




Speech By
Michael Hart

MEMBER FOR BURLEIGH

Record of Proceedings, 23 March 2021

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

 **Mr HART** (Burleigh—LNP) (6.21 pm): I rise to deliver my address-in-reply in this 57th Parliament. I start by congratulating all members who were elected to this parliament in this term. It is a difficult job that we all do. As the member for Thuringowa said earlier, we spend a lot of time away from home and it is a strange job that most people really would not appreciate. We all deserve a minor pat on the back for the job that we do. My electorate is only 30 square kilometres and consists of the traditional 36,000 voters, and I want to thank them for electing me again for my fourth term as the member for Burleigh. In fact, my wife told me the other day that at the end of this term I will be the longest serving member for Burleigh, so I want to thank them for that as well.

This election was probably one of the better elections that I have fought on a local level, so I want to congratulate and thank the candidates who ran against me: Georgie Batty, Scott Wallace, Ingrid Weber, Rachel Mebberson, Carlo Filingeri—I do not think I ever met him, but he ran—and also Wayne Bartholomew. I have to give a special congratulations to Wayne. I am not really sure that he wanted to be a member of parliament, but he put his hand up and he had a go. He put up a very successful campaign. He had assistance from the Premier's office and from unions, and this is probably the strongest campaign I have had run against me. The result at the end of the day was not what I would have preferred—it was a lot closer than I would have preferred—but I have to say that Wayne was very civil in our dealings, so thank you, Wayne. Some former Labor candidates have not been quite so civil.

Mr Nicholls: He'd only been in the Labor Party for a couple of months, mate. They hadn't trained him up at that stage.

Mr HART: This is true, and I take that interjection from the member for Clayfield.

Obviously there are a lot of people who help us out during an election. I apologise if I miss any, but I want to single out a few people who helped me at pre-poll. Pre-poll was huge this election and it is getting bigger each election, so it is a really important place to be. I stood there for the full two weeks and did not shake hands with every person who came to vote, which is what I normally do, but this year was different and I could not do that. To Matt Taylor, Judy Hynes, Brian Davidson, Ken Vernon, Karly Abbott, Nola Mattei and Robyn Harcourt from one of my Neighbourhood Watch groups, Greg Ingram, Bren Milsom, Ben Naday, Wendy Flett, my new friends Geoff King and Peter Woodhouse, Lachlan Hammet: those people helped me during pre-poll and I really appreciate it. They put in a massive effort, and we smashed pre-poll. That is where we won the election, so well done to them. To the 150 booth workers I had on election day, thank you for your support. Without you, I would not be standing here today.

To Warren Thomson, who stepped in as my SEC chair for the last year: Warren, I really appreciate the effort that you put in. I want to give a big thank you especially to my staff: Renee Whitehead; Anna Honeyman; Megan Williscroft, who helped out during the year; and Ethan Thomson, who helped out during the year. We all know that our staff do the majority of work in our offices. They are the front line. They are the ones that people come in and talk to and get solutions. Half the time I

do not even know what my staff have done to fix things, but I know they are working because when I walk down the street people come up to me and say, 'Well done on fixing that,' and I always tell them that it was more than likely my staff who fixed it. Thank you especially to those ladies who work full-time in my office. Those girls have been with me now for six or seven years so my office has not changed that much, so thank you, girls.

I want to give thanks to my family, and again the member for Thuringowa mentioned that he missed his wife's birthday this year. I have missed my wife's birthday numerous times, but she has been there with me now for six elections. I lost two before I won the last four. Six elections is a long time. She has put in a big effort, as have my children, Tim, Jess and Hayden, and their respective partners, Aimie, Simon and Anna. My four grandchildren—Joshua, Isla, Cameron and Boston—came and helped on pre-poll and they did a wonderful job, so I thank them for their support as well. Without their love and guidance, we could not do the job that we obviously all do here.

I listened intently in 2015 to the Governor's speech. That was when the Governor said that the Palaszczuk government would be open, accountable and transparent, and things went downhill immediately after that speech because this government has been none of those things. It has not been accountable, it has not been transparent and it absolutely has not been open. I have gone back to being on a committee now when I have not been on a committee for over five years. The committee structure is made up of three non-government members and three government members, with the chair having a casting vote. I have noticed that what tends to happen in committees is that secrecy and lack of information is flowing through our committees, and that is a complete detriment.

