



Speech by

Hon. J. ELDER

MEMBER FOR CAPALABA

Hansard 23 November 1999

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Department of State Development

Hon. J. P. ELDER (Capalaba—ALP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development and Minister for Trade) (9.42 a.m.), by leave: One of the core commitments that saw this Government elected to office was the creation of the Department of State Development as the major driver of economic activity in the State. Since the creation of the department, there have been numerous achievements. On the whole, the department has operated smoothly. There has been, however, a process of continual evaluation so that the department continues to operate smoothly with a concentration on its basic purpose, and that is to help the economic growth of Queensland.

Consequently, I am pleased to be able to inform the House about some changes which will enable the department to better focus on its core tasks. The major changes are the creation of a new task force to meet the Government's priorities in infrastructure development and the introduction of new management arrangements to provide special focus on service delivery, both regionally and internationally. This will result in 30 positions being relocated from head office in Brisbane to the 15 State Development Centres in regional Queensland, something that I would have thought would be supported by all sides of the House. It is a process which has already begun and will continue over the balance of this financial year.

The former Industry Division will be reshaped into two separate branches dealing with existing industries and emerging industries. The former branch of Innovation and Technology Resources will be applied to servicing the objectives of both these new branches. Innovation and technology are as relevant to the competitiveness of our traditional industries as they are to the growth of new ones. The new Industry Division, called Industry Development and Innovation, will manage the Property Services Group in view of the obvious linkage between industry strategy and the operation of the department's industrial estates and technology parks. This function was formerly managed within the Infrastructure Division.

The Major Projects Division will be adjusted by the inclusion of the intermediate size projects and the land planning functions conducted formerly by the Infrastructure Division. The former Infrastructure Division, with the adjustments to it discussed already, will be headed by the Deputy Coordinator-General and will assume responsibility for the development and implementation of the State infrastructure plan. This is a major initiative of Government and will develop a whole-of-Government framework for infrastructure development across the State to replace the piecemeal approach that has been adopted in the past.

The new task force will also be created to drive the Government's commitment to partnering the private sector on infrastructure structure development. As mentioned already, the Strategic Policy Division will assume overarching responsibility for innovation policy and it will extend its research capacity. The Office of Regional Development will adopt a more strategic focus than it has previously exercised and will be closely aligned with the Meat and Food Task Force, the Timber Task Force and the Tourism Development Team—all groups whose efforts will translate into more jobs in regional Queensland.

The Meat Industry Task Force, which has made such a good job of working with the meat processing industry, will be expanded to deal with food processing generally. I should add that a substantial majority of the department is unaffected by these changes. The Trade Division, the

Investment Attraction Division and the Commercial Advisory Services Division are unchanged, while the adjustments to the Corporate Services Division and the Office of Small Business are of a very minor nature.

These adjustments very largely involve adjustments to reporting arrangements of work groups within the existing organisation. There is no overall reduction or increase in positions and there will be little if any physical relocation of staff. These adjustments are part of the organic growth of an effective organisation that must be committed to high performance in the pursuit of the Government's objectives in economic growth and regional development.

While these changes are in the process of being implemented, the organisational development work that has preceded them has gone on for some time. The director-general of my department engaged organisational change consultants following the creation of the department last year. They have provided ongoing advice to him about the structure and the effectiveness in delivering the Government's agenda. The need to focus on the issues that this reorganisation has addressed were identified by those consultants in advice provided to the director-general since April this year.
