



Speech By
Bart Mellish

MEMBER FOR ASPLEY

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL; STATE DEVELOPMENT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND WORKS COMMITTEE, REPORT

 **Mr MELLISH** (Aspley—ALP) (4.12 pm): The last time this parliament sat was when the LNP Crisafulli government delivered its first budget. The opposition was alarmed to see key details stripped from their transport budget for this budget and those in the future via their butchering of QTRIP. Now we know why this transport minister so confidently declared projects would be delivered 'on time and on budget': there are now no timelines and no budgets that he can be held accountable to. This minister has strongarmed his department into—we know they did not want to do it—this not open and not transparent display of transport projects in the budget process.

Heading into last month's estimates hearings, we were hopeful for transparency and answers on many issues such as the future of Queensland's transport network—details like funding for stage 4 of Gold Coast Light Rail, timelines for the Queensland Train Manufacturing Program and how the next phases of the Coomera Connector will proceed. Sadly, we got none of that. Instead, we got a political spectacle, with 17 points of order raised by LNP committee members during the transport and main roads session alone—17 interruptions in just four hours. Rather than allowing for public scrutiny, they blocked questions and dodged accountability. The LNP made it clear: politics over public interest.

When I asked the transport minister about the last time he transferred from a train to a bus, he responded with a lengthy monologue about the lack of rail on the Sunshine Coast—a strange deflection from the minister responsible for the Wave, a mode of transport that, as confirmed by the director-general, is not a train. But, of course, the minister responsible for the project would probably be more the Deputy Premier! Speaking of which, where is the Deputy Premier's review into the Gold Coast Light Rail stage 4? It was due midyear, yet here we are at the end of August with no report, no transparency and no funding. Will the Deputy Premier at least return the \$15 million the Gold Coast City council contributed to the joint business case, which has been put on hold?

Residents from Burleigh to Coolangatta are still in the dark about this critical transport corridor's future. When I asked what consideration had been given to proposals to toll future stages of the Coomera Connector, the committee was told that was a matter for the Treasurer. We also had no confirmation and a bit of confusion about stage 2 of this vital project going forward.

A simple question about the status of the Zero Emission Bus Program revealed a clear contradiction between the minister and his director-general.

Mr Mickelberg interjected.

Mr MELLISH: While the director-general confirmed there is money in the 2025-26 budget to support essential depot infrastructure, the minister appeared to walk back the LNP's previous commitments, saying they will not commit to actions that sound good in a media release but are completely unachievable. I hear the minister chirping now, but he was happy to waffle on for eight minutes when I was asking for simple responses, filibustering because he did not want to stand up to scrutiny. The minister maybe needs to slow down a bit here in the House and out there in the public.

Mr Mickelberg interjected.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Whiting): Order, members!

Mr Mickelberg interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Buderim, order! Both sides, order!

Mr MELLISH: The minister is going a bit fast and he needs to take it easy. Maybe he knew what the LNP conference was talking about when it comes to zero-emission buses, dog whistling to the anti net zero crowd. Despite the program going to tender over a year ago, industry providers have heard little. How can the industry plan for the future if the government will not communicate with them?

When I asked the director-general about advice given on dredging in the Pumicestone Passage—another Deputy Premier backed vanity project—LNP committee members argued that Maritime Safety Queensland was not under the transport minister's remit. This was a decision of government. They are hiding the details. They are clearly not releasing what the Maritime Safety Queensland advice is.

Mr Powell: Tell that to the people of Caloundra!

Mr MELLISH: I take the interjection from the member for Glass House. I doubt he will release the information either.

Later, the minister washed his hands of the Queensland Train Manufacturing Program entirely, refusing to engage with questions about mounting delays and how that affects the broader train manufacturing program. After some excellent questioning by the member for Bundaberg, QTMP's delay of at least a year was finally confirmed by the manufacturing minister in his session. We have long suspected that the LNP held this program and Maryborough in contempt. Designed to meet the growing demands on Queensland's existing train fleet and to bring new life into Maryborough's manufacturing sector, the QTMP must be a priority for this government, but it does not feel that way.

In the end, I left estimates with more questions than when I entered: will the Premier ever make good on his promise to buy back the Airtrain before the 2032 Olympics; will the Port of Cairns common user facility be handed to private investors; will the Coomera Connector be tolled; and will the real transport minister in this government please stand up?

QTRIP is supposed to articulate this government's transport vision and priorities, but under this LNP government Queensland is being held back. They have butchered transparency. They have butchered QTRIP. The answers to the questions that we asked were not just for us. They were for communities waiting for projects. They were for local contractors. They were for local councils. They were for local industry players who need to know when these projects will start. This minister promised 'on time and on budget' multiple times and he has rewritten the entire transport budget, because now there are no timeframes and no budgets.

Mr Mickelberg interjected.

Mr MELLISH: This government is running away from transparency.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Buderim, your interjections are not being taken.