




Speech By
Bart Mellish

MEMBER FOR ASPLEY

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MOTION

Direct Sunshine Coast Rail Line

 **Mr MELLISH** (Aspley—ALP) (6.25 pm): Make no mistake: this government is lining up to break its election promise to build heavy rail to Maroochydore. If I heard correctly from the returned member for Nicklin just now, it sounds like they are lining up to push off the Beerburum to Nambour project as well. That is new information.

The people of the Sunshine Coast are being short-changed by the LNP government, it seems. This is a rail line that this government pledged more than 40 times would be built to Maroochydore by 2032—a promise that secured this government all the seats on the Sunshine Coast. Just over 100 days in, the Deputy Premier is backing out of heavy rail. They have said that they are looking at alternatives. They are going to use the Olympics review as an excuse to cut heavy rail on the Sunshine Coast. They are lining up to give us a substandard transport outcome. They are lining up to help their developer mates sabotage the biggest ever public transport investment in their region.

We told them that rail to Maroochydore by 2032 was technically challenging, but they committed to it anyway. Not only is Caloundra to Maroochydore rail now at risk but they want to kill the whole thing. Rail has dropped off their radar and out of their language. This is the biggest infrastructure commitment the LNP has ever made and now they are going to kill it.

This new transport minister has completely gone to water on this in the wake of the member for Kawana's rampage to kill this project. He has been put in his box by the Deputy Premier, who is the real decision-maker on this. The Minister for Transport should not be let off the hook. His track record on Sunshine Coast direct rail is pretty poor, too. Before even becoming minister he had to apologise to the parliament and take down a Facebook post to prevent himself being referred to the Ethics Committee for a misleading claim on Sunshine Coast direct rail in this House last year. The now transport minister told the House that there was no money in the 2024 budget for Sunshine Coast direct rail when in fact there was more than \$1 billion in the forward estimates alone. I did not think it was possible to miss a billion dollars in a budget paper, but, as we have seen, anything is possible with this boofhead of a minister. The Premier clearly made a mistake in picking the member for Buderim to be the transport minister—

Ms SIMPSON: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The member used unparliamentary language.

Mr SPEAKER: I would ask that you withdraw that unparliamentary language.

Mr MELLISH: I withdraw. The Premier clearly made a mistake in picking the member for Buderim to be transport minister. At least the member for Chatsworth looked like he knew what he was talking about. He did not know what he was talking about, but he looked like he knew what he was talking about.

Let us not forget this transport minister's completely laughable claims on Cross River Rail, which had to be corrected by the Office of the National Rail Safety Regulator, and the fact that the member for Kawana has taken Gold Coast Light Rail stage 4 off his hands entirely. We have seen the Department of Transport and Main Roads, which is doing a \$30 million business case, taken out of the picture, and the Deputy Premier and his hand-picked director-general are personally reviewing that project.

The state LNP has amazing pedigree in picking duds on the Sunshine Coast—duds who simply do not understand public transport. The member for Glass House took us on a meandering trip down memory lane to 2005, so I am happy to take us back to 2009, when the current member for Maroochydore released plans for a heavy rail line from Maroochydore to Caloundra. It sounds familiar so far. The member forgot to connect it to the main line. This was going to be a completely stranded rail line from Caloundra to Maroochydore, not connected to the north coast line. I do not know how the trains were supposed to get to the Sunshine Coast—by helicopter or speedboat maybe.

That was not the best bit about the member for Maroochydore's announcement back then. Reading from the *Courier-Mail* article from the time, the policy document included an asterisk saying the pledge was 'subject to the global financial crisis'. Well, there you go. Maybe they needed to put an asterisk on their election commitment this time around—an asterisk saying 'subject to the member for Kawana's property interests'.

As we read the *Brisbane Times* today, the Deputy Premier continues to be the main government spokesman on this project, despite having a material conflict of interest. He needs to recuse himself from being the main decision-maker on this project, which would directly affect his personal property interest. He needs to table his advice from the Integrity Commissioner and he needs to table his conflict management plan, which I highly doubt he is abiding by. He has demanded nothing less of others in this chamber in the past, but of course the Deputy Premier sees himself as above all that.

The LNP is already at war over this rail line. Federal members Andrew Wallace and Ted O'Brien have called for it and so, too, has the mayor. Queenslanders were told that this project would be built—no ifs, no buts, no short cuts—but Queenslanders are quickly finding out that the word of the Crisafulli government means nothing. It is time the Premier pulled his deputy into line, showed some leadership and got on with delivering the Sunshine Coast rail to Maroochydore by 2032, as they promised.

I genuinely feel for the new member for Caloundra on this. She has been led down the garden path by the Premier and Deputy Premier. The Minister for Transport, a member on the Sunshine Coast, will go down in history as the man who let his own government kill Sunshine Coast heavy rail to Maroochydore.