consider the Baillieu model. And, while it is not often that I agree with unions, I agree with their support for the transit officers, who do a great job at night-time on the trains in Perth.

I also take this opportunity to wish all my colleagues, on both sides of parliament, all the best for Christmas and look forward to seeing them return safely to this place early next year. Merry Christmas to everyone.