



Speech by

**BRUCE DAVIDSON**

**MEMBER FOR NOOSA**

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Hansard 30 July 1998

**MOTION OF CONFIDENCE**

**Mr DAVIDSON** (Noosa—LP) (8.03 p.m.): Tonight, in rising to speak in this debate, I congratulate you, Mr Speaker, on your elevation to the office of Speaker. I also welcome all the new members in this Chamber who have been elected to represent their respective electorates. I wish them all well in their endeavours. I recognise also all of my constituents in the electorate of Noosa on the Sunshine Coast who supported me at the recent State election.

Tonight, I find it very hard to support this motion, because over the past six months the current Premier has been all over Queensland promoting Today's Labor as if it was all new, yet when we look at the members on the benches opposite we see that they are yesterday's Labor—the same people who were here in the six years of the Goss Government and who brought this State to its knees. They are the same people in respect of whom hordes of people came to my electorate office complaining about the process of Government. Nothing has changed.

Over the past 12 months we have also heard the Premier promising new blood in the ranks of the CEOs, or directors-general, of the departments. He made statements such as, "If we pay peanuts, we'll get monkeys. We have to offer five-year contracts to attract the people with the best ability to administer our departments in this State." When I look at the directors-general and CEOs who have been appointed to those departments, I see that they are the same tired old Labor Party people who were there under the previous Labor Party Government and who administered those departments to the point at which they no longer served the people of this State.

**Mr SCHWARTEN:** Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. My point of order is that the directors-general acting in both of my departments were appointed into those positions under the previous Government.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! There is no point of order.

**Mr DAVIDSON:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. In this morning's newspaper, I read that the Premier is now proposing to increase the pay levels of CEOs—the same old Labor Party hack CEOs who, as I said, brought this State to its knees and created so much frustration in the hearts and minds of Queenslanders in the period from 1989 to 1996. The Premier said that if we pay peanuts we will get monkeys. The same old monkeys are back.

Let me talk about my portfolio of Tourism, Small Business and Industry. I wish to start with tourism. As I have said so many times in this House before, when I was appointed as the Minister for Tourism in Queensland, the QTTC was gone; there was absolutely no focus at the QTTC and it was a corporation that had lost its way. It had been politicised and left to struggle to find its own direction. There had been no involvement by the former Minister in its day-to-day operation. There were no people on the board of the QTTC who had a new-age view or a vision for tourism in this State. The senior staff at the QTTC—as I have said before, the director of marketing was paying a consultant to tell her how to market Queensland—had lost their way. The QTTC had no partnerships with the industry and the industry had no confidence in it.

No matter where I travelled across this State during the eight months that I was the shadow Minister, people lined up to complain to me about their frustration in dealing with the QTTC and about its hopeless marketing of Queensland. We immediately set about appointing a new board to the QTTC.

We maintained the services of Frank Burnett as the chairman to provide continuity. However, I identified people across this State from the industry who had the skills, ability and know-how to market and promote Queensland, to restructure the QTTC and to give the corporation the skills and people it needed to ensure that Queensland retained its position as the No. 1 tourist destination in the country.

The appointment of Stephen Gregg was a coup. Mr Gregg was overlooked by the previous administration and had gone to the Northern Territory. I do not know whether there was any political interference, but the appointment of the CEO at the time was not appropriate for what was needed. Bringing Stephen Gregg back totally rejuvenated the QTTC. It gave the tourism industry right across this State the confidence that it had so desperately been looking for. Under Mr Gregg's stewardship in the short time that he was there—18 or 19 months—the QTTC was totally refocused. He employed the appropriate people with the skills, knowledge and industry confidence and support to ensure that we could once again market and promote Queensland not just to Australia but to the world.

Some of the appointments made to the QTTC are ones of which I am very proud. I congratulate Mr Gregg. I totally enjoyed the time that I worked with him. He is one of the most professional people with whom I have worked in my life. I hope he has the opportunity to continue the good work that has been done there. Before my appointment, the previous Government had been formulating a tourism strategy. The document was three inches thick, had been worked on for two years and was going nowhere. It was full of rhetoric and Public Service bureaucratic speak that no-one could relate to. We ditched it. We threw it out the window after hundreds of thousands of dollars had been spent on it. In a very short time, we got industry involvement and, together with senior officers at the QTTC, we released Queensland Tourism—A Framework for the Future. That statement was released about 18 months ago. In it we gave some very clear directions to the industry in Queensland on where the QTTC was heading.

As a result of A Framework for the Future, earlier this year I released the strategy statements on tourism in Queensland. Anyone who wants to know about the work that has been done over the past 18 months by me, the QTTC and the previous coalition Government should obtain a copy of A Framework for the Future and a copy of the progress report on A Framework for the Future. Once again, we have positioned the QTTC in the marketplace as the premier tourism organisation in this country, if not the world.

I noticed that the Minister asked for the resignation of the chairman, Sallyanne Atkinson. I did not say a word or complain. It is the Minister's prerogative. He is the Minister of the day; he has the right to appoint to that chair or to that board whomever he so desires. I was not critical of that removal, but I would be very interested to see whom he appoints as chairman in the future.

