



Speech By
Steve Minnikin

MEMBER FOR CHATSWORTH

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)

Appropriation Bill

Transport and Resources Committee, Report

 **Mr MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (12.06 pm): Off the cuff, I simply thank the member for Kurwongbah in relation to the way that he chaired the Transport and Resources Committee. I have always said that he is a thoroughly decent bloke. I absolutely and vehemently disagree with his ideology, but I think he actually does a reasonable job. I wanted to get that out at least once.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr MINNIKIN: Yeah, with the rest of it! I have always been a fervent believer in the old adage that actions do indeed speak louder than words. The Minister for Transport and Main Roads likes to talk up a good game and we have heard that things are always awesome, but the simple fact is that he must be living in a parallel universe because cost blowouts and project delays continue to haunt this wasteful and very tired third-time government.

Whilst there was justifiable outrage at the waste attributed to Wellcamp of approximately \$237 million, the transport and main roads minister, who was called foolish by the CCC, makes the waste at Wellcamp truly look like petty cash. The real cost of this government's biggest infrastructure project, Cross River Rail, continues to be a commercial-in-confidence secret. The simple fact is that the number often quoted by Minister Bailey of \$5.4 billion, which was again mentioned earlier today by the Premier, is completely inaccurate because the budget shows that construction costs with the PPP, the public-private partnership, will be at least \$6.88 billion as published in the government's own financial papers.

The government also refuses to come clean on all of the other ancillary projects that have their own separate line items and they are not part of the \$6.888 billion. This includes projects such as the New Generation Rollingstock, automatic train operation and platform screen doors fitment. This is a new project listed in QTRIP this year. The platform screen doors are part of Cross River Rail and have been included in project animations for many years. However, it is a \$275 million cost that is separate to the budgeted \$6.888 billion for Cross River Rail. When adding all of these ancillary projects, the LNP believes that the real cost of Cross River Rail is more like \$8 billion. Again, the government was asked to admit that the project would not open in 2024 as previously promised. The minister dismissed this by saying that the 2024 date was—wait for it—a typo! The project is late and the government should simply

come clean about it. The government even refused to answer simple questions such as when the Coomera Connector was changed from a six-lane road to a four-lane road. This is the level of secrecy that exists within the government.

Another project that has seen significant cost increases is the European Train Control System, the ETCS. The project cost was originally \$634 million according to QTRIP in 2016-17, but alas the minister was quoted as saying the cost is now \$764 million, which is more than the \$717 million cost stated in this year's QTRIP. Extraordinary! The department's explanation for the cost change was that parts of the project costs were originally in the Queensland Rail and Cross River Rail Delivery Authority budgets but it has all been brought together as an alliance contract. If this is the case, how can Queenslanders have faith that any project cost for any project listed in QTRIP is a true and accurate reflection of reality?

We also discovered there has been \$3.6 million spent to date on the Bruce Highway Trust, which has held only four meetings. It is truly difficult to understand how taxpayers are getting real value for money. The Minister for Transport and Main Roads has been in the role for 2,739 days and, aside from 24,000 tweets and criticising the previous LNP government, cost blowouts and waste are what he has to show for it. Truly, is it any wonder that questions are being asked by leading figures in industry about this minister's ability to deliver critical transport infrastructure in the lead-up to the Olympic games. We do not have, under this minister's watch, a project that he can seem to bring in on budget and on time. Minister, the clock is absolutely running on your time.