



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**Main Committee**

**PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

**North West Sydney: Road Infrastructure**

**SPEECH**

**Monday, 21 June 2010**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

---

# SPEECH

**Date** Monday, 21 June 2010  
**Page** 6064  
**Questioner**  
**Speaker** Owens, Julie, MP

**Source** House  
**Proof** No  
**Responder**  
**Question No.**

**Ms OWENS** (Parramatta) (8.07 pm)—I think I could be forgiven for thinking that the member for Mitchell is going to run for state parliament today, because we are of course talking once again about state issues. There is nobody who lives in north-west Sydney—or Parramatta, for that matter—who does not understand the need for the north-west rail line. I would be one of the first to say that it is essential, as in my area are the Parramatta-Chatswood line, the doubling of the Richmond line and the western metro.

We do have an extraordinary backlog of public transport rail infrastructure in the Sydney area and, as the member for Mitchell has said, it is a backlog that comes from 50 years of policy failure—many, many years. In fact, the Parramatta line was the first line built in New South Wales. It was built in September 1855. It was a long time ago. Many governments have come and gone since then, and since then we have had a single spur north and a single spur south. So many, many governments, extending long before the current one, have failed us in this area. I suspect that, given the nature of the backlog, which has built up over probably a hundred years, it will last long after the next state government. It is going to take a considerable amount of time for us to deal with that substantial public backlog. That is why I am really happy to see the Rudd government actually move decisively to engage in the policy area of cities and public transport. I remind the member for Mitchell that his claim that it is 50 years of policy failure on both state and federal levels applies very seriously to the Howard government, who spent nothing on public transport infrastructure during their 12 years in office.

And can I add to the list that I do not just want a north-west rail line and a Parramatta to Chatswood line and the doubling of the Richmond line and the building of the western Metro; I also want lifts at Wentworthville, Toogabbie and Pendle Hill, I want more trains to stop there and I want commuter parking. We have very, very real issues to deal with when it comes to public transport in Sydney and particularly Western Sydney. As for stunts where a member of federal parliament stands up and calls on the government to do something about it, can I suggest to the member for Mitchell that if he is really serious about this he can call on his own side to put their money where their mouth is. I am assuming he is telling us tonight that this is actually a policy of the opposition.

*Mr Hawke interjecting—*

**Ms OWENS**—He is running for state parliament again! He has just said that Barry O'Farrell is going to commit to it. If Barry O'Farrell is committing to it, why are you wasting the federal parliament's time standing up here and asking for the government to do it?

*Mr Hawke interjecting—*

**Ms OWENS**—I think I am getting the picture now: Barry O'Farrell is committing to it but not putting any money into it. I think that is what the member just said. Otherwise there is no explanation for why he is standing up in here wasting valuable time calling on the federal government to do something. If you believe that this is such a priority area, put your money where your mouth is and let us see this in the federal opposition policy. Let us see it costed. Let us see it funded. Let us see it there. That is what you should be doing. It is just a stunt. In my 5½ years here I can honestly say that I have not got up and called for something to happen if I did not think I could make it happen. I do not engage in fooling my electorate in that way. I really think you need to have a serious think about this. I know the press release will go out tomorrow: 'I'm a good guy, I'm standing up for my community.' Well, stand up for your community with Mr Abbott and put it in your own policy. There is an election coming up. This is your chance. Stand up tonight and call for yourself to do it.

**Mr Hawke**—Yes, I will.

**Ms OWENS**—Good. I am glad to hear it, because it sounds like you will tick that one off and add it to the promises. At the moment it sounds like what we have is Barry O'Farrell promising something that he has no intention of delivering because there is no money. This is actually a really serious matter and it requires really serious action. In the last budget we allocated \$4.5 billion to urban public transport. Again, that is \$4.5 billion

more in one year than the Howard government put up in 12. So a little bit of history would not hurt from the member for Mitchell. This is a serious matter. These stunts do not help at all. If you think it really is the most serious issue, put it up.