

31 May 2007

Provest puts Tweed rail debate back on track in Parliament

"I am trying to convince Premier Iemma that there is in fact a win-win solution..."

Tweed MP Geoff Provest has formally asked the New South Wales Parliament to debate the reopening of the Murwillumbah to Casino rail service and funding for an extension of the line to the Gold Coast.

"I have put a Notice of Motion to Parliament asking for the Government to protect the existing Murwillumbah-Casino corridor, to undertake a study into the introduction of a light rail service, and to commit funding to plan a corridor to extend the line from Murwillumbah to Coolangatta," Mr Provest said.

He denied the issue was 'dead' following Labor's March State Election win, saying North Coast voters had overwhelmingly voted for pro-train candidates.

"With Queensland extending its line from Robina to Coolangatta and the Tweed's ongoing population growth, we must have this train service eventually."

"The Government has always cited costs for its original decision to abolish the service, but the longer it waits to act, the more expensive it will become. It therefore makes sense to start fixing this now."

Mr Provest argued a new rail service would effectively pay for itself, when road congestion and environmental costs were taken into account.

"A Tweed light rail service means less pressure on the Pacific Highway, less greenhouse gas emissions and more tax revenue for Sydney as a result of expanded economic activity on the North Coast," Mr Provest said.

"To date the Government has only considered a return of the heavy rail XPT service which would require expensive track upgrades and would provide limited benefit to the community."

"I am trying to convince Premier Iemma that there is in fact a win-win solution, with light rail better serving the needs of locals without overstressing the State budget," Mr Provest concluded.

Contact: Geoff Provest MP 0418 754 775

Note: Mr Provest's Notice of Motion is reproduced below.

NOTICE OF MOTION

Speaker,