




Speech By  
**Ray Stevens**

**MEMBER FOR MERMAID BEACH**

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**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL (NO. 2); APPROPRIATION BILL (NO. 2)**

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (5.18 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution to the Appropriation Bill (No. 2) and Appropriation (Parliament) Bill (No. 2) and I am pleased to do so in terms of this meaningful and timely updating of the accounting procedures to the House by the Treasurer which was introduced by Tim Nicholls in his time as treasurer. In 2014, as I recall, there was an \$80 million overspend but it was brought to the attention of the House in a very timely manner.

We are looking at several billion dollars in this adjustment to the 2016-17 budget. It is quite significant that the Labor government actually won Gold Lotto with the rise in coal prices which enabled it to have a nice little spend-up in the budget for 2016-17 which saved them going into a deficit position in 2017-18. If the government keeps buying lotto tickets and the coal prices keep going up then it will have no worries about the fiscal future for Queenslanders and a downgrade of the AA credit rating that it is famously good at producing on behalf of Queenslanders. However, I note that in that expenditure Queensland Treasury allocated over \$1 billion to allow for the repayment of debt, essentially as a result of that spike in coal prices. They allocated \$300 million in Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning works for Queensland and—guess what—the delivery of Cross River Rail.

It amazes me that we have been sitting in this parliament all week and there has not been any mention of the Cross River Rail. That is mainly because I do not think the most important project in South Brisbane—I mean, Queensland—in the 2017-18 budget is particularly popular in areas such as Townsville, Barron River, Mirani and Keppel. I do not believe that people in those seats can see the value in \$2.5 billion going into the election treasure trove of the member for South Brisbane as she tries to ward off the Greens candidate who is storming home faster than Kiwi when he won the Melbourne Cup. We hope to hear some more about the progress of that most important project in Queensland—although not for the Gold Coast, I can give the House the drum there. We look forward to hearing more about that most important project in terms of the money coming forward.

As is appropriate, the Finance and Administration Committee met with Treasury officials on this matter to delineate exactly where the money has been accounted for and moved to. That is good practice. The Finance and Administration Committee supports the passing of these bills. We understand how important it is to keep aspects of Queensland's financial situation up to date, rather than using the old practice of Treasurer Fraser, who waited for a year to pass before doing so. At least in the 55th Parliament we have an update on the allocation of these quite substantial funds. As the Treasurer pointed out, this relates to about 4.5 per cent of the budgetary figure for the year going forward. On behalf of the Finance and Administration Committee, I thank the Treasury officials for outlining, through this accounting process, the reasons for this. We will be supporting the bill.