




Speech By
Hon. Brent Mickelberg

MEMBER FOR BUDERIM

Record of Proceedings, 26 March 2026

**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) (SUPPLEMENTARY 2024-2025) BILL;
APPROPRIATION (SUPPLEMENTARY 2024-2025) BILL**

 **Hon. BA MICKELBERG** (Buderim—LNP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (6.07 pm): I rise to address the cognate debate in relation to the supplementary appropriation bills, and I will endeavour to make a brief contribution tonight unless those opposite interject too much, and I am not taking interjections from my colleague on my right. I will focus on those elements as they relate to my portfolio responsibilities as Minister for Transport and Main Roads.

Before I begin, I want to acknowledge the hard work of the many thousands of public servants who work within the Department of Transport and Main Roads: those RoadTek workers who have been on the ground in the Cook electorate, restoring road access after the most recent natural disasters; the planners who are working through the pipeline of delivering the infrastructure that we need here in a growing state; and our Queensland Rail workers who deliver the passenger services here or the freight services on the Mount Isa line, for example. Their work does not go unnoticed. On behalf of the government, I say thank you to them as we increasingly do more. We will continue to deliver for Queenslanders. This bill is about providing the government, the Public Service, with the tools they need to get on with the job of delivering for Queenslanders.

Some of the \$405-odd million that has been allocated to the Department of Transport and Main Roads in this supplementary appropriations is to fund the permanent implementation of the LNP's 50-cent fares. It is a tremendous LNP initiative and something we are very proud to champion. As I said earlier in the week, 230 million trips have been taken since the introduction of the LNP's permanent 50-cent fares in February last year. That means more than \$497 million has been saved by Queenslanders when compared to Labor's previous fare structure. That is almost half a billion dollars in the pockets of Queensland commuters, compared to what they would have paid under Labor.

We are very pleased to see the response of Queenslanders after we made 50-cent fares permanent. Patronage on our network has increased by 22.2 per cent over the same period compared to the pre-50-cent-fare period. That is real evidence that our permanent 50-cent fares are making a real difference, providing real cost-of-living relief for Queenslanders. Rather than just talking about it, rather than just thinking about it and having an ambition—the former minister, the member for Aspley, said he was talking about it on the first day he was sworn in as the transport minister, but he just did not get around to making it permanent in the whole time he was the transport minister.

Mr MELLISH: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The minister is clearly misleading the House. I am happy to write to you, but I also take offence and ask that he withdraw.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Marr): The member has taken offence, so I ask you to withdraw.

Mr MICKELBERG: I withdraw. I make the observation that only the LNP has made 50-cent fares permanent. Labor had an opportunity to do it. They were in power for 10 years, but they did not do it. They funded a six-month trial on the eve of an election. It is very clear that they were never committed to making 50-cent fares permanent. If they were, the evidence would have been there before the election because they had 10 years to make it permanent.

It is all well and good to sit there and say, 'I thought it was a good idea. I had an opportunity to make it permanent, but I did not.' That is their record. The numbers do not lie. There is a line item in the 2024-25 budget that says 'public transport temporary fare reduction'. That is how it was described. They are not my words. It was their budget. How much do you think was in the forward years?

A government member: Zero.

Mr MICKELBERG: Zero. That is their record. Let's be very clear: it is only an LNP government, the Crisafulli government, that has made 50-cent fares permanent. They can hyperventilate all they want. The reality is that they could have done it but they did not, and Queenslanders know it. Queenslanders know that it is the Crisafulli LNP government that has delivered real cost-of-living relief by making 50-cent fares permanent.

This supplementary appropriation has an allocation to help support an additional rollout of the South-East Queensland and regional urban bus network. Improvements to the bus network are being funded by the LNP Crisafulli government and will ensure more and better bus services. We are changing how we support services to schools. We have opened a new station at Pimpama. The first new station in 10 years has been delivered by an LNP government, not a Labor government—the first station in 10 years. They could not build a station in 10 years. We built one in the first year.

Mr Stevens: Light rail blowout.