I have heard the Minister make statements that he might reduce the board from 10 members to six and the chair. That has been discussed in the past. The bureaucrats would like that; they believe it is more workable. However, one of the challenges I faced was ensuring that we gave all major regions in Queensland a voice on the board of the QTTC. I know that 10 is a large number. It often creates some minor problems for the bureaucrats, but I believe it gives all regions of this State total involvement with the QTTC. It is always difficult if one appoints a person from one region, because then every other region will kick up a fuss because they do not have a representative on the board. It is a very tough task. So I suggest that the Minister consider maintaining the present number of board members of the QTTC.

When I was appointed Minister, the budget of the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation was about \$29.5m. We increased that to \$42m in the last budget. Last year, in 1997-98, the QTTC had expenditure of \$46m and a one-off \$5m special allocation, but the base budget of the QTTC is just over \$42m. I appreciate that in the last few weeks the Minister has provided another \$5m to assist it in further marketing. I believe that we put the runs on the board by increasing that budget from \$29.5m to just over \$42m, with many other special one-off allocations for it to market in both domestic and international marketplaces.

When I was first appointed Minister, the Queensland Events Corporation was rather directionless. It had lost its way. It did not have a budget it could work with. When I was first appointed, the Asia/Pacific Forum, which is a racing forum, was a dream of the previous Minister's and the chairman. It was designed as an international event to add depth to the Queensland Winter Racing Carnival. The event arose out of discussions between the Queensland Events Corporation, the Office of Racing and the Queensland Principal Club during July to September 1995. It was to consist of a conference and a trade show. The event was cancelled in May 1996 by the then board of the QEC when only 67 delegates and six trade exhibitors had registered. At the time the cost to the Queensland Events Corporation and to the Racing Development Fund was \$459,000. The QEC lost \$50,000 and had to provide a further \$9,862 to pay the final accounts. That is one failure.

Another failure was the Great Barrier Reef Dive Festival in 1995 in Cairns. Once again, the QEC invested \$200,000 in that event and only a minimum number of people attended, and there was

obviously no international recognition. Only 72 passes to the event were sold and, as I said, media coverage to the event was limited to Queensland, and much of that was in the Cairns region.

I turn now to the International Women's Triathlon in 1995. The Queensland Events Corporation entered into a five-year agreement with Triathlon Australia to stage an international women's triathlon on the Gold Coast. The agreement called for the Queensland Events Corporation to pay \$180,000 over five years, with \$50,000 to be paid in the first year. The agreement was terminated after the first event when the triathlon attracted only 201 competitors of which only 15 came from interstate and two from overseas. The Queensland Events Corporation originally believed that the event would attract at least 150 interstate and 40 international competitors and over 2,000 Queensland entrants. Even though the event failed to achieve the required number of participants, the Queensland Events Corporation was forced to pay the full \$50,000 for the 1995 event in return for the organisers agreeing to terminate the agreement with the QEC. That was the record of the Queensland Events Corporation: three events into which it invested major funds, and all went belly up. Such was the record of the Queensland Events Corporation.

While I am on the subject of the Queensland Events Corporation, I would like to talk about the achievements of its chairman, John Jamieson. I would like to put on the record of this House that he was one of the most professional people with whom I ever worked. As Chairman of the Queensland Events Corporation, he was the hardest working person in a Government position with whom I have had the pleasure of working. He was totally committed to securing every major event he possibly could for the State of Queensland. Once again, it is the Minister's right to appoint whom he chooses to the position of chair. I was not critical at the time when Mr Jamieson was removed—or his letter of resignation was accepted. I think that that is the Minister's right.

However, I was absolutely disgusted that the Minister chose not to involve Mr Jamieson in the announcement of the Goodwill Games for Queensland. I have spoken to many people in Brisbane and across the State who have known Mr Jamieson and know that he was totally committed to the Queensland Events Corporation. They know his achievements and they are really disgusted that the Minister did not hold on to him for another 10 days, take him to America and involve him in that announcement.

Let me put on the record that Mr Jamieson refused to take the \$20,000 chairman's fee from the Queensland Events Corporation. On the day he agreed to be chair, he said to me that he was happy to put something back into Queensland. He is a businessman and he has done very well. He is very successful, so he was very happy to put something back into this State. He refused to take the \$20,000 fee. He went to America five times. He gave up his own time five times to go to America to secure the Goodwill Games for Queensland. I believe it was a disgraceful act by the Minister to not allow Mr Jamieson to be involved in the announcement of the Goodwill Games.

In my discussions with Mr Jamieson about the Goodwill Games, I directed him a year ago to get this event for Queensland, to do everything he had to do to get this event for Queensland. It is the most important single sporting event in the year 2001 in the world. It is post-Olympics. It will give us an enormous focus in 2001 post-Olympics in this State. Cabinet approved the funding for the Goodwill Games on 12 March. We were very close to making an announcement. We could have forced the announcement as the deal had been done.

