



Speech By
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MEMBER FOR CURRUMBIN

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PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Gold Coast, Fare Evasion

 **Mrs STUCKEY** (Currumbin—LNP) (2.53 pm): I rise to bring to the attention of the House an alarming trend that is costing Queensland taxpayers millions of dollars, yet the Palaszczuk government has sat on its hands and done absolutely nothing about it. I speak of rampant fare evasion on Gold Coast Surfside buses. Figures I have obtained over the past three years reveal some startling numbers—numbers that should have this incompetent government scrambling to remedy. Figures for the period from April 2015 to 2016 were reported as 425,354. Since then, fare evasion numbers have skyrocketed at a staggering rate that should anger all Queenslanders. In 2016-17, the numbers blew out to 1,024,261—more than double the figure of the previous year. In 2017-18, the figures exploded further, with a count of 1.67 million fare evades.

I know that the residents of the Currumbin electorate are outraged by the prevalence of fare cheats and also their brazen attitude. I will refer to a few comments of residents who contacted me this month. One said—

School holidays are a joke kids up to 10 at a time just get on, bus drivers can't do anything—kids just say it is against the law you can't leave me behind—parents talk to your children teach them respect!!

Another said—

Every time that we use public transport there are at least 4 that get on and say they are fare evaders which upset the paying commuters. It's not just kids.

Yet another said—

Hi Jann, Your bus fare evasion article concerns me over the extent of it! I see it all the time as I am a frequent bus user. It seems to be one group, that being teenagers. They pile on the bus one after the other and grunt at the driver 'got no money' and the driver pushes the fare evader button ... they now think this means a free ride for all and sundry. It certainly doesn't teach them responsibility. More policing definitely required.

This fare evasion is not just the cost of lost revenue to honest Queenslanders; paying passengers have to cop increased fares and that is just not fair. Fare evasion is escalating at a frightening rate, encouraging other antisocial behaviours such as assaults and vandalism. The culture of not paying is becoming entrenched. So much for the bus safety reforms of this Labor government. Bus drivers are so frightened of being bashed that they just push the fare-evade button.

Recent figures relating to fare evasion on light rail look like they are heading the same way—upwards and rapidly. Cheats are getting away with it because the Palaszczuk government has not supplied anywhere near enough senior network officers to police our public transport, with only 10 or so dedicated to Gold Coast routes across all modes. This Labor government must step up and find a solution to a problem it has allowed to spiral. The residents of the Currumbin electorate ask me, 'Where is the education campaign? Why aren't repeat offenders getting caught? Indeed, why should any of us pay?' It is time for action. It is long overdue.