Speech by

Hon. J. ELDER

MEMBER FOR CAPALABA

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT
Queensland Innovation Council

Hon. J. P. ELDER (Capalaba—ALP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development and Minister for Trade) (9.42 a.m.), by leave: For many years, the bedrock of the Queensland economy has been agriculture, mining, and now tourism. As we enter the next century and the world's economy alters, we need to both upgrade these traditional industries so that we can remain world-competitive and continue to embrace new industries to create new, exciting job opportunities for our young people. More than anything else, this calls for new ways of thinking, for innovative strategies and directions—a challenge that this Government is determined to embrace.

This Government unashamedly sees the private sector as the primary engine of this growth in new innovative industries. To promote further growth in the area, my department is developing an innovation strategy, which has already been the subject of a discussion paper which, in turn, has been the subject of wide-ranging and extremely supportive public comment.

This strategy, which is another important plank in making Queensland the Smart State, is currently being finalised and should be ready for public release early next year. An important element of this strategy is the formation of an innovation council to provide Government with high-level advice to help us, as a Government, determine what sort of smart infrastructure is necessary to help drive that growth.

Consequently, I am pleased to inform the House that today will see the first meeting of the Queensland Innovation Council. Its primary task will be to provide advice on the development and, more importantly, the implementation of the innovation and technology initiatives of the State Government. This council will be making recommendations on how we can encourage innovation and further develop our already impressive capabilities in areas such as advanced manufacturing, biotechnology and the emerging area of nanotechnology.

Specifically, the council will focus on four key priorities: advancing R and D infrastructure and capabilities, accelerating commercialisation and uptake of ecologically-sustainable innovation, promoting strategic opportunities for Queensland and fostering a culture of innovation within the State, including in our schools, the public sector and the wider community.

One area of the council's work will be to make sure that the world-class research currently being undertaken in the numerous cooperative research centres throughout the State is transmitted to our local industries. Significantly, the council will also advise Government on priorities in ensuring that Queensland has the knowledge-based infrastructure, or tool set, to promote innovation, attract investment and ensure that we retain and grow innovative companies in this State.

The council will be chaired by Professor Gus Guthrie, and council members have been selected as Queensland-based industry and visionary leaders from the public and private sectors, educational and research institutions and the general community. My Parliamentary Secretary, Stephen Robertson, will also sit on the council to ensure that there is a strong political commitment to back up its advice. Mr Robertson has been responsible for a lot of the coordination and consultation necessary in the preparation of the entire innovation strategy.

Whilst what I have outlined may seem on one level to be simply a strategic framework, I want to make it quite clear that I see the council as having one primary purpose—to create jobs. The council will

concentrate on having the private and the public sectors working together. Innovation in new industries and our traditional industries is one of the best ways of creating new jobs—not just for the next few years, but for the next century. Embracing innovation in all sectors of our economy is an essential prerequisite to promoting Queensland as the Smart State. I commend this initiative to the House.

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