




Speech By  
**Ray Stevens**

**MEMBER FOR MERMAID BEACH**

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### **APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL; REVENUE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (4.47 pm): On behalf of my Mermaid Beach constituents I rise to speak to the Appropriation Bill 2019. With this budget I am reminded of that well-worn saying that success has many fathers but failure is an orphan. Well, the 'Orphan Annie' Palaszczuk Labor government's 2019 budget fails the people of Mermaid Beach and the people of Queensland with its reliance on increased debt, increased taxes and a rehashing of old projects to hide the fact it is paying \$3,500 million a year in interest payments—money that would otherwise build a lot of schools, hospitals and roads for Queenslanders.

A new Labor benchmark high of \$90 billion committed debt for Queenslanders can only leave economists, political commentators and the Queensland public aghast as to how this enormous debt level for Queenslanders can ever be paid back. Everyone should ask this Palaszczuk government how it is that the tremendous state of Queensland, with its magnificent tourism resources, bountiful mining resources and rapidly increasing population growth, can go broke in an economic boom. Bad management by an horrific economic management team headed by Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk is the sole reason that Queenslanders are facing higher tax slugs and higher costs of living incurred by this Labor state government's indirect taxing regime. This Labor government is solely focused on its seats in Brisbane at the expense of regional seats across the state.

I reiterate my call from past years' budget reply speeches that people on the Gold Coast want the M1 fixed. The current road is at capacity and no amount of smoke and mirrors by this government about spending tiddly bits on interchanges as its temporary fix is going to convince Gold Coasters that this government actually cares about the Gold Coast. Rehashing the overdue M1 roadworks from Mudgeeraba to Varsity Lakes, utilising federal money to pretend they are doing something for the Gold Coast, is just an insult to the intelligence of Gold Coasters who see through this pea and thimble approach to fiscal commitment for capital infrastructure for the Gold Coast.

I was gobsmacked to see the omission of the much vaunted Gold Coast Light Rail Stage 3A, which runs for the most part through the electorate of Mermaid Beach, when previous utterances by the transport minister and the Treasurer indicated that the project was a must happen. When both the Prime Minister and the opposition leader who was trying to be prime minister, Bill Shorten, committed to a federal contribution of \$112 million towards the project, I and thousands of Gold Coasters assumed the deal was done and the project would proceed, but no. A backtrack blaming the size of the federal government commitment—which was to be the same even if the dreaded Bill Shorten became prime minister—has now made the project a no-go area for this Labor government.

The truth is that they could not afford the project along with their own profligate spending on the Cross River Rail in the Treasurer Jackie Trad's own electorate for now, so the Gold Coast Light Rail—with 10 LNP seats on the Gold Coast—was an easy sacrifice to a government desperate to claw back political favour in the northern parts of the state where the federal election showed how the Labor brand

has been trashed in those areas by the unholy Labor-Greens alliance, which favours black-throated finches above the jobs and livelihoods of thousands of North Queenslanders. The Treasurer's unashamed allegiance to the left-leaning Labor-Greens alliance running this great state for the first time ever in Queensland's political history is the reason Queensland is going backwards faster than a train trying to leave Roma Street Station on time with a non-union train driver.

With 26,000 extra public servants since the Palaszczuk government came to power almost five years ago, you would think our hospital services and waiting lists for surgery would have improved, but they have not. Ramping has come back into the health delivery mode of government, despite a record spend—which it always will be and always has been every year—of \$19 billion. It is not the amount of money you throw at Health that fixes the problem but how effectively you spend that money. This government cannot understand anything about health other than union mandated nurse-to-patient ratios.

I note the commitment of \$6½ million to build a new school classroom building at Broadbeach State School in my electorate, which I am pleased to acknowledge—

**Mr Saunders** interjected.

**Mr STEVENS:** Do not get too excited. However, this capital expenditure should be classified as routine necessary upgrades to replace the temporary dongas built along the Bruce Fox Oval in one of the fastest growing school areas on the Gold Coast. When I started in this parliament, Broadbeach State School had around 300 kids and now there are over 900. Of course they need new classrooms to accommodate their new kids, so a \$6½ million facility is not a bonus commitment for Mermaid Beach but only an education department obligation so kids can actually sit in a classroom rather than learning out on the oval in the open air.

I note the lack of funding in the budget for the much vaunted and lauded by the tourism minister global tourism hub. This fanciful Labor spin mirage as a cure for tourism economic activity on the Gold Coast is a blatant attempt at revenue raising by this Labor government through foisting thousands more poker machines on the Gold Coast community when they are not needed, are not wanted and will destroy many community clubs currently surviving on their existing poker machines. No-one has been told what this so-called global tourism hub actually is, where it might be located, what the business case is for it and how much funding is committed by this Labor government to planning and implementing this ridiculous proposal.

