



Speech by

Hon. J. ELDER

MEMBER FOR CAPALABA

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Visit by Mayor of Shanghai

Hon. J. P. ELDER (Capalaba—ALP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development and Minister for Trade) (9.49 a.m.), by leave: As honourable members would be aware, not just this Government but also previous Governments have placed high store by relations with China. We regard the relationship as a long-term one and have been prepared to place resources there to further that relationship.

China is currently Queensland's 12th largest trading partner. Most of that trade between Queensland and China is in commodities such as coal and sugar. However, we see a great deal of potential for further trade with China, especially among our small and medium companies and especially in the high-tech area.

As such, I am delighted to inform the House that next week the Queensland Government shall be hosting a four-day visit to Queensland by the Mayor of Shanghai, Xu Kuangdi. Although Mayor Xu has visited Australia on previous occasions, this is his first visit as mayor and his first visit to Queensland.

Mayor Xu will briefly stop over in Sydney before travelling to Queensland, so the whole emphasis of this trip is on Queensland. This is a considerable coup for Queensland and is a fitting celebration of the 10th anniversary of the sister-State relationship between Queensland and Shanghai. The position of Mayor of Shanghai is a very important position in Chinese political circles. The fact that the mayor has chosen to visit Queensland rather than other States indicates the importance the Shanghai Government places on this sister-State relationship with Queensland.

Mayor Xu will be spending Friday and Saturday next week in Brisbane and then will travel north to Cairns before leaving Australia. When in Brisbane, Mayor Xu will attend a State reception to which 120 people have been invited, including members of the Queensland business and legal fraternity. The mayor himself is a technologist and holds a PhD in metallurgy. He was a professor in the Shanghai Institute of Technology before entering political life in China.

While Mayor Xu's visit will include some interaction with Queensland's well-known overseas industries such as tourism, we are also keen, in light of the mayor's background and interest, to show him some of Queensland's new technology and industrial practices. As such, he will be seeing the Queensland Institute of Medical Research when in Brisbane and the NQEA shipyards in Cairns—one an excellent example of Queensland technology and the other a good example of Queensland's modern industrial practices.

I think we are all aware that there are many partisan matters discussed in this House, which makes for lively debate, but I hope that all members of the House can see the importance of this visit and the potential it has for cultivating long-term links with Shanghai, one of the most important parts of China and one of the fastest growing parts of the world. This visit is about all improving trade relations so that in the long term we have a good, long-term, sustainable jobs outcome here in Queensland.