I was absolutely disgusted to see Mr Beattie, the Premier, come out in the press and say that the reason that the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing had to go to America was that the arrangements had been messed up. I think that was a disgraceful statement of the efforts that John Jamieson had put in as Chairman of the Queensland Events Corporation. The deal had been done. I congratulate the Minister for going to New York to sign the agreement. I think it was great and I say to him: well done. I suppose it is one of those little things in politics that, if the election had been a month later, maybe I would have done it. However, he is the Minister of the day so I say: congratulations. But I just cannot believe that he did not allow John Jamieson to be involved in that signing in New York.

I would like to put on record on behalf of the coalition the enormous benefits that the Goodwill Games will provide to Queensland. I know that the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing and the Premier have announced the games and they have released a lot of statements on them. The Goodwill Games are one of the world's most prestigious international multi-sport events featuring the top athletes in individual events and the top six teams in team events in a 12 sports program. When it is held in 2001 in Brisbane, it will be the first time that the event has been held outside the US and Russia. The Goodwill Games far exceed the Commonwealth Games in terms of standard of sports competition and its global television reach. The 2001 Goodwill Games will see 230 hours of television coverage broadcast to over 700 million people across 130 countries throughout Europe, Asia and the United States. The 2001 games will cost approximately \$175m to stage. There are enormous promotional benefits.

The Goodwill Games will contribute some \$A140m in both hard dollar spend—cash— and soft dollar promotions including \$A60m in soft dollar promotion of the games in Queensland through Time Warner division, including CNN, CNNI, TBS, TNT, Sports Illustrated, Time, People, Entertainment Weekly and Sports Illustrated Kids; \$A7.14m hard dollar spend through placement of television commercials, promotions and print media to drive worldwide visibility and exposure for Brisbane and Queensland as the games destination; \$A4.3m in hard dollar spend to assist in acquiring Time Warner entertainment talent, personalities and other entertainment platforms attractive to sponsors, media and spectators; and \$A47.4m in hard dollar spend on administrative, operational and logistical areas of the games.

The 2001 games will offer US\$6m in prize money, making it the largest purse in multi-sport event history. The involvement of the world's leading athletes and entertainers combined with unparalleled media coverage presents Queensland with the opportunity to not only host one of the world's great sporting events, but to leave a lasting legacy for Queensland and Australian youth in the year of the centenary of Federation. With Australia's centenary of Federation in 2001, the games will also provide a unique opportunity for this State to have the world's elite athletes here in Queensland as part of our celebrations and to take those celebrations to a global audience. The games are expected to attract in the vicinity of 1,000 national and international print and electronic media journalists, making the event one of the largest media events in the world.

The games are expected to directly generate approximately 514,360 additional visitor bed nights during and subsequent to the games. This would result in an economic impact of some \$120m to the State. A further \$47.1m in revenue in Queensland is expected to be generated in flow-on effects resulting from global promotion of the State through extensive international television coverage of the games. In total, the 2001 games are expected to generate a total expenditure within the State of \$167m, resulting in the creation and maintenance of some 1,789 jobs throughout Queensland. Again I put on the record for the people of Queensland my thanks and appreciation to John Jamieson for his efforts in securing the Goodwill Games for this State. I know that in the year 2001, the year after the Olympics, it is going to be the biggest sporting event in the world and it is going to mean enormous economic benefit for this State.

The Queensland Events Corporation has also released a strategic business plan. Over the past few years the corporation has negotiated for, and won, some major events. For commercial reasons, I will not mention any of those for which we are negotiating at the moment, but in the time of Mr Jamieson's chairmanship, we hosted the inaugural Telstra Super League Grand Final in Brisbane in 1997, we won the 1999 men's and women's Championship Hockey Trophy, we won the 1999 Golden Oldies Hockey Festival, we have won the 2000 World Figure Skating Championships, we have won the 2000 World Veterans Athletic Championships and in October this year we have won the Asia-Pacific Masters Games for the Gold Coast. We have also won the World Hobie Cat Championships in the Whitsundays, we have assisted with Easter in the Outback, the Whitsunday Masters Games, the Fourx Rodeo at Mount Isa and the Discovery Eco Challenge in Cairns. The portfolio of the Queensland Events Corporation is second to none in this country.

When I was appointed Minister, the Premier of Victoria, the Victorian Government and the Victorian Events Corporation were beating us hands down for every major event that came to this country. In the two and a bit years of my Ministry, and the 18 months of Mr Jamieson's chairmanship, we beat the Victorians on every bid. We never lost a bid. I proudly say that the Queensland Treasury and the Queensland Cabinet never refused to provide funding for any of those events. We had a magnificent team of people at the QEC. The Minister is taking over a team of professionals and a corporation that is totally focused and which I believe has the best skills in this country to bid for, and win, major events for this State.

In closing, I would like to say this: "Jammo, I know that you were instrumental in winning the Goodwill Games for Queensland. When we return to Government I am sure that you will be the first bloke I will ring to offer you back the job of chairman of the Queensland Events Corporation in recognition of the sacrifices you made in your personal business life, for the time you gave, for not taking the chairman's fee, for the enormous success you achieved as chairman, and for the fantastic economic benefits you provided for the State of Queensland."

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