



Speech by

Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Queensland Economy; Expo 2002

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier) (9.42 a.m.), by leave: Two recent surveys, by the Australian Industry Group and Morgan and Banks, have revealed a high level of confidence by business and industry in Queensland's future. The surveys show that, despite the Asian economic downturn, Queensland is moving ahead. My Government has played its part in this process by demonstrating strong leadership and by governing as if we have a majority of 10. With our massive \$4.8 billion Capital Works Program and innovative jobs creation strategies, we are creating the right climate for business to prosper, notwithstanding the impact of the Asian economic crisis.

There have been a number of major success stories recently. ATCO Structures Pty Ltd, with its headquarters in Alberta, Canada, has invested \$20m in establishing its Asia-Pacific headquarters in Brisbane and another centre in Townsville. ATCO chose Queensland for its headquarters because we have a very stable economy and the company believes we have an exciting future, not to mention a can-do Government. Decisions like this send a very positive message to the international business world that Queensland is a can-do State which has all the attributes necessary for the site of an Asia-Pacific headquarters and to development partnerships for investing into Asia.

Last week I opened Queensland's first new sugar mill in more than 70 years. I congratulate farmers and Bundaberg Sugar for creating a new multimillion-dollar industry on the Atherton Tableland, with up to 500 direct and indirect jobs in the region. We are continuing to support this new industry by allocating \$7.8m to the Atherton Sugar Project this year through the Department of Transport for infrastructure. And the Department of Natural Resources has allocated \$4.5m this year for improvements to the Mareeba-Dimbulah Irrigation Area. As the new century dawns, experts forecast that that local community will earn about \$30m a year through export income.

Yesterday, along with the Minister for Mines and Energy, I announced that the State Government had given the green light for a \$639m nickel and cobalt mining, processing and refining project to proceed in central Queensland. The project, to be developed near Rockhampton by Lagoon Hill Nickel, a subsidiary of Preston Resources, will generate 1,000 jobs during construction and 210 permanent jobs when operational. Later today the Deputy Premier and I will sign an agreement with Telstra forming a partnership to provide a one-stop shop to persuade national and international companies to move or establish their call centres in Queensland. There is plenty to be confident about in this State.

In addition, when it comes to major activities, projects and opportunities, such as Expo 2002, this Government will do everything it can to facilitate those. I advise the House that the Philippines has yet to formally withdraw from the staging of Expo 2002. However, the Philippines' position has opened the way for Queensland to be reconsidered as the site to stage Expo 2002, although that consideration cannot effectively take place until the Philippines has withdrawn.

The Commonwealth Government, at the request of the Queensland Government, has therefore advised the Bureau of International Exposition—BIE—Secretary General of Australia's interest in pursuing Expo 2002 should the Philippines withdraw. If the Philippines withdraws by December 1998, the matter will probably be determined at a special general assembly of the BIE either in late January or early February 1999. A two-thirds majority of delegates is required to secure agreement to host Expo 2002. The task to secure agreement from a two-thirds majority of BIE delegates will not be easy, and

detrimental comments by those opposite attacking our bid to stage this event will only detract from our efforts and our likely success.

With this in mind, my Government has developed a comprehensive lobbying strategy which will be implemented immediately upon the Philippines' notification to the BIE of its withdrawal. The indecision of the Philippines makes it extremely difficult for Australia to pursue its interest in staging the event. The longer the Philippines takes to withdraw, the more difficult it becomes for Queensland to undertake the work necessary to stage the event. My Government will vigorously pursue the right to stage this prestigious event in Queensland in 2002. At the meeting of the general assembly of the BIE in November we will have a representative who will be privately pursuing Queensland's interests at every opportunity.

In conclusion, I am disappointed by political comments made by both the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the Liberal Party over the past few days that have served only to undermine our bid. I would have thought there would have been bipartisan support for this bid similar to that which we gave in Opposition. I am disappointed that the Opposition is seeking to undermine our bid. Let the people of the Gold Coast know, and let the record show, that the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the Liberal Party sought to destroy our bid to stage Expo 2002 at Coomera.
