




Speech By
Hon. Bart Mellish

MEMBER FOR ASPLEY

Record of Proceedings, 22 May 2024

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Transport Infrastructure

 **Hon. BJ MELLISH** (Aspley—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads and Minister for Digital Services) (10.00 am): The Miles Labor government is delivering for Queensland. We are the first government to put real money on the table for what will be the biggest ever investment in public transport on the Sunshine Coast, the Sunshine Coast direct rail line. I warmly welcomed the Albanese government's announcement last week, as part of the federal budget, that it will invest a further \$1.1 billion in the project. That takes the Commonwealth's investment to \$2.75 billion and the total investment to \$5.5 billion, ensuring that stage 1 of this vital project can be delivered. The project will bust congestion in the south-east, reducing travel times by around 45 minutes each way during peak hours and connecting the community to jobs, study, services and Queensland's most famous tourist attractions.

Mr Mickelberg: It'll turn Caloundra into a car park.

Mr MELLISH: I note the interjection from the member for Buderim, who believed we did not need to do a business case. There would have been no business case if it were up to the member for Buderim.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Member for Buderim and Minister.

Mr MELLISH: Essentially, the Direct Sunshine Coast Rail Line will extend the South-East Queensland rail network from the north coast line at Beerwah to the Sunshine Coast. The first stage will see a 19-kilometre dual track built from Beerwah to Caloundra—

Ms Simpson interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Maroochydore.

Mr MELLISH:—making it the longest spur line in the south-east passenger network.

Ms Simpson interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: The member for Maroochydore is warned under the standing orders.

Mr MELLISH: It will also include the protection of the updated rail alignment to Birtinya and Maroochydore. This project is about providing faster, more reliable and environmentally sustainable connections between the Sunshine Coast, Moreton Bay and Brisbane. I know the members for Caloundra and Nicklin are very excited for this project. I know members opposite do not want to see public transport investment in their electorates. This project will also unlock housing supply, enabling the construction of at least 3,000 additional homes by 2032 alone. Advice from the department is that

staging the delivery of this megaproject is the best way to ensure it is up and running by the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games. We are getting on with delivering it with a \$5 million early works package that includes geotechnical investigations and environmental surveys. We are also undertaking market sounding for stage 2 to Birtinya and protecting the rail corridor all the way to Maroochydore, meaning that stages 2 and 3 are futureproofed.

I will always advocate for more funding from the federal government for our road and transport projects. We do welcome the continued support of the Albanese government for our transport big build. As well as the direct Sunshine Coast rail project, our key projects including the Beerburrum to Nambour heavy rail project in the member for Nicklin's electorate, the Coomera Connector and the Bruce Highway have all benefited from funding boosts.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Members to my left, I am having a difficult time hearing the minister. Your interjections are not helping.

Mr MELLISH: Other projects that those opposite do not want to hear about include the Bremer River bridge upgrade, Mount Crosby Road interchange and Mount Lindesay Highway upgrade; all received additional funding from the federal government. It was also pleasing to see the previous federal announcement of funding for the Bruce Highway upgrades locked in.

Despite these positive announcements, we remain committed to changing the Australian government's position on 80-20 funding for regional roads and we will continue to campaign for this to be reinstated in future budgets. We will have more to say on these great investments on our key projects when our state budget is delivered.