Some of the biggest infrastructure projects in the state are happening in my electorate at the moment with the widening of the M1 from Varsity to Tugun. The Minister for Transport can reinvent history all he wants, but the LNP built that name that the minister cannot pronounce—Worongary—down through Mudgeeraba while we were in government. We all know that governments need to plan well ahead, so when the minister came into the ministerial office he found in the bottom drawer plans and organisation for the widening of the M1 further and in particular light rail.

Mr Bailey interjected.

Mr HART: I note that the minister is in the chamber, so I want to talk about light rail because that is, as the minister—

Mr BAILEY: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The member is suggesting that I took plans out of the bottom of a drawer left by the previous government. I find that personally offensive and I ask him to withdraw.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): The member has taken personal offence and asked you to withdraw.

Mr HART: I withdraw.

Dr Robinson interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Pause the clock. I had called the House to order, member for Southport, when you interjected after I was giving a ruling so I will put on you a warning.

Dr ROBINSON: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. That was me who interjected, not the member for Southport.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you for your honesty. I will take the member for Southport off the warning and I will place you on the warning, member for Oodgeroo.

Mr HART: When I was the vice chairman of the Burleigh Chamber of Commerce I was on the original committee that looked at light rail. This is well before light rail was even built, while we were still thinking about stage 1. I can tell members from meetings with the minister for transport during the 2012 to 2015 election it had already been decided to take light rail stage 2 to Helensvale. There were plans in place. Those plans were in the bottom drawer of the minister's office, regardless of what the minister has to say on that issue.

It is really interesting that the government announced in March 2020 that they were releasing the multimodal study for light rail down the highway through Palm Beach. They said that this study had identified that that was the preferred route for stage 3 of light rail on the Gold Coast. The multimodal study that they released is only a snapshot of it. It is two pages. I will table that for the benefit of the members of the House.

Tabled paper: Document, dated March 2020, titled 'Gold Coast Highway (Burleigh Heads to Tugun) Multi-modal Corridor Study' [365](#).

To do my job as the member for Burleigh I thought I would have a look at this multimodal study. For years I have held the position that I did not support light rail going down the coast through Palm Beach. I instead wanted it to go out to Varsity Lakes train station and then down the M1. All members here know the position I have taken on that. I have an open mind. I thought maybe I can be convinced by that multimodal study.

I asked the minister if I could have a copy of that multimodal study. The answer was no. I then decided that I would put in an RTI and request that information, as the member for Burleigh, so that I could fully inform myself. The response was that it was not in the public interest for me to have a copy of the full multimodal study so that I could do my job as the member for Burleigh and educate myself on what might be the best outcome. I table the RTI response.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 8 February 2021, from the Principal Advisor (RTI and Privacy), Department of Transport and Main Roads, Ms Helen Adcock, to the member for Burleigh, Mr Michael Hart MP, in response to a right to information application for the full report of the Gold Coast Highway (Burleigh Heads to Tugun) Multi-modal Corridor Study [366](#).

I moved on from asking the minister and putting in an RTI request and I wrote to the minister. I think there is some value in reading part of what I wrote—

The reason I am seeking access to the full multi-modal corridor study is to inform my position as the areas representative and solely for that reason. Even you should appreciate that as a fellow Member of Parliament.

To that end, I again request access to the full Gold Coast Highway (Burleigh Heads to Tugun) Multi-Modal Corridor Study report. I am prepared to give you an undertaking that the report will remain confidential and will only be used to inform my position on the future light rail route.

I table that letter that I wrote to the minister.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 11 February 2021, from the member for Burleigh, Mr Michael Hart MP, to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads, Hon. Mark Bailey, relating to a request for the release of the full report of the Gold Coast Highway (Burleigh Heads to Tugun) Multi-modal Corridor Study [367](#).

I will also table his reply.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 8 March 2021, from the Minister for Transport and Main Roads, Hon. Mark Bailey, to the member for Burleigh, Mr Michael Hart MP, relating to a request for the release of the full report of the Gold Coast Highway (Burleigh Heads to Tugun) Multi-modal Corridor Study [368](#).

In his reply the minister outlined that this multimodal study was a technical report and that technical reports were not available to members of parliament. I was quite stunned at that. I must assume that the minister thinks that technical reports are beyond the scope of a member of parliament to understand. I was an aircraft engineer for 20 years and I am au fait with all things technical. The only reason I want to see the multimodal study is to prove that the minister is actually telling the truth to the Queensland parliament, to the people of Palm Beach and to the people of the Gold Coast, that this is the best route. The minister is not giving me the opportunity to see that. He is, in fact, denying the person who represents 36,000 people in my electorate access to full information.

