

Queensland Government's Response to the Queensland Rail Train Crewing Practices (Strachan) Commission of Inquiry Report

The Queensland Government apologises to the travelling public for Queensland Rail's recent performance which has included the cancellation of services and a reduction in the number and reliability of services following the opening of the Redcliffe Peninsula Line.

This situation has caused significant disruption to customers and eroded the public's confidence in Queensland Rail.

As the report makes clear, decisions taken as early as 2013 have led to the events we have seen on our rail network.

This Government believes that customers have a right to expect a safe, reliable and efficient public transport system.

This Government has accepted all 36 recommendations in Commissioner Strachan's report.

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Following the cancellation of 100 Citytrain services on 21 October 2016, the Government commissioned Mr Phillip Strachan to undertake a review of the circumstances leading up to and associated with the current disruptions to the Citytrain timetable. Commissioner Strachan examined the adequacy of Queensland Rail scheduling, rostering, train crew recruitment and training practices, as well as considering when deficits in train crew availability were known about and what action was taken ahead of the commissioning of the Redcliffe Peninsula Line to address these issues. Commissioner Strachan was also tasked with reviewing the implementation of the Government's Five Point Plan which included the progress of recruitment and training of train crew and the suitability of recruitment practices.

The report handed down by the Commission makes 36 recommendations and outlines a range of reforms aimed at restoring the reliability of Queensland Rail services and supporting the successful delivery of major rail projects into the future.

The Government supports the steps Commissioner Strachan has detailed to improve the operation of Queensland Rail and thanks him and his team for their tremendous work. The Government also wishes to thank the relevant unions and their members for their ongoing cooperation and input during the work of the Commission.

The Government's response to the report presents an opportunity to re-shape the operation of Queensland Rail and delivery of rail services and in doing so, bring about long-lasting changes to Queensland's transport system.

The Government will act immediately to respond to the report and put in place an open and transparent reporting regime, documenting the implementation of accepted recommendations. Our first priorities towards achieving a reliable rail service which restores public confidence in Queensland Rail's ability to deliver Citytrain services are to:

- establish a Citytrain Response Unit tasked with independently monitoring, auditing and reporting on the implementation of the recommendations of the Commission and Queensland Rail's response and recovery plan.
- implement regular reporting on train crew demand, supply and shortfalls initiatives to Queensland Rail's Executive Leadership Team and the responsible Ministers.
- implement transparent and timely reporting to TransLink and the public regarding operational issues that are affecting, or may affect, service delivery, to enable customers to plan alternative travel arrangements. This information is to be available in real time at stations, online and through call centres.
- ensure that negotiations with train crew unions focus on best practice crewing arrangements to alleviate overtime pressure on train crews.
- work with the train crew unions regarding introducing modern competency-based training arrangements in line with Australian and global best practices. The new training regime will shorten the average training time for new recruits without compromising safety.

Many of the recommendations made by the report involve detailed consideration to ensure their effective implementation. The Government accepts all the report's recommendations and will continually review the progress of Queensland Rail in implementing these changes through the newly-established Citytrain Response Unit.

The release of the Strachan Report represents a unique opportunity to improve the long-term resilience and delivery of passenger rail services in Queensland. An international recruitment process is currently underway to appoint a new Chief Executive Officer for Queensland Rail. The successful candidate will demonstrate a strong customer focus and have a proven capacity to deliver the cultural change and transformational program outlined in Commissioner Strachan's report. The Government is committed to the reform of Queensland Rail as a long-term strategy to improve passenger transport both now and into the future.

