



Speech by

**Hon. J. ELDER**

**MEMBER FOR CAPALABA**

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Hansard 23 November 1999

**DEPARTMENT OF STATE DEVELOPMENT**

**Hon. J. P. ELDER** (Capalaba—ALP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development and Minister for Trade) (6.23 p.m.): I rise to second the amendment. It will be a long three weeks in the Parliament if this is what the Opposition has come up with on day 1. By day 12, I think the debate will have all the excitement of a long lunch with the member for Burnett.

The simple fact is that morale in the department has never been higher. According to the coalition's own report on TSBI—these are not my words—its leadership was moribund. That was the finding of a report that the former Minister buried. I am about to get to the bottom of another report from the Department of Economic Development and Trade which was buried, but I found where the former Minister hid it. By the time I come up with that report, I will have more to say about that person's stewardship and leadership of the department.

Morale in the department is up because it has a Minister that sets policy and policy goals. Public servants can now reach those goals and attract business. That is the difference. The departmental officers have a Minister who leads and they have an ability to attract business. We are doing exactly what the Leader of the Opposition told me to do this morning. He said, "Get out and work; do not run the other way." I have never run the other way. That is the difference. I have a lot more bottle than the Leader of the Opposition and those opposite have.

The sharp focus in my department is on putting Queenslanders back to work. The only thing that the former Minister for Tourism, Small Business and Industry managed to do well was to go overseas. In South Africa he was great at rhino hunting but he did very little to really get on with the job. He is inaccurate in terms of costs. While I have been sitting here, I have done some calculations on the cost of this particular organisational structure. Where does the honourable member get \$1m from? Two positions have been terminated and two officers have been offered VERs. Where does \$1m come from?

**Mr Slack:** In respect of their five-year contracts.

**Mr ELDER:** No. If the member understood the issue he would know that they only get 20% of the base of their contracts and whatever else they are due. Again, the honourable member does not understand the process. It is quite clear that even when he was the Minister, he did not understand how the department worked. The only members of this House who have undermined John Carroll are the former Minister and the Leader of the Opposition. To those who have questioned the move to APEC I say that that is not true. The only people who have undermined and defamed John Carroll are the people opposite and it is about time that they stopped.

I have told my department officers to do everything that they can to attract business. I have told them not to break the law or to break any commercial confidences, but to do everything that they can to attract business. They have been very successful in doing just that. When the coalition was in Government, the first thing that it did was to sack dozens of public servants for what it thought was political allegiance. Decent public servants who worked under a Labor Government and who had no political allegiance were not spared when the coalition came to Government. It wiped the lot of them and defamed the lot of them. That is a fact.

**Mr SLACK:** I find that remark offensive and I ask for it to be withdrawn.

**Mr SPEAKER:** The honourable member has asked for the comment to be withdrawn.

**Mr ELDER:** I withdraw. All members can read the Hansard in relation to Ross Rolfe, Jackie Byrne and a number of D-Gs to see whether I or the member for Burnett is telling the truth. It is easy: members can simply read the Hansard to see the truth.

This morning the member tried to misrepresent my comments to the Estimates committee. I had to correct him, because I said that I would not and could not give a guarantee that there would not be changes. Of course there will be changes, because Governments need to respond to their new policy initiatives. The world changes and the economy changes. We need a high performance department that meets those changes head on and responds to them. For example, we have engaged a venture capitalist specialist. That was not an issue a few years ago, but it is now because it is important in terms of the Government's policy of growing our biotechnology base. Policies change, our focus changes and departments have to be organic in the way that they respond to those changes. That is a fact of life. If the member opposite does not understand that, it explains why he is sitting there and we are sitting here. We respond.

Let us talk about the projects that the Government has brought on. I signed the documents on Citibank. Other projects have involved IBM, Indus, Mills Tui, the securing of the Asia-Pacific headquarters of Parmalat for Brisbane, Savill, the joint venture by Excell and Telstra in the Stellar call centre, the agreement with Berri to expand its product base in the Sunshine Coast, Connor Shea Napier at Dalby, Austar which is creating 1,000 jobs on the Gold Coast, Bechtel moving its headquarters from Sydney to Brisbane, National Foods which is building a new plant at Crestmead, Danpork at Warwick, AMH, QAC, the RFA—

**Mr Slack:** Come off it.

**Mr ELDER:** Now the member is claiming Danpork. I can tell him who moved the blockages on Danpork: we did. He could not do it and the local member knows that because he asked me to remove the blockages. They are now up and running.

Time expired.

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