Mr MICKELBERG: I take that interjection from the member for Mermaid Beach. Gold Coast Light Rail stage 3—a project in the member for Mermaid Beach's electorate—was originally priced at \$709 million. That is what they said it was going to cost. In their 2024 budget it had blown out to \$1.219 billion—a 72 per cent increase. That is their record.

They did not stop there. The former Labor government hid another \$330 million blowout. They signed off on it literally in the week before they went into caretaker mode. They did not tell anyone, mind you. We found out when we came into office that they wanted to hide that from Queenslanders. They were a bit embarrassed about their record, as they should be. They signed off on another \$330 million cost blowout on Gold Coast Light Rail stage 3. Why did they have that blowout?

A government member: BPIC.

Mr MICKELBERG: I take that interjection—BPIC. Thuggery, bullying, lawlessness and the destruction of productivity on job sites from the CFMEU were writ large on Gold Coast Light Rail stage 3. By contrast, our government is getting on with the job of delivering Gold Coast Light Rail stage 3. In fact, as the member for Mermaid Beach knows, the first tram was on the tracks at the end of last year, testing between Miami North and Broadbeach. We are getting on with the job and delivering the project in a calm, considered and methodical way. We are restoring productivity. We are doing everything that those opposite failed to do. Queenslanders can see it. Queenslanders can see that our government is focused on delivery and that we are getting on with the job. If we look at Cross River Rail, it is another abject failure of the former Labor government—\$19.4 billion. Labor said it would cost \$5.4—

Mr Stevens interjected.

Mr MICKELBERG: You are all over your brief, member for Mermaid Beach. I take that interjection. They said it would cost \$5.4 billion, but they got to \$19 billion. They said it would be open in 2024, but we now know it will be 2029. That is their record. Why? Productivity was destroyed and there was CFMEU thuggery and bullying. We saw over 140 days of protected industrial action in a single year under the former Labor government. Compare that to our record. How many days did we lose in protected industrial action on Cross River Rail in calendar year 2025? Any bids? How many days did we lose? Under the member for Aspley, 148 days were lost. How many did we lose last year?

Mr McDonald: Zero.

Mr MICKELBERG: Zero—that is right, member for Lockyer. That is what restoring productivity looks like. That is how we will end the abject failures of the member for Aspley. There was \$6.7 billion in project blowouts in QTRIP alone. That ignores Cross River Rail. In QTRIP alone—\$6.7 billion. Is there any wonder the budget is under pressure after Labor managed the transport portfolio so poorly?

Mr McDonald: What about level crossings?

Mr MICKELBERG: I have to get to my own electorate, member for Lockyer. We have seen why, and we have seen it writ large at the commission of inquiry—the direct line to Jackie Trad. We have seen it writ large. The evidence is there. Queenslanders can see we are getting on with the job and delivering Cross River Rail.

I want to turn to my own electorate of Buderim. We have seen some tremendous progress on some transport projects, including the Mooloolah River Interchange. One of the first acts of the member for Aspley was to roll over when the federal government cut funding for the MRI, but we are getting on with the job. Construction has started.

Ms Simpson interjected.

Mr MICKELBERG: I can hear the member for Maroochydore interjecting. We are getting on with the job, delivering the full scope of the Mooloolah River Interchange. The member for Aspley saw fit to kick Queenslanders out of their homes and knock down their homes in the middle of a housing crisis. It would have been all right if he was going to build the thing, but then he did not want to build it. We are getting on with the job of delivering it.

The Sugar Road and Mooloolaba Road upgrade is another project. In fact, I had a former minister for transport and main roads visit there, and he said, 'That's a dangerous intersection. We need to fund it.' In fact, he put money in the budget for it. Do you reckon he built it? He cut the funding. He said he was going to fund it. He did fund it, but then he cut it. They never built it. We are getting on with the job and works are happening there already.

I have the Minister for Education here. We have upgrades for Mountain Creek State School in my electorate. What a tremendous school it is, but it has been underfunded by the Labor Party for far too long. Only the LNP Crisafulli government is delivering for Buderim and for all Queenslanders. That is why I support this legislation.