



Speech by

BRUCE DAVIDSON

MEMBER FOR NOOSA

Hansard 23 March 1999

EUMUNDI MARKET

Mr DAVIDSON (Noosa—LP) (7.10 p.m.): It gives me a great deal of pleasure to rise in this House today to bring to the attention of all honourable members an occasion not only of some moment in my electorate but also of significance to our great State, and that is the 20th birthday celebration of one of Queensland's true success stories, the Eumundi market. It seems only yesterday that this flourishing enterprise suddenly blossomed in the main street of one Queensland's heritage towns, Eumundi. I bring this celebration to members' attention because in a period when unemployment, particularly among our young people, remains critically high, this example of home-town initiative shows how, with determination and diligence, part of the massive problem may be solved in other parts of this great State.

How the time flies, when I think back those 20 years ago and remember those very early days. Back in 1979, when we were all very much younger, some young town folk, the children of a local family, decided to sell some home-baked scones from the steps of the CWA hall situated in the Eumundi Park on the roadside of the town's major traffic through way. Within a few weeks, three stalls had been set up to become what we believe to be the official opening day of 24 March 1979. I believe the entire takings for that day represented about \$30, but the Eumundi market was up and running.

There is no doubt that, back in those early days, the original entrepreneurs with their scones and produce, and most importantly their enthusiasm, could not have dreamed about or could have conceived of the phenomenal growth that has taken place over the past 20 years. Rarely can it be claimed that a major tourist attraction, to say nothing of a major business, has been launched and developed and which continues to enjoy a major level of success without guidance being provided by a bevvy of marketing expertise as has the Eumundi market. Obviously, there is a lesson for all of us to learn out of this.

The original people involved were largely unsophisticated in matters of business, yet with sheer determination and a country town attitude where helping thy neighbour is second nature and giving it a go is an attitude, they proved beyond doubt that anything is possible in Australia and in Queensland if dedication and tenacity are the bricks upon which to build a dream. From such a small beginning, the market now boasts 280 stalls set over the 3,500 square metre site, of which only 26 stalls could not be considered as local. So we can see that, over the years, with all of its growth, the market has remained primarily very much a local event.

One of the major strengths of this market is that it has a very simple operational philosophy, which makes it the unique event that it is today. The rules set down by the market's managers, the Eumundi Historical Association, are quite simple. To be eligible to participate and trade at the market, one must abide by their guidelines, which are make it, sew it, bake it or grow it. As such, the Eumundi market is an authentic craft and produce market, untainted by commercial big business and, as such, operated only by talented individuals and very committed local produce growers. This market is not only a super-success in its operations; as an enterprise it turns over millions of dollars each year and it is a major Queensland tourist attraction. It is known worldwide and assists the promotion of not only Eumundi and the Sunshine Coast but also Australia internationally. It matters not how far one travels around the world, the odds are that if one tells people one comes from Queensland, many will ask, "How is the Eumundi market faring?" Such is its worldwide fame.

Back here at home, the Eumundi market is much more than another tourist attraction; it is now an established institution. It is a plentiful resource of employment for over 400 people each week as well as attracting business to other Eumundi enterprises every weekend, some of whom now open only on the weekend. The income that is generated at the market is redistributed throughout the Sunshine Coast and other south-east Queensland businesses, which makes this market and its activities a vital cog in the south-east Queensland economy.

Perhaps the most tangible asset that the market has and provides is to allow members of the Eumundi Historical Association to invest the proceeds from stall leases back into the town of Eumundi. The association not only owns much of the freehold land upon which the market operates but also has refurbished many of the buildings in town to their original presentation.

So what now? When business and tourists come to town, they can experience Queensland as it was in days gone by. One of the projects that the Eumundi Historical Association has fathered and sponsored is the historical museum situated opposite the market. If members of this Chamber have not visited this excellent walk through Eumundi's history, I thoroughly recommend that they make a visit. Currently, the members of the association are working, as custodians, on the School of Arts, which is located just up the road from the market site. The association hopes that in the not-too-distant future the School of Arts building, refurbished back to something like its original condition, will attract not only local talent but also international talent to its doors and the town of Eumundi. Again, that is more opportunity and effort from these dedicated people of the Eumundi Historical Association who have played such a significant part in the rejuvenation of Eumundi, the town that nearly died.

Time expired.
