



Speech By  
**Ray Stevens**


**MEMBER FOR MERMAID BEACH**

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Record of Proceedings, 2 September 2021

**PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENT**

**Gold Coast Light Rail**

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (2.03 pm): The much vaunted Light Rail stage 3 extension from Pacific Fair to Burleigh traverses 85 per cent of the electorate of Mermaid Beach. It is a popular addition to public transport opportunities on the Gold Coast and stages 1 and 2 have been well received by the Gold Coast community. However, that popularity is for one thing and one thing only. It is for its use as public transport. What our political leaders and private proponents are not admitting is that it is being used as a development density multiplier enabler to see more high-rise density built along the light rail corridor.

Guess what? This corridor just happens to be the most sought after and desirable real estate on the Gold Coast, being a short walk to the beachfront. No-one of political significance is owning up to the real reason governments are spending billions of dollars on this transport infrastructure because development apparently is a dirty word. The council blames the state government for planning density outcomes and as a child of the state government the Gold Coast City Plan must be endorsed by the state government.

It does not matter what commitments the council gives about not increasing density along the light rail corridor, the state government can and will say that they must increase their densities as per the density requirements under the South East Queensland Regional Plan and the only area on the Gold Coast that fits the public transport requirements for increased densities is along the light rail corridor. If the Gold Coast council does not agree with these increased densities, specifically designed for the construction industry—which is the second biggest employer on the Gold Coast—the state government will not approve the Gold Coast city planning documents. History already shows this increased density is a requirement of light rail as evidenced by the increased densities and height levels along Light Rail stage 1 from Southport to Broadbeach.

The main objections, I believe, to Light Rail stage 3 and proposed Light Rail stage 4 come from residents opposed to turning the Gold Coast into 'sardine city' along the light rail corridor. I believe that with the increased traffic and parking problems created by, in some cases, the doubling of overall densities, the residents have legitimate concerns. I am calling on the Palaszczuk state government to set in stone the current building densities to protect residents in my electorate and the southern electorates to the airport to prevent the Gold Coast Highway—with 93 per cent of residents driving a car, as per the department's own figures—from becoming a parking lot. Light rail is public transport for the future and is not to be a development enabler.