



Speech by

Hon. J. ELDER

MEMBER FOR CAPALABA

Hansard 30 November 1999

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Gold Coast, Convention Centre

Hon. J. P. ELDER (Capalaba—ALP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development and Minister for Trade) (9.43 a.m.), by leave: In the past few years, the Gold Coast has become one of the most favoured destinations for delegates of conventions of all sizes. This growth has largely proceeded on the back of the coast's outstanding natural facilities and the very large hotels which do not have convention centres. However, this Government has seen the need to provide a dedicated convention centre on the Gold Coast to consolidate the growth that has occurred so far and put the Gold Coast in a position to attract further large-scale conventions.

The Government received several proposals for a convention centre in the second half of last year and early this year. We formally called for expressions of interest so that we could test the market. From here a short list of four contenders was compiled in March. This was reduced to three in August and then two when some of the consortia which had been short-listed left the process. Despite the urgings of those opposite, this Government remains committed to having a convention centre on the Gold Coast. Consequently, I am pleased to announce to the House that Jupiters Limited will be the preferred tenderer for a \$145m Convention and Exhibition Centre on the Gold Coast. The convention centre should be ready by March 2002, subject to the project gaining the necessary approvals from the Gold Coast City Council.

The Government received two very good proposals. Jupiters was judged the better of the two, and we will now go into detailed negotiations on formal binding agreements for the construction and operation of the convention centre. A major point of the Jupiters proposal is that it will help provide a great economic stimulus to the Gold Coast. It has a strong focus on the convention market but will also provide a venue for exhibitions, entertainment and sporting events. There will be considerable benefit for existing hotels and associated retail and service industries on the Gold Coast. It is proposed that the facility will be built off the Gold Coast Highway close to the existing Jupiters Casino at Broadbeach. Having this facility here means that it will be accessible to existing businesses and commercial development, and that in turn will benefit the broader Gold Coast business community.

I realise that there has been a great deal of discussion and speculation about this matter, but it is the Beattie Government which is giving the Gold Coast its long awaited convention centre which will be a huge boost for the coast's traditional industry—tourism. The centre will be owned by the State Government and operated by Jupiters and will be able to host conventions of up to 2,000 delegates. In combination with its existing facilities, Jupiters will actually be able to host two conventions of this size at the same time and provide a venue for concerts and sporting events for 6,500 people. It could also host exhibitions requiring up to 7,000 square metres of indoor space with an additional 2,000 square metres outdoors. In planning terms, the Gold Coast City Council will retain the responsibility for normal local authority approvals for the centre. It is this Government's intention that this will be done through the Integrated Development Approval System of the Integrated Planning Act.

The Jupiters proposal also involves the re-routing of Little Tallebudgera Creek so that the centre is accessible to the Gold Coast Highway. This in turn involves the relocation of the boat ramp and the senior citizens centre. What this will mean in practice is that some parkland will be given up for the convention centre, but Jupiters in turn intend to donate other land to public parkland so that overall there is an actual net gain in public space and public parkland in the area.

This facility has been sorely needed for some time now as the Gold Coast is entering a new phase of its development and needs to concentrate more on value adding to its traditional industries. Those opposite seem to think that they have a monopoly on representing the Gold Coast. However, we promised to be a Government for all Queenslanders, and that is what we are doing here. It is the Beattie Government that is delivering to the Gold Coast a facility it needs and one which will create more jobs in the future.
