




Speech By
Ray Stevens

MEMBER FOR MERMAID BEACH

Record of Proceedings, 27 November 2019

ADJOURNMENT

Gold Coast, Infrastructure

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (7.07 pm): It is all happening on the Gold Coast and, in particular, in the fabulous electorate of Mermaid Beach, which is ably represented by the current state member who has been lobbying extensively on his constituents' behalf. Stage 3A of the Gold Coast Light Rail project, which will run from Broadbeach to Burleigh, almost exclusively through the electorate of Mermaid Beach, has been made into a reality by a \$269 million funding commitment of the Scott Morrison federal government to infrastructure projects that build better cities. This is a fantastic funding package, as opposed to the Bill Shorten Labor funding commitment of only \$112. Labor Senator Murray Watt, a reject from this state parliament, should hang his head in shame as a lobbyist for the Gold Coast community.

This project would not have come to fruition under a Labor state government without the considerable largess of funding from ScoMo's government. It highlights how this Labor government has sent Queenslanders broke, with its \$90 billion of government debt making it unable to complete state government responsibilities with state funding. State Labor has become a beggar to the federal government for money, because it has borrowed on its credit card to the max and has taxed Queenslanders until they bleed through the pocket. Again we have private enterprise coming to the rescue of a broke Palaszczuk Labor government with Star Casino offering \$100 million to upgrade the Gold Coast Convention Centre, another state government responsibility, in return for exclusivity of operation on the Gold Coast for the next 25 years.

This is a great deal for the Gold Coast, Queensland and a stony-broke Palaszczuk Labor government, because the mooted Global Tourism Hub, centred on another casino licence, was a doomed and fanciful fairytale that not even Labor's spin doctors could identify, promote or justify in their quest for more poker machine revenue which would have killed off many of the community and sporting clubs relying on poker machine revenue for their existence.

The Deputy Premier and Treasurer and the tourism minister need to grab this convention centre deal with both hands, because without Star Casino funding there will be no extension of the Gold Coast Convention Centre which everyone on the Gold Coast agrees is a must-do infrastructure project for the government.

Trying to give free Gold Coast public lands to any aspiring international casino licence operator in return for poker machine revenue is a dodgy look by anyone's calculations, so it is time to stop the fantasising about a so-called global tourism hub and accept the gift-horse being offered by the Star Casino group for an immediate extension of the Gold Coast Convention Centre. Without federal government funding or private enterprise funding, nothing will get done on the Gold Coast under this stony-broke Labor government.