




Speech By
Ray Stevens

MEMBER FOR MERMAID BEACH

Record of Proceedings, 20 February 2025

ADJOURNMENT

Hedges Avenue, Footpath

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (9.24 pm): The light rail stage 3 is taking shape throughout my electorate and the promised ancillary development as a corollary of the light rail project should now also be addressed. Mayor Tom Tate has categorically ruled out committing Gold Coast City council funding to the sacrificial Oceanway project along the foreshore fronting Hedges Avenue. Whilst it is clearly a council decision, something must be done in the interests of personal safety to address the hordes of walkers, runners, pram pushers and cyclists who regularly utilise the Hedges Avenue walkway for daily exercise. It is time to bring the walkway into the 21st century by extending the footpath width across the now dedicated cycleway, which ironically goes against the one-way traffic flow in a peculiar gesture to high-speed cyclists who regularly exceed the 30 kilometre per hour speed limit for this intensely utilised one-way street.

The 1960s power poles, cracked and uneven footpath and a tapestry of variable and difficult driveways hinder the safe and comfortable passage for the multitude of human traffic using this popular exercise route. With increased traffic utilising Hedges Avenue, particularly because of the light rail incursion, it will only be a matter of time before a serious accident occurs, possibly even involving a fatality.

There has been an agreement between the state government and Gold Coast City council to fund the Oceanway project on a fifty-fifty basis. With the council not proceeding with the beachfront Oceanway at Hedges Avenue, that funding agreement should transfer to the upgrade of the footpath along Hedges Avenue on that fifty-fifty basis. Ideally, the undergrounding of the powerlines should also be included in the remedial works to bring a highly taxed area into the 21st century environment. A wide footpath similar to the footpath through Kurrawa Park would alleviate the missing link in the Gold Coast Oceanway project and would satisfy safety concerns and accessibility for thousands of exercise addicts—me included—both locals and tourists.

Following discussions with council officers and the local councillor, a detailed plan needs to be progressed immediately with costings and timeframes put in place for council and state government consideration. This would be a substantial commitment that needs to be properly and seriously addressed, but the alternative of a life-threatening scenario is just not acceptable. With the projected population densities for this area of the Gold Coast—it is planned to host another 15,000 residents—plus the expected increase in tourist numbers to the Gold Coast, this infrastructure project is not a wish list project but an absolute necessity. Whilst this project would normally be the remit of the Gold Coast City council, the fact it is a missing piece of the Oceanway project that the state government has committed to justifies the state government funding. Also it was part of the upgrade to local facilities as part of the light rail stage 3 project additional benefits, which is also a state government driven project.