



Speech by

Hon. J. ELDER

MEMBER FOR CAPALABA

Hansard 14 September 1999

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Magnesium Metal

Hon. J. P. ELDER (Capalaba—ALP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development and Minister for Trade) (9.40 a.m.), by leave: The recent announcement that the Australian Magnesium Metals Corporation has produced magnesium metal from its Gladstone demonstration plant is heartening news for the State. The production of magnesium metal has been a long time coming, and the positive effects of this for Queensland cannot be overestimated. What it essentially means is that this State is on the verge not only of a new light metals industry but also the likely establishment of associated bolt-on industries in die-casting and other enterprises.

The production of magnesium metals—proof that the technology employed by AMC actually works—brings Queensland a step closer to a firm decision being made on the establishment of an \$800m smelter at Stanwell near Rockhampton. Such a metals plant would create 1,000 jobs during the construction phase and permanent employment for about 300 people.

One might ask why this Government is so keen on this project, and the answer is simple. It is a project that successive Labor Governments—firstly, the Goss Government, and now the Beattie Government—have worked tirelessly in progressing. This support stands in stark contrast to the attitude of the previous Borbidge Government, which supported this project with little more than words. The Labor administrations have been prepared to support this new industry for the State with substantial financial backing.

Before members opposite jump too quickly to their feet, I do acknowledge that the Borbidge Government did spend \$290,000 to undertake a light metals study on downstream processing. And in 1997, there was the appointment of a dedicated officer to promote light metals activities from the London office. This particular position continues.

But let us look at the record of successive Labor Governments and their support for this important industry. The former Goss Government had enough faith in the industry when it put forward a \$5m package for research and development in the mid 1990s. Subsequently, the Beattie Government has committed \$10m to the establishment of the Australian Light Metals Centre, which will be located at the Brisbane Technology Park at Eight Mile Plains. The light metals centre has been commissioned to set up vertical integration in the light metals industry involving not only magnesium but also aluminium.

Further, the Beattie Government is also proud of a \$4m involvement in the Centre for Alloy and Solidification Technology metals manufacturing—or CASTmm, as it is known—which is also headquartered in Brisbane. CASTmm has been tasked with the development and implementation of key technologies that substantially contribute to the growth and international competitiveness of the nation's light metals production processing and manufacturing.

This Government is creating a Smart State. The light metals industry and the biotech and information technology sectors are those being targeted by this Government to ensure that Queensland has a growing business base. What this is all about is utilising our natural resources so that we can add value to them at home and, in the process, create jobs for Queenslanders.