




Speech By
Ray Stevens

MEMBER FOR MERMAID BEACH

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ADJOURNMENT

M1, Traffic Congestion

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (6.32 pm): I rise in the House today to reiterate the recurrent theme of my maiden speech in this House 10 years ago about the rapid population growth of the Gold Coast and the urgent need to address the problems associated with this rapid growth. I and thousands of other motorists are regularly exasperated with the daily traffic congestion on the M1. Eighteen years ago the Borbidge LNP coalition planned and delivered an eight-lane highway from Brisbane to the Gold Coast which would cater for the growth of the Gold Coast for the next 20 years.

In 2018 it will be full to capacity. Any slight accident on the highway results in major traffic jams and delays on the only route from Australia's third largest city to Australia's sixth largest city. It is now time to start identifying, planning and preparing for funding an alternate route to the M1 from Brisbane to the Gold Coast because starting today will only deliver an outcome in five years at a minimum.

I am sure that my fellow Gold Coast members will remember the incident on the M1 Nerang River Bridge in late February. A fiery truck crash brought life on the Gold Coast to a standstill. Traffic on the heavily travelled M1 was brought to a stop. The semitrailer wreckage blocked lanes of traffic and took 12 hours to be cleared, and the flow-on effect to our currently insufficient arterial roads was obvious with gridlock and delays affecting everyone who ventured near. Congestion costs our Gold Coast businesses greatly, with workers who are unable to start or who miss work altogether. Avoiding this catastrophe of traffic was nearly impossible if you wanted to travel north or south, and it stands as a firm example of the need for a secondary motorway.

Furthermore, the M1 is currently the only option for those commuting to Brisbane on a daily basis in order to enjoy the beautiful Gold Coast lifestyle outside working hours. It has nearly reached its capacity of 170,000 cars per day. The annual average daily traffic volume is just over 144,000 cars a day. This traffic, like the Gold Coast, will only continue to grow into the future. Indeed, the Gold Coast is predicted to double in population to 1.22 million within the next 35 years.

There is no Palaszczuk Labor government plan to fix the problem, and it is not mentioned in the budget papers that we have before us now or, I am sure, the budget papers that are coming up in four weeks time. But wait! On 13 March the Palaszczuk Labor government announced the State Infrastructure Plan 2016, and surely this long-term wish list would include hopes and dreams for reducing the traffic chaos which connects Brisbane to the Gold Coast. However, the creation of a north-south toll road, which is already on the transport department's plans as the intra-regional transport corridor for the Gold Coast to Brisbane, would allow not only for the Gold Coast population to grow sustainably but create a speedier option for commuters to reach their destination.