

Minister dodges rail line

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TRANSPORT Minister Rachel Nolan has come under attack after sidestepping questions about why a \$56m project to upgrade the interstate rail line from Acacia Ridge to Beaudesert is yet to begin.

The project is to be funded by the Federal Government but cannot begin until the State Government signs off on a lease giving control of the line to the Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC).

Ms Nolan recently deflected questions on the subject to her department, saying the timeline for the project was an operational matter.

The Minister's seeming indifference to the project this week drew a stinging attack from Logan councillor and LNP pre-selection candidate for the soon-to-be-created Federal

seat of Wright, Hajnal Ban.

"This is an example of a minister that just has no grasp of the issue," she said.

"Clearly she is not across issues affecting her own portfolio and she has shown no willingness to follow this issue up."

Cr Ban accused Ms Nolan of treating voters in the Beaudesert region with contempt.

"Her response is not acceptable and if she is not prepared to do the job maybe she should consider resigning," she said.

"That the Transport Minister is willing to let a \$56 million project sit in limbo and that she is uninterested in driving the project is absolutely shameful."

Questions to Ms Nolan's office about Cr Ban's comments went unanswered.

Meanwhile, the timeframe for the signing of the lease to allow the project to start remains uncertain.

The Times last week sought a response from the Department of Transport and Main Roads as to why the process was taking so long and when it might be finalised.

On Tuesday, a Department spokesperson could only say the terms of the sublease on the corridor were in the "advanced stages" of negotiation between Queensland and the ARTC.

"Separate negotiations between QR Network Pty Ltd and ARTC are under way in relation to arrangements for transferring the existing rail infrastructure on the interstate standard gauge rail corridor from QR Network Pty Ltd to the ARTC," the spokesperson said.

"These issues are being addressed as quickly as possible, commensurate with ensuring that all critical safety, operational, technical and legal requirements are met and the best outcome is achieved for Queensland."

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