



Speech by

Dr LESLEY CLARK

MEMBER FOR BARRON RIVER

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APEC TECHNOMART

Dr CLARK (Barron River—ALP) (6.40 p.m.): The community continues to express its lack of faith in the political process. The community is cynical and is disillusioned by the behaviour of politicians. The conduct of the Opposition, particularly the Leader of the Opposition, today in regard to the failure of the Technomart III technology conference on the Gold Coast has added significantly to that cynicism and disillusion. The coalition has shown yet again that it is more interested in political point-scoring and slick one-liners than it is in solving problems and working in the interests of Queensland. The difference between the Government and the coalition is surely becoming increasingly apparent to the community. We are a positive Government with positive policies to address real issues. When problems arise—and, yes, they do—we do not look to blame somebody for it, we do our best to fix it.

Nobody doubts that the failure of Technomart, which happened through no fault of our own, has the potential to damage Queensland's reputation, but here lies the difference. What did we do? We organised a venture capital conference. We got on with maximising business matching opportunities. We did not do what members opposite would do, which is to go out and cause mayhem. If the coalition had the best interests of Queensland truly at heart—and this happened in one of its own electorates—what would it have done? It would have joined us to minimise the impact that this was having. It would have done something positive about it instead of standing up in this place and jeopardising the reputation of Queensland further. It simply could not resist what it saw as an opportunity to lay blame and damage the Government. Once again, short-term political gain is demonstrated as being more important to it than the economic prosperity of this State. That is demonstrated time and time again. The community and I are sick and tired of these spoiling tactics. Last week the coalition tried these tactics in respect of the RFA and they did not work. It is now trying them again. The coalition should heed the message that Queenslanders want more from their politicians; they want constructive policies and action that puts the community first and political point-scoring last. That is what it is all about. The Opposition does not seem to get it. It has been so busy looking for an opportunity to attack the Government over Technomart that it has completely overlooked the value of a one-day conference, which I attended, on the Gold Coast organised by the Australian Association of Science and Technology Parks titled "Growing Global Enterprises: Developing an Australian Model for Technology Incubation".

That conference was opened by the Deputy Premier and was attended by some 80 delegates from Government, university, business and industry, with experts both from within Australia and overseas. The keynote speaker was Ms Laura Kilcrease, a partner in Triton Venture Management from Austin, Texas. Her presence helped to further strengthen the growing relationship between Queensland and Texas that was begun as a result of the Premier's recent visit.

The conference heard very clearly the value of incubators and of commercialising technology. In North America incubators have been responsible for the creation of some 19,000 companies and some 245,000 jobs. The Austin technology incubator, known as IC², has been at the leading edge of creating the right environment for enterprise and wealth generation from technological innovation. No wonder the Premier came back convinced that we could replicate the Texas example.

For the benefit of honourable members, I wish to put on the record what I was doing at that conference. I was there because in my electorate we are working on developing a technology park in association with the James Cook University. I attended because I want to ensure that we capitalise on the knowledge that has been generated about how incubators can best deliver results for our local

community. I learnt a lot at that conference. I did not waste my time, as are members opposite, on generating criticism for the sake of criticism. I believe in doing constructive things that have positive results. That is the lesson for the coalition. It is about time it learnt it, because that is what the community wants to see from it.
