




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MERMAID BEACH

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PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Gold Coast, Traffic

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (2.25 pm): I have risen in this House on numerous occasions to plead with the government on behalf of Gold Coast residents to at least take initial steps to address the rapidly growing problem that is the elephant in the room for Gold Coast to Brisbane commuters—the increasingly traffic-jammed M1, the major connector road between Australia's third and sixth largest cities. Yet the government's ham-fisted, half-smart response to the burgeoning problem is to cut the road speed limit by 10 kilometres per hour to 100 kilometres per hour in the forlorn hope this measure will reduce accidents and traffic snarls. What a joke!

The police department even installed sneaky new 100 kilometres per hour speed detection cameras to immediately bolster the government's revenue by circumventing clear legislative guidelines by the use of tricky lawyer language. That does respect for the Police Service no good will at all. Will it address the horrendous embarrassment for the government that is the M1, particularly as we showcase the Gold Coast through the Commonwealth Games, in terms of its accessibility and livability? 'No way Palaszczuk' will be the slogan we will see all across the highway. With no plan from the Palaszczuk Labor government to alleviate this problem, it will only get worse as the populations of Brisbane and the Gold Coast grow rapidly. The current M1 was designed for an effective lifespan which expires this year, 20 years after it was built by the Borbidge LNP government in 1998. Recent population projections for the Gold Coast estimate the Gold Coast will grow to over 1.2 million people over the next 35 years, so the time to start fixing the M1 problem is now. Do not wait until the M1 becomes a parking lot as the previous Goss government did with the old highway in 1995.

I remember big Billy Ludwig of AWU infamy telling me how ridiculous it was for the Goss government to spend \$2 million on a transport study about the highway when any mum with two kids in the back of a car stuck in traffic on the old highway could tell you that we needed a new road. The Goss government lost that election, some saying it was due to the so-called 'Koala Highway'.

The Palaszczuk Labor government should heed the lessons of the past and start doing something about the most important piece of infrastructure for the future of the Gold Coast. The inter-regional transport corridor is the answer as an alternative to the M1. Even if there were a tollway, it needs to start now. If something is not done, tourism and business on the Gold Coast will die.