



Speech by

Mr G. HEALY

MEMBER FOR TOOWOOMBA NORTH

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NELLY BAY DEVELOPMENT, MAGNETIC ISLAND

Mr HEALY (Toowoomba North—NPA) (6.40 p.m.): The Nelly Bay harbour development looms as a catalyst for a substantial boom for tourism and small business in Townsville and on Magnetic Island itself. The hotel and retail site associated with the safe harbour will give added drawing power to the magnificent natural attractions of the island. The previous coalition Government recognised the value of such a project and committed \$6m to it.

What hypocrisy we have heard tonight from the Deputy Premier to suggest that the previous coalition Government did nothing! Before the Mundingburra by-election the Labor Party was forced, kicking and screaming, to do something in relation to Nelly Bay, and all we got was a supplementary EIS. That is all it was, and only because of the Mundingburra by-election. After six years of Labor inactivity, six years of Labor doing nothing, the previous coalition Government committed \$6m.

I was pleased to see the Beattie Labor Government demonstrating some bipartisan support for the project when it honoured that commitment of the previous coalition Government and continued the process that had already been put in train. It was all there. The Government recognised that the coalition retains its commitment to seeing this project through and, in turn, we are happy to give bipartisan support in Opposition.

Townsville has been waiting far too long for this project to be sidetracked, far too long for this project to be sidelined, and far too long for this project to be sideswiped. It carries with it the promise of jobs in construction, jobs in hospitality, jobs in transport and jobs in retail. Do honourable members remember that? Jobs, jobs, jobs? That is what is called for. That is what will be given to the people of Townsville and Magnetic Island.

Mr Nuttall: Do you know where Nelly Bay is?

Mr HEALY: I do. I was up there the weekend before last and I talked to quite a few people in Townsville. I was overwhelmed by the amount of public support for this project. The opponents of this project are reading the mood of the people very wrongly indeed.

Mr Borbidge: Do you reckon Mr Reynolds will have the nerve to vote against this motion?

Mr HEALY: The Leader of the Opposition has raised an interesting point. Will the member for Townsville vote against the motion tonight? He has the opportunity. If he feels strongly enough about this issue to represent his own people in this particular debate, he has the opportunity to vote against this motion tonight. If he does, good luck to him. He should stand up for his constituents and vote against this motion.

I understand that some small traders may have concerns about the competition that will come from additional retailers who may move into the new complex, but there can be little if any doubt that the market will grow along with the number of retailers. There will be more tourists coming to Magnetic Island and more tourists coming to Townsville. In addition, tourists may be enticed to stay longer. Magnetic Island is a big attraction for the growing backpacker market. Business in Townsville and on Magnetic Island has been waiting far too long for this development to come to fruition.

The ugly scar that now dominates Nelly Bay is a blight on this beautiful island and should be fixed as soon as possible. To the State Government's credit, for the most part it has tried to keep things

moving. Members of this side of the House are pleased to support the Government in its efforts. This project must go ahead as soon as practically possible.

Queensland needs more projects like the Nelly Bay harbour redevelopment, not fewer. I urge the Government to ignore sectional interests within the Labor Party which have been searching for ways to torpedo this project. Local media on Magnetic Island, notably the Magnetic Community News, has described the situation like this—

"The most disturbing concern is the underlying festering boil within the Labor Party and those with their own barrow to push, who continue to actively work against a process they were either part of establishing or already contributed to."

The process has been subject to intense scrutiny from day one. Feedback to the Opposition is that the majority of island residents support the Nelly Bay harbour development. There is also general support within the adjacent mainland community of Townsville. Townsville Enterprise is supporting the project. But the usual list of suspects—the radical greens, the anti-development lobby, the anti-jobs lobby and the sectional interests who fear their respective strangleholds may be broken, including the member for Townsville— are the ones who are actively working to undermine the Government's commitment to seeing this project through. Members on this side of the House urge the Government not to give in and not to forsake the solution put in place by the coalition Government under then Premier Rob Borbidge.

Time expired.
