



Speech By  
**Hon. Bart Mellish**


**MEMBER FOR ASPLEY**

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Record of Proceedings, 7 March 2024

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Sunshine Coast, Rail Infrastructure

 **Hon. BJ MELLISH** (Aspley—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads and Minister for Digital Services) (10.07 am): The Sunshine Coast is the largest urban area in Australia without a direct rail connection. By 2046, the region's population is expected to increase by another 52 per cent, creating an extra 800,000 local car trips every day. This is why we are building the direct Sunshine Coast rail line and why it is so important. It is why this government has committed \$2.75 billion to make the 30-year dream a reality. Our government spent \$14 million to get the business case done and submitted it to Infrastructure Australia. I table a summary of the business case now.

*Tabled paper:* Department of Transport and Main Roads: Direct Sunshine Coast Rail Line—Business Case Summary, March 2024 [323](#).

At 19 kilometres, stage 1 from Beerwah to Caloundra will be the longest spur line in our south-east rail network.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr MELLISH:** We are happy to add in some more pictures so those opposite can understand. It is almost as long as the 20 kilometres of Gold Coast line from Helensvale to Varsity Lakes—a line that took 12 years to build over three stages. We will do it within eight years so it is up and running for the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

The Sunshine Coast already has the second highest car ownership rate in the country. Building the direct Sunshine Coast rail line will make a trip from Caloundra to Brisbane at least 45 minutes faster than a car during peak hour. That is 90 minutes a day in a return trip, 7.5 hours a week, 15 days a year not sitting in the car battling traffic. That 15 extra days of freedom a year means money well spent. Building direct Sunshine Coast rail will also fast-track housing development, helping unlock some 3,000 new affordable homes around the rail corridor by 2032 alone. The corridor to Caloundra requires zero homes to be resumed.

Building a train line does not happen overnight. This government did the proper planning, including refining the existing corridor, selecting suitable station locations, staging and delivery time frames. While we await Infrastructure Australia's assessment, we have commenced environmental investigations along the line. We welcome the Australian government's initial commitment of \$1.6 billion towards this project. I urge the federal government to match our funding and back the direct Sunshine Coast line.

While I am on my feet, I would also like to address the member for Chatsworth's question from the February parliament sittings—

**Mr Crisafulli** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Sorry to interrupt, Minister. Leader of the Opposition, I do not need to remind you to use members' correct titles. I would like to hear the ministerial statement.

**Mr MELLISH:** While I am on my feet, I would also like to address the member for Chatsworth's question from the February parliament sittings regarding the cost of building three new train stations on the Gold Coast. I am happy to advise that the figures in the budget papers are correct. The Queensland Audit Office have advised TMR they will be updating their major projects report to correct their error.