




Speech By
Ray Stevens

MEMBER FOR MERMAID BEACH

Record of Proceedings, 14 July 2015

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Gold Coast Airport

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (12.13 pm): There is one definitive fact a Gold Coast resident can take from the actions of the operators of the Gold Coast Airport and that is that they cannot be trusted. The recent announcement that the airport is installing aerobridges in its \$200 million expansion for the Commonwealth Games in 2018 flies directly in the face of their protestations they have made in the past. Consistently over many years when questioned about why Australia's sixth largest city did not have aerobridges when airports such as Darwin, Cairns and Townsville did, they claimed it would damage the turnaround times for budget airlines and would actually reduce the number of passengers coming to the Gold Coast which would obviously be bad for our tourism industry. What a load of bunkum! It is all about the cost of building a two-storey building for the aerobridges. Now they claim Australia's worst major city airport needs the aerobridges for the upcoming Commonwealth Games traffic and that they will be installing them as part of that \$200 million upgrade. The bad news is that there will only be aerobridges for international flights and not the 80 per cent of flights to the Gold Coast which are domestic. It proves that you cannot believe a word they say.

Transferring their disingenuousness about aerobridges to their public utterances about the 'safety and reliability' need for an instrument landing system, or ILS, on the Gold Coast, one can only draw the conclusion that it is about marketing for technologically outdated Asian airlines that is driving their conquest to deliberately impact on the audible and visual environment of residents under the proposed new flight path. This subterfuge about the safety and reliability need for the ILS is debunked by the domestic airlines which provide 80 per cent of the commercial traffic into the Gold Coast Airport, spending vast amounts of money in late 2014 and early in 2015 installing the modern satellite navigation system RNP. At a recent Gold Coast public meeting, a current and professional airline pilot outlined exactly the expert pilot's position as to why an ILS system is outdated technology and the RNP is equally as efficient in bad weather. But it is not about safety and reliability at all, as only 13 out of 35,000 flights into the Gold Coast in 2014 were cancelled or diverted and even if an ILS was installed there is no certainty that those 13 flights would still not have been cancelled or diverted because of weather factors and runway issues. The proposed ILS is only effective for two-thirds of the landings on the Gold Coast which come from the north on runway 14. Runway 32 will not have an ILS and so will remain dependent on weather conditions and therefore there will still be the occasional diversion or cancellation.

If the airport operators were honest they would say that this ILS proposal is about clinging to the Asian airline market flying tourists directly to the Gold Coast today and it is the possibility of expanding the Asian market to more operators who will only come if an ILS can guide their outdated aircraft into the Gold Coast to keep their pilots confident and happy. We could then make a judgement call over more Asian tourists against the loss of amenity of residential suburbs. It is a simple equation. But the deceit the airport company is engaging in by trying to persuade the Gold Coast community that it is all

about safety and reliability when a current qualified pilot publicly declares the safety and reliability aspects are more than adequately addressed by the newer RNP technology beggars belief. We are fortunate that we have a senior Abbott federal government representative in Mr Steve Ciobo, member for Moncrieff, recognising the deleterious effects this proposed new flight path will have on its residents and putting his political career on the line in pursuing a 'no' call by the Deputy Prime Minister, Warren Truss, on this outdated, unwarranted and deceitful proposal by Gold Coast Airport.

The Gold Coast City Council has also rejected the proposal of a new flight path over tourist strip homes, identifying the loss of visual and audible amenity would actually be a negative for tourism in the city. I do believe this is one of the most shameful acts of corporate vandalism I have witnessed on the Gold Coast and I can assure the House that in my time in politics on the Goldy I have seen a few. With a current professional practising pilot saying the ILS is not needed, the Gold Coast council saying it is not needed, the federal member saying it is not needed and thousands of desperate home owners saying it is not needed, please do not go ahead with this outdated technology.