




Speech By
Ray Stevens

MEMBER FOR MERMAID BEACH

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ADJOURNMENT

Gold Coast Light Rail Stage 4

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (6.04 pm): The dogs are barking, the whispers are swirling, and a strong rumour from Canberra tells me the extension of light rail stage 3 to light rail stage 4 going all the way to Coolangatta Airport will be cut from funding in the Albanese infrastructure spend review currently being kept under wraps until after the referendum. The cutting of federal government funding will be the perfect catalyst for the Palaszczuk state government to withdraw its funding commitment to light rail stage 4, in the same way the state Labor government blamed the federal Labor government for state Labor not going ahead with the Mary River dam after they spent \$500 million acquiring Mary River family properties.

The stage 4 project has four blue ribbon seats around it, and the Albanese government will take great pleasure in cancelling a priority project of the Morrison LNP federal government with no political fallout to their federal election chances. It is a \$3.3 billion budgeted exercise that will be \$5 billion by the time Labor gets to do it, and it is 55 per cent funded by the feds. The extension of light rail 3 from Burleigh to the airport has great engineering difficulties, as reported to me by department of main roads officers, and the increased height densities and population increases along the tram route that the light rail project was instigated to achieve cannot be realised through this last leg. The reality is that the state Labor government has no real interest in completing the last leg of the so-called public transport project and is desperate for an excuse for it not to go ahead.

Mr Albanese will be the perfect excuse for a parachute of the Palaszczuk Labor government from the project, and local Labor government senator and part-time Gold Coast mouthpiece for the federal Labor Party Murray Watt—'Who or Watt'—will suffer no political fallout as a statewide representative; nor will the single Labor representative on the Gold Coast, the member for Gaven, Meaghan Scanlon, whose electorate is not within cooee of light rail stage 4. I am calling on transport minister Bailey to advise Gold Coasters if he will still support light rail 4 when the federal government pulls out of funding. What is his unequivocal commitment to finishing the project, which the Gold Coast City council is still absolutely committed to and which was championed by his government as a priority project?

The subterfuge and dishonesty this government continues to inflict on the people of the Gold Coast because it is seen as a non-Labor-supporting area—and it is not—beggars belief. Only an LNP government will be up-front with the people of the Gold Coast from October next year. The good folk in the Mermaid Beach electorate will only be able to travel north on their light rail public transport experience—another failed Labor government infrastructure project.

(Time expired)