



Speech by

Hon. J. ELDER

MEMBER FOR CAPALABA

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Y2K Contingency Planning Workbook

Hon. J. P. ELDER (Capalaba—ALP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development and Minister for Trade) (9.40 a.m.), by leave: Honourable members would be aware of this Government's efforts to help Queensland business, small business in particular, cope with any problems that occur with their business systems in the dawn of a new millennium as a result of what is commonly known as the Y2K bug. The Government has held seminars the length and breadth of the State for all small businesses. All members of the House would be aware that the Queensland Government produced a workbook that provided small business with a check list so that they can work through their own systems to check if they are Y2K compliant. This received a strong response from small business: 130,000 copies of the book were distributed and I thank the members from both sides of the House who helped distribute it and raise awareness among small businesses in their electorates.

In general, however, our experience has been that while larger businesses have generally had time and money to implement systems to cope with Y2K, many small businesses are adopting a wait and see attitude and are generally waiting to see if anything goes wrong with their systems after the new year and then they will make the corrections to their systems. So while businesses which have undertaken Y2K audit and remediation plans can be very confident of a problem-free turn of the century, there could still be unexpected failures which may impact directly or indirectly on their businesses.

Consequently, the Government has developed a Y2K Contingency Planning Workbook to provide Queensland business and industry with the process to develop a backup plan should any unforeseen failures occur due to the year 2000 date change problem. This workbook will assist those businesses that have completed their Y2K audit and remediation plan to gain a final assurance that their business will continue to trade into the year 2000. The workbook can also be used by businesses as a contingency planning tool for other circumstances detrimental to their success, such as loss of key personnel, illness or resignation, disruption to essential services, supplier or customer business failure, or damage caused by acts of nature.

The Y2K Contingency Planning Workbook is being released now, because activity in preparation for Y2K among small businesses has tapered off. While the Australian Bureau of Statistics reports that the number of businesses in Queensland that are Y2K ready has increased from 9% at the end of last year to 30% in the middle of this year, it seems apparent that most small businesses which are going to make their preparations for Y2K have done so.

In this light, the Government's main priority at the moment in regard to small business is assisting in contingency planning and planning of this nature will, in any event, be of assistance to individual small businesses. The workbook will be distributed to business associations, local governments, chambers of commerce, banks and accountants. All members of Parliament will receive several copies next week, if they have not done so already. I would like to thank members for their support in advance. I have a preliminary copy of the workbook. Members played a proactive role in distributing the previous workbook. I commend it to the small businesses in their electorates.
