




Speech by
Ray Stevens

MEMBER FOR MERMAID BEACH

Hansard Tuesday, 19 June 2012

GOLD COAST, LIGHT RAIL

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (9.11 pm): I rise to speak on the light rail proposal that terminates in my electorate of Mermaid Beach, just in front of Pacific Fair Shopping Centre at Broadbeach. I have been inundated with senior community members demanding that the project be aborted. I am here to confirm that the birth of the light rail will be on time and on budget and it will have a pain-free delivery. The pain will start after the birth, when taxpayers are forced to stump up the extra funds that will be required to support this public transport option.

The history of the light rail goes back a long way to the mayoral days of Gary Baildon, when the Gold Coast City senior planner of transport, Mr Rodney Grose, drove this project, in company with the CEO of the *Gold Coast Bulletin*, Mr Roy Miller. They put the light rail option on the agenda. The federal Howard government funded a \$1.25 million dollar study that was supported by the federal Gold Coast members for the electorates of Moncrieff and Mcpherson, to see how the light rail would address the issues of public transport on the Gold Coast.

I have never supported this option as the most financially prudent option for public transport on the Gold Coast. Quite clearly, this option was very limited in terms of movement numbers, it was very limited in terms of the number of people it would serve and it was what the Labor Party called an 'iconic project' to try to gain votes on the Gold Coast. However, on the Gold Coast the LNP achieved a perfect score. We have 10 out of 10 LNP members representing the Gold Coast, so their strategy around the light rail project did not work.

We have written the contracts, we have written the cheques and there is no going back from the Gold Coast light rail as a major project. It is a \$1.6 billion project on the Gold Coast. There is no opportunity to revisit the matter. We look forward to the opening of the light rail to provide transport from the Gold Coast University Hospital and the university itself down to Pacific Fair at Broadbeach, which is the end point of the rail line. I assure people that any long-term proposal for extending the light rail will be extremely limited. We have to live with the project that we now have on our back doorstep. We will enjoy it to the best of our capacities and we will utilise it to the best of our capacities.