If the government were serious about promoting tourism on the Gold Coast and for Queensland, they would look at expanding the convention centre and commit funding for that expansion now so that it may be delivered within the next couple of years. We on the Gold Coast are already missing out on large international conventions and trade shows because of the lack of floor space so it is a no-brainer for tourism to expand the convention centre to join with the Star casino, the Pacific Fair Shopping Centre and the Broadbeach commercial centre, which is already a global tourism hub that has been developed in the main by private enterprise without the interference of union backed Labor puppets masquerading as development proponents.

If the Palaszczuk Labor government were serious about promoting tourism on the Gold Coast, they would seriously welcome the cable car proposal to the World Heritage listed Springbrook National Park to promote ecotourism on the Gold Coast, but no. They bow to the mad lefty greens under their unholy Labor-Greens alliance because they know they cannot win government under compulsory preferential voting without the support of the Greens. If the Greens say no, it does not happen under Labor.

Again, we see an exorbitant amount of the 2019 Labor budget committed to the infamous Cross River Rail in the Treasurer's own seat—or should I say 'current seat'. We have a parking lot already on the M1, yet this Labor government refuses to join the federal government in funding an alternative route between Australia's third largest city and Australia's sixth largest city to address a major transport route for the economic prosperity of Brisbane and the Gold Coast.

**Mr Nicholls:** And northern New South Wales.

**Mr STEVENS:** And northern New South Wales. I take the interjection from the member for Clayfield, who understands that planning and prospering in this state needs a government commitment to obvious transport infrastructure.

The looney Labor-Greens alliance again stands in the way of a sensible, doable and simple answer to transport in the rapidly growing south-east corner. Despite this reduction in real-term infrastructure spend, the Palaszczuk Labor government is raking in another \$3,500 million in extra taxes from the pockets of Queenslanders through nine new taxes that it promised Queenslanders it would not introduce.

The waste of a combined \$450 million on IT programs brings back ghastly memories of the nurse payroll IT failure which cost Queenslanders \$1,300 million. It created havoc amongst our most valued nurses and hospital staff, and it took the LNP to give an above-agreed-rate rise to nurses pay when we got into government in 2012. The Treasurer at the time will remember it as he smiled and wrote the cheques out. Nurses of Queensland, the LNP looked after your payrolls then and we will do it again in 2020. I just reminded myself of the fact that the good member for Greenslopes was one of the beneficiaries back then of LNP generosity when he was in his nursing career.

On waste, who could forgive the \$110 million wasted on returning the prison system back from the private sector to the union backed government operators who will undoubtedly send the prison system back into chaos just to appease their union masters? On law and order, the Palaszczuk Labor government has again failed the Gold Coast, with no extra money for policing in Queensland despite the Gold Coast growing at 15,000 people per annum. We need more policing to combat the rising crime we are witnessing. Through media reports and drug busts, we can see that the criminal outlaw bikie gangs are making the Gold Coast their home once again.

Labor do not care. With only the seat of Gaven in their cabal, they are prepared to sacrifice new projects such as Gold Coast Light Rail Stage 3A and they are prepared to sacrifice Gold Coast police officers from the highly effective RAP squad that is combating drugs and serious crime in my area down in Varsity to other areas to plug their shortfall in policing numbers. They are prepared to sacrifice the second M1 option to satisfy the Labor-Greens alliance who do not want any new roads built for more cars. The bad news for the Labor-Greens alliance in Queensland is that Queenslanders are sick of them holding up job-creating infrastructure and stopping coalmines for the regions and breathtaking ecotourism adventures for the sake of misplaced, minority, negative ideology that costs Queensland dearly in economic growth and sustainable living.

With the announcement this afternoon of the go-ahead for the Adani mine in the Galilee Basin I cannot help but wonder why there was no financial provision for further works and implementation of the Adani mine approval in the 2019 budget. The obvious question to ask is: was it prepared on the basis that a Bill Shorten Labor government would rule in Canberra and would cancel the proposal based on the spurious excuses of groundwater and black-throated finches offered by our left wing Labor-Greens alliance in Queensland? After Bill got the flick from Queensland it is amazing how quickly this government did a backflip on the project to try to claw back some semblance of support in the northern mining regions.

Through its heavy taxing of the resources industry and this government's abhorrence of using Queensland coal—even though the budget is predicated on over \$5 billion of mining royalties, which supports hospitals, schools, roads and policing—this budget gives total credence to the hypocrisy the Labor Party wears on its sleeve in pretending to be a friend of the industry and yet castigating the products it produces. I am imbued by the prospect that there will be only one more opportunity in the 56th Parliament for the Palaszczuk Labor government to bring down another anti job, anti region and anti economic growth budget. I am hoping the great people of Queensland and the great people of Mermaid Beach in particular recognise the havoc, debt and mismanagement the Labor-Greens alliance government has wreaked upon Queensland during their painful five years of irresponsible government in Queensland and give the other team a go. Deb in 2020 is the way to fix these Queensland woes with the wonderful Queensland plan she outlined today—clearly no new debt and no new taxes. That is the way forward for Queenslanders for 2020 and beyond.