




Speech By  
**Ray Stevens**

**MEMBER FOR MERMAID BEACH**

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Record of Proceedings, 8 August 2017

**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL:  
FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE**

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (3.27 pm): As members will notice from the strong non-government statement of reservation to report No. 43, the non-government members thought it was one of the poorest budgets that could have ever been presented by the Treasurer to the Queensland people. It was claimed by the Premier and the Treasurer that this was going to be a budget based on jobs. As we know, in the regions that is probably the most important issue for everyday Queenslanders. What did we get? We got a \$2,000 million commitment to Cross River Rail in the electorate of South Brisbane that may help—‘may’, mind you—the member for South Brisbane, the Deputy Premier, get re-elected. I wonder what people in Townsville and other regions think about \$2,000 million and what it could do for jobs in their particular areas and what other programs it could go towards that the federal government has said that they would join with the state government in expending money on—major infrastructure building assets, rather than being committed to an \$80 billion budget.

Queensland taxpayers are locked in, Eddie, to an \$80 billion budget. The number of public servants has gone up to 214,000, which is, as I understand it, at least 14,000 more public servants. This government’s answer to rising unemployment is to hire more people for the Public Service at the expense of the Queensland taxpayers. That is almost \$1,000 million a year in extra expenditure on public servants trying to prop up the employment numbers for this government.

While the government is going ahead with this half-baked Cross River Rail project, I have been talking to the people of Mermaid Beach and other areas of the Gold Coast and they do not even know what Cross River Rail is. The government has committed \$2,000 million to Cross River Rail, which will probably get them one-third of the way across the river. Where will the rest of the money come from? I am sure the federal government will not stump up for this government’s crazy programs.

I note that the budget does not even contain one dollar for the alternative to the M1—not even funding for a study. On Friday we saw what happens when a big crash cuts off the M1. Thanks to the member for Maryborough, we also know about the disastrous debacle that we will see during the Commonwealth Games next year. To him I say: well done for telling the truth in the Labor Party. I hope telling the truth in the Labor Party, which is not a great career move, does not cost the member for Maryborough his job.

I wish to comment on the racing minister’s failure at the estimates committee hearing to explain why her oversight of Racing Queensland has seen the debacle that is the Eagle Farm track, which has cost the racing industry millions of dollars. The minister failed miserably to explain that away. She tried to hide the fact that it is her department, under her watch, that oversaw that disaster. Two people lost their lives on that project. This has nothing to do with the Brisbane Racing Club or Chairman Neville Bell. This is all about the minister’s department and her failure to properly oversee racing. She has put in her watchdog, Mr Ross Barnett, who spent millions of dollars on the terrible problems that we had in the greyhound racing industry. They spent a truckload of money—millions of dollars—of thoroughbred

racing industry money and have now put the steward who was in charge of policing the dogs in charge of the whole shooting match for racing in Queensland. He is still there today. He is on leave. He has not been officially appointed. I take it that he is still being paid. It shows how incompetent the racing minister is when it comes to looking after racing in this state, which will go down further if the Labor government stays in power and this minister stays in charge of racing, which is one of the most important industries in the state.

*(Time expired)*