



Speech by

**Tim Nicholls**

**MEMBER FOR CLAYFIELD**

Hansard Thursday, 18 October 2007

---

## **GOLD COAST RAPID TRANSIT SYSTEM**

**Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—Lib) (7.29 pm): Tonight I want to raise an issue of concern to many people on the Gold Coast. I refer of course to the Gold Coast rapid transit system proposal. In particular, I want to raise the issue of the Southport to Broadbeach section of stage 1 of the project. The proposal that the government released last week has shown once again that it does not have in mind what is best for the people of the Gold Coast and Surfers Paradise but what best suits its own pockets. The route selected by the government for the Southport to Broadbeach section, whether it be for buses or light rail, was done without reference to local residents or businesses. This is in stark contrast to the process followed for the previous two sections when two alternatives were put up for community consultation and comment.

I travelled to the coast on Monday to discuss this issue with local businesses, residents and the members of the chamber of commerce. There are good people who are going to be seriously affected by the current route. They do not deserve the cold, heartless treatment dished out by this government. They do not deserve to be put on notice about their properties being resumed without a full process of consultation and a clear explanation of how the route was selected and why their properties are needed. They have had no such consultation. In fact, they have been virtually assured that their properties will be resumed.

But why are those properties needed? There has been no clear answer. Many suspect that this government, when given the choice between tearing up the livelihood of shop owners and people's homes or disrupting the Indy track, was blinded by the fast cars, bright colours and girls in their bikinis waving chequered flags. What does the minister do? He blames the lack of choices and consequential inconvenience on the Gold Coast City Council for overdeveloping Surfers Paradise. He ridicules suggestions for alternative routes and generally behaves in a take it or leave it manner that displays all the arrogance of the Beattie-Bligh Labor government. His department is reported in the *Gold Coast Sun* as refusing to refute claims that 'there is no opportunity to change the route whatsoever'.

The minister should clearly instruct his department to consider and prepare alternative routes for community consultation before any decision is made. He should not piously ask the community to suggest alternatives. His department has the expertise and, more importantly, the responsibility to undertake this task.

What does the *Gold Coast Bulletin* say today? It states—

Tunnel vision needed.

If Transport minister Mickel is in the mood to pee \$1 billion up against a wall there are better ways to do it other than to destroy Surfers Paradise. Mr Mickel is defending a visionless rapid transit system plan proposing to widen the Gold Coast Highway and knock down several buildings along the way. It is a waste of money. It won't work because it does not address the core problems. There is more to be said.

I commend that article to the minister. What has happened with the price? It has gone from \$550 million to estimates of now a billion dollars. Last week it was revealed that the original \$550 million is now going to be at least \$750 million. I am calling on the minister—and I know he is in the chamber—to release the reasons behind the selection of the route for section 3—Southport to Broadbeach—and commit to a proper consultation with the people of Surfers Paradise with clear possible alternatives to his preferred route.