At the start of my address-in-reply I said that this government is not accountable, it is not open and it is not transparent. Nothing could be clearer. This government is trying to railroad the people of Palm Beach with light rail that they do not want. They do not want light rail going down the Gold Coast and that message has been loud and clear. In his reply, the minister went on to attack me politically saying I lost margin because of my position. Nothing could be further from the truth. Somebody else put in an RTI application for the full multimodal study. Unlike myself they were given the scoping document for the multimodal study. It makes interesting reading. I table it for the benefit of members.

Tabled paper: Department of Transport and Main Roads, document titled 'Route Strategy Planning Study on Gold Coast Highway between Reedy Creek Connection Road, Burleigh and Boyd Street, Tugun' [369](#).

The front page of the tender document for the multimodal study is 'Route strategy planning study on Gold Coast Highway between Reedy Creek Connection Road, Burleigh and Boyd Street Tugun'. The whole plan was about the Gold Coast Highway. There was never any consideration given to any other routes. The minister has misled the parliament, has misled the residents of Palm Beach and has misled the people of the Gold Coast.

Mr BAILEY: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The member's comment about me misleading the chamber I find personally offensive and I ask that he withdraw.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member has taken personal offence. I ask you to withdraw.

Mr HART: I withdraw. The document states in part—

The Gold Coast Highway planning that South Coast Region has that does incorporate light rail is preliminary only and would be a category A under the 'Approved Planning Policy'. This means that under the State Assessment and Review Agency (SARA), TMR may not have the opportunity to work with developers to preserve the corridor for the future Light Rail.

One of the reasons the multimodal study was undertaken was so that development could be increased through Palm Beach in my electorate. We are already seeing wall-to-wall developments happening through Palm Beach. This document leads to more development. I have made some inquiries with TMR about one particular building in Palm Beach which has had an approval put on it. I have been told that that building was never referred to SARA because there are no requirements down through Palm Beach. That development has been ticked off, as have a number of other developments through Palm Beach.

That leads me to what is happening in Palm Beach. It has been completely overdeveloped. The people in my area do not want to see that. Part of the reason for this happening is that the performance planning scheme that this government put in place leads the Gold Coast council to tick off on any sort of development, whether it is over density, the site cover is too much or the height is too high. Basically it does not meet any normal outcomes so the council is able to tick off a performance outcome. Putting light rail through Palm Beach will make this even worse.

In the few minutes left I will talk about the Burleigh Beach Pavilion. Back in 1953 there was a rock pool outside what is now the Burleigh Beach Pavilion which was much loved by the people of the Gold Coast. In 1983 that was removed and a building was built there which incorporated a pool. There were some commercial activities allowed in that leasehold because the pool was there for public use.

Over the years that facility has changed hands a number of times. It has been sold for millions of dollars and become a very valuable site. The current owner is trying to turn it into a hotel. It is covered by a state government lease from the Department of Resources. One of the lease conditions is very straightforward and unambiguous: the lessee must use the leased land for commercial business purposes, namely, for a swimming pool, kiosk, restaurant and an associated health facility purpose and for no other purpose whatsoever.

The owner is going through the process of having the building approved as a hotel. The people in my area do not want a hotel in the Burleigh Pavilion, they do not want it operating all hours of the night and they do not want poker machines there. I had an undertaking from the former minister for natural resources that should the hotel breach the lease the government would end that lease. Unfortunately that minister is not here anymore, but I have a similar undertaking from the new Minister for Resources and I will hold him to it moving forward.

Unfortunately I do not have time to talk about renewable energy and hydrogen other than to say that some of the things that the member for Callide said were very sensible. This government has moved far too quickly into renewable energy. A couple of weeks ago the Premier said that there are 7,900 megawatts built or committed, which is \$8.5 billion worth of investment in our electricity system, and she said that there are 7,000 jobs. What absolute rot! There are no jobs in the operation of renewable energy projects such as wind and solar farms after they have been built. There are jobs available only during the construction phase. I ask members this: if you spend \$8½ billion on renewable energy—and most of that is private investment—how do you think people will get a return? It is not via cheaper electricity. It will be via more expensive electricity, which is what we are seeing at the moment. Wholesale prices are lower but people's electricity bills are not. They are a wake-up to what is going on with this government and they will not accept it. At the next election they are gone.

(Time expired)