



Speech By  
**Ray Stevens**


**MEMBER FOR MERMAID BEACH**

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Record of Proceedings, 4 September 2018

**MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST**

**Gold Coast Light Rail**

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (2.44 pm): I rise to highlight the importance of the community consultation currently in progress on stage 3 of the light rail project which is proposed to run down the Gold Coast Highway through my electorate from Pacific Fair at Broadbeach through Nobby Beach and Miami to stop at Burleigh. I was very concerned to learn in briefings from departmental officers that the next stage through Palm Beach would be very difficult to achieve and no planning had been done at all to take the light rail all the way to the airport. The question has to be asked: why go to Burleigh if it cannot go through to the airport? There will be enormous economic and business disruption should 3A proceed, as was the case with Surfers Paradise and Southport where some businesses went broke and others had to leave town. The definitive outcome and benefit must be identified before we proceed. It cannot be the case of a shiny new bauble for Gold Coast natives to further the political popularity of vested interests in the planning process.

The business case identifying passenger numbers, traffic reduction and job generation, both short term and long term, should be available for all to see before 3A is inflicted on substantially unsuspecting residents. Residents should also be aware that massively increased high-rise densities right along the adjacent coastal strip will be the outcome of light rail 3A going ahead—as it has already done to the southern end of Broadbeach, captured by the Gold Coast City Council planning scheme and endorsed by the Palaszczuk Labor government, where high-rise limits are greatly extended to underpin the usage of the light rail.

**Mr Power** interjected.

**Mr STEVENS:** One does not have to be a mathematical genius, member for Logan, to work out that the more people who are jammed in along the light rail route means the more people who will use it which in turn means less cost to the state government that has to subsidise the private sector operator who runs the light rail under a government backed guaranteed scheme of return on the private equity funds invested. That raises the obvious question: are we putting in the light rail to solve our currently increasing traffic congestion or is the light rail going to create more traffic congestion by the associated high-rise development, 93 per cent of whom, by the department of transport's own figures, will use a car as their form of transport?

I have seen Miami in Florida where the wall-to-wall high-rises along the beachfront make for impossible traffic jams along the main highway. The Gold Coast being a lineal north-south city, with only three major north-south connections, is headed for major gridlock in years to come if we keep adding population in high-rises along the light rail route. I find it incredibly perplexing that we will be cancelling the now well-used public transport medium of buses to make people get off buses and get on the light rail. For a public transport trip from Broadbeach to the airport and vice versa, you have to catch the bus from Coolangatta to Burleigh, get off the bus with your bags and jump on the light rail. What is wrong with a bus trip straight along the highway from Coolangatta to Broadbeach?

In fact, Brisbane City Council allocates around \$120 million a year to its successful bus public transport, yet Gold Coast City Council puts nothing towards our bus system in the city. Where is the logic in that? It is easy for people to welcome the shiny new bauble of a light rail trip to Burleigh to sample Burleigh's fabulous restaurants, perhaps have a tippie or two more than they would if they had to drive and to find regularity, comfort and ease of boarding the light rail a believable reason for abandoning the current form of public transport, which provides the bus companies with one of their most regularly used transportation links.

However, I warn residents of Broadbeach, Mermaid Beach, Nobby Beach and North Burleigh in my electorate: be prepared for a high-rise coming next to you. The final say on whether the light rail should proceed or not, particularly if it is not going through to the airport, should be given, by a referendum, to all residents living in the area affected by the light rail and who are expected to be the people who will benefit by the arrival of light rail to their suburb. The referendum should be inclusive of all residents on the rolls in those areas and should take place immediately before the project is set in stone. Only that way will we receive a definitive view on whether light rail 3A should proceed because it will change the amenity of those suburbs forever.

*(Time expired)*