



We The People
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We the People 288 The Financially Tragic Tram

Good Day to you. I speak with many people each week and most are good Australians who are trying to lead happy lives on the Gold Coast and live within their means. The reason so many of my narratives deal with problems, duplicity and rampant dishonesty is because the average person is alarmed and fed up and it appears most have lost all faith in governments and council. Who can say that this country is generally happy when so much is wrong and so much corruption is present. One fellow I met recently is Jeff Robinson of Burleigh Heads. Now Jeff is a self made man and he is angry, very angry, at the deceit and misdirection by omission surrounding the tram on the Gold Coast. Now what he's done is remarkable as his research and logically based assessment, paint an awful picture of the financial disaster surrounding the light rail project. In fact according to Jeff and I quote... **"it's designed to deceive the people financially and represents a failed project before it was even started"**. So many people appear to believe it's some kind of infrastructure salvation for the Gold Coast where in reality it's a financial transport failure and here are just a few reasons why.

Stage one and two are now complete with the combined damage to Southport and Surfers Paradise business at a staggering level. The tram runs from Broadbeach to Helensvale being stages 1 and 2 with stage 3 and 4 proposed to link it to the airport in Coolangatta. Along its route follows a corridor 1.6 km wide of high rise high density with a veritable platoon of opportunistic developers in tow who care not for the quality of life of the average person. **The cost so far is a staggering \$2.9 billion dollars or nine times the original budget.** A \$5 dollar fare actually costs \$28 which the tax payer bears. Now stage 1 cost \$172 million per kilometre to build with a total operating cost of \$256 million per annum or a mind blowing \$700,000 a day. It carries 25,000 passengers daily but needs to carry 140,000 each day to break even. So you can begin to appreciate the population size needed for this Trojan tram is astronomical and totally unrealistic and fatal for the Gold Coast. There are so many questions including where the buses arriving will park and where commuters will park and what is the future when you consider it's bleeding money. Of course most people won't live near the tram or indeed want to go where its fixed rails take it, so what happens with those tens of thousands of people. The answer is and can only be an integrated network of express buses with flexible routes using the roads already in place and at a fraction of the cost. Put simply, the tram is yesterday's technology when it comes to flexible public transport. Las Vegas deliberately chose buses over a tram system because of cost and efficiencies and that's the city Tom Tate so often comments on as iconic.

The tram will cost tax payers \$6 billion to fund over the next ten years and to make the thing pay will need a population of 2.4 million people just along the tram route which of course is just plain crazy and an example of very dubious planning. When you look at the real numbers it is simply amazing that an honest business case could have been put up and of course it never was. Because it's a joint government and private business venture attached to the public teat, we the people are not allowed to see the deal or to know where the huge amounts of money go or indeed who is getting the outrageous 9% interest on the loans. Currently the Queensland Government owe \$100 billion dollars and the tram actually adds 6% to the figure such is the size of the terminal tram. Now for the money being spent we could have 19,000 new Police officers or 578,000 new hospital beds or even a new 8 lane freeway from Helensvale to Brisbane. Get the picture.... yet we have been misled about the benefits of the treacherous tram by a perfidious Council and a duplicitous state government. Jeff Robinson has produced a website called stopthelightrail.com.au and I urge you to have a look at it for the whole story with its exhaustive analyses as time doesn't permit me to even scratch the surface. Once you've had a look then marvel at one man's effort to bring this matter to light and to seek the truth from untrustworthy politicians in Local and State government. The tram is a white elephant and must be stopped at Broadbeach. That website again is called stopthelightrail.com.au, just Google it. Next time I will report on the tram's evil partner called **Value Capture**. It's a doozy and you will not believe what you hear.

Until next time this is Kent Bayley