




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR ASPLEY

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MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Train Manufacturing Program, Jobs

 **Mr MELLISH** (Aspley—ALP) (2.15 pm): In the 2½ weeks since the last sitting we have heard about four different stories spun by this government about its lack of action to protect train manufacturing jobs in Maryborough. It was only a leaked letter to the workforce that alerted the public to the pending loss of 120 workers from the Maryborough Walker Street facility—not a government announcement; no press release in sight. This government tried to keep secret the rejection of the diesel tilt train refurbishment contract which would have kept over 100 locals in jobs. First we heard in this House that everything was fine—this was the first story—when ministers Last and Mickelberg frantically tried to only talk about the Torbanlea facility and the QTMP being constructed there. Secondly, we saw an emergency dash to Torbanlea from this transport minister trying to save the skin of the member for Maryborough, where we heard the claim that it is because of a private freight operator that the workers would lose their jobs. Thirdly, maybe the transport minister had a quick google and realised Queensland Rail is actually government owned, so they stopped claiming that it is a private freight operator but—wait for it—the minister was now claiming he had no control over Queensland Rail. Last Tuesday the minister said—

I've had no role in this decision ... operational decisions for Queensland Rail are a matter for the board ...

The member for Maryborough has said on his Facebook page—

Downer's contract is with Queensland Rail—it has nothing to do with the Crisafulli Government.

This is obviously misleading. We can even compare it to a media release this month titled 'Crisafulli government delivers more train services'. In that release the minister goes to great lengths to claim that a few extra train services on the weekend were largely because of the sheer brilliance and hard work of the Crisafulli government. Mr Deputy Speaker Lister, if I can be so bold, I recall even getting a question from you last year about wine served on Queensland Rail trains and where they came from, which was a great question. As to the refurbishment of Queensland Rail trains—well, no, the government has nothing to do with that whatsoever, according to the current ministers. So when things are going well they run the trains; when jobs are being cut they have never met Queensland Rail in their life.

Maybe the minister needs to have 'transport' taken out of his title as he has obviously only had a negative impact on the portfolio during a short spell in the job. We have seen him fail on his pre-election promise to get rail to Maroochydore—a broken promise; we have seen Gold Coast Light Rail taken off him by the Deputy Premier; we have seen him refuse to rule out a toll on the Coomera Connector; we have seen him mislead on Cross River Rail delays; and now we have seen the claim that he is not even the minister for Queensland Rail. Remarkable! I will not be holding my breath for the other shareholding minister, the Treasurer, to swoop in and fix this as he is too focused on covering up explosions at Callide

and juicing up the numbers in his budget at the moment. We heard him make some bizarre, rambling filibuster today when he was asked a very direct question about his ministerial responsibilities and read from a letter from Downer which does not put this matter to bed.

Let me point out that this is not about Downer; this is about the government not giving it work which would keep Maryborough locals in jobs and then trying to wash its hands of that decision. I hear from locals that the member for Maryborough is now abusing opposition members in public cafes. That is not great behaviour from the local member of parliament. Right now more than 100 workers are facing the sack before Christmas. We are going to continue to fight with them and hold this government to account because the people of Maryborough matter. Labor's Queensland Train Manufacturing Program secured jobs for generations in Torbanlea. Those working in Maryborough itself deserve certainty too. I had the dubious honour last year while minister of welcoming back into service the last of the foreign-built trains purchased by the former LNP government that had to be sent for repairs to be disability compliant.

If you get train manufacturing wrong it takes decades to fix—if it can be fixed at all. We saw what the LNP did to Maryborough the last time they were in government and now they are trying for a sequel. I have met with workers from Downer who are rightly upset and want answers and I will meet with them again. The Crisafulli government cannot seem to get its story straight on this. Their version of events is as clear as mud. It is time for the Premier and his ministers to own up to this disastrous decision and tell the people of Maryborough whether they will protect these much needed jobs.

This Premier does not back his regional members. I congratulate the Nationals in Canberra who have had the courage of their convictions to announce this morning that they will not be entering into a coalition with the Liberal Party. I congratulate them for standing up for their regional members. This is in contrast to the Queensland LNP who take their votes for granted. The Premier, who fled Townsville and who has now fled the Gold Coast for Brisbane, and the Deputy Premier are not looking after the regional members. The Treasurer is too busy to look after them. The last time they had a regional member as their leader they were celebrating her loss on election night on Clive Palmer's boat. While I was at the Bald Hills booth with the member for Nanango trying to chase votes, her own party was undermining her. They do not back their regional members. We will back the regions. We will back Maryborough jobs. We will back train manufacturing. This government needs to wake up and come to the party.