



Speech by

Hon. J. ELDER

MEMBER FOR CAPALABA

Hansard 11 March 1999

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Millennium Bug

Hon. J. P. ELDER (Capalaba—ALP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development and Minister for Trade) (9.40 a.m.), by leave: Today I want to focus on the work that the Government will be undertaking to assist the business community to minimise any problems it may encounter in connection with the millennium bug. This is especially important in Queensland, because we have proportionately more small and medium-sized businesses than any other State. All the evidence so far suggests that the small and medium-sized businesses are the ones that need assistance. Consequently, this Government is reaching out to that business community, especially the small-business community, to assist it in confronting the problem.

Specifically, we have developed a year 2000 Queensland business workbook, which is a 48-page workbook that provides an overview of the year 2000 problem, including reasons for the problem, and potential problems in taxation, insurance and legal issues. More importantly, the workbook provides a Y2K project plan checklist to assist business and industry undertaking their own year 2000 project. This is the first such workbook available to the business community within Australia and it will provide that community with a checklist that can be worked through to become year 2000 compliant. While small and medium-sized businesses, in particular, are targeted, the industries that we are trying to reach include the agricultural, construction, cultural, recreation, hospitality, construction and mining industries.

The workbooks will be distributed free to all Queensland businesses. A promotional campaign will commence next week and will include television and press advertising and 100 taxi-back promotions. The workbooks will be available through the State Development Centres, business and industry associations and other outlets such as banks and the offices of solicitors, accountants and business advisers. I urge honourable members to check their mail next week, as it will include 70 copies of the workbook and more will be available on request.

In addition to the workbook—and we have prepared 100,000 copies—the Government is also scheduling 60 seminars throughout the State, with particular focus on regional and rural areas. Those seminars have already commenced. As I understand it, they have been well received by the small-business operators who have attended. We have prepared and distributed 30,000 pamphlets that point small business to private sector operators who are offering year 2000 business solutions and consultancy services. We have also recognised the decentralised nature of Queensland by training one business adviser in each State Development Centre to act as a key Y2K contact and point of referral. Those 14 business advisers have been trained in matters encompassing embedded chip, legal, banking and insurance aspects and the role of State Development. Each State Development Centre will be targeting high-risk areas within their geographic regions.

We recognise that the Y2K is potentially a major problem for the business community. It is important that the focus is now on technology providers, the private sector and Government working together to make sure that the effects of the millennium bug are minimised.
