




Speech By
Bart Mellish

MEMBER FOR ASPLEY

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PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Minister for Transport and Main Roads, Performance

 **Mr MELLISH** (Aspley—ALP) (2.23 pm): In the course of just a few days, this new government and the new transport minister have lost enormous credibility with Queenslanders. Firstly, we have seen the frankly ludicrous claims by the member for Buderim that Cross River Rail will now cost \$17 billion and is due to open in 2029 after he did some pretty sus sums in his own office. In a desperate bid—

Mr Lister: Are you going to write to the Speaker about it?

Mr MELLISH: I will write to the Speaker. In a desperate bid to move the goalposts on Cross River Rail, the Crisafulli government has cooked the books. Today the minister refused to release the advice that he is making these claims on—no advice from the department, no advice from the authority and no advice from the Office of the National Rail Safety Regulator. On the timeframe claim, we saw embarrassingly that the Office of the National Rail Safety Regulator, in an unprecedented step, called out the minister's made-up 2029 figure yesterday. The *Brisbane Times* article stated—

"ONRSR does not undertake testing or commissioning for any major project—this is the role of the project manager, so the timeframe for this process is a matter for them," a spokeswoman for the regulator said.

How embarrassing. In a second embarrassment the minister has included the cost of maintenance for the life of an asset in the cost to build the project. He has also included the cost of station upgrades, unrelated signalling projects and even the cost of buses across the whole of South-East Queensland to come to his made-up figure. Will the minister release the breakdown of costs? Of course not. He made the ridiculous claim yesterday that he had legal advice as to why he was able to release a figure to get him on the news but not the actual cost breakdown. I quote from the minister—

I'm not going to split it out into individual elements because, in doing so, it will enable contractors to be able to work back and work out a number.

I call on the minister to table the breakdown or at the very least table the legal advice saying he cannot, but I sadly think it is all made up; it is in his head. This minister does not even know who is funding this project. Yesterday he said, before he walked into a tree on his way out of the press conference—

If Catherine King wants to commit additional funds to Cross River Rail, I will welcome it with open arms.

I have news for the minister. Cross River Rail does not have any federal funding; it is solely funded by the state government, as it always has been, because Campbell Newman and a former LNP government refused funding. I would urge him to do his research before he goes cap in hand to the federal government and embarrasses himself even further.

Fourthly, I did not think it was possible for someone to botch an issue in not one, not two, not three but four ways. The minister claimed BPIC had led to delays on the Cross River Rail project. We have more news for the minister. Cross River Rail is not a BPIC project. What a joke.

This is all just a continuation of this minister struggling with the facts when it comes to major infrastructure projects. In September this year he was found to have misled the House and was forced to apologise when it came to Sunshine Coast direct rail. He claimed that there was no money in the budget in 2024 for it when there was actually \$1 billion. This minister is out of his depth and the Premier needs to consider why he put him in this role.