



Speech by

Hon. M. FOLEY

MEMBER FOR YERONGA

Hansard 26 August 1999

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Third Asia-Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art

Hon. M. J. FOLEY (Yeronga—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for The Arts) (9.48 a.m.), by leave: From 9 September, Queensland will play host to one of the most important cultural events in the Asia-Pacific region: the Third Asia-Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art—a dazzling window on the cultures of a dynamic region and a unique event in international relations.

Mr Beattie: Hear, hear!

Mr FOLEY: I thank the Premier for his very strong support of the arts. I look forward to seeing the honourable member for Crows Nest at the Asia-Pacific Triennial.

Nearly \$2.6m of Government funding over nine years has enabled the Queensland Art Gallery to host three APT exhibitions plus international conferences; publications; educational, screen and youth programs; performances; and forums. This third APT is expected to attract more than 200,000 visitors before it closes at the end of January 2000.

Mr Wells: That's an incredible result.

Mr FOLEY: I thank the Honourable Minister for Education and former Minister for The Arts. His strong support of the APT has helped make it a strong gallery today.

But through the APT, Queensland achieves an even bigger audience because the international participants gathered under our gallery's roof relay our message across their regions and network on return home. And via the wonders of the Internet, the Asia-Pacific Triennial will tap into an even bigger global audience with a virtual triennial online exhibition, part of one of four official Sydney 2000 Olympics arts festivals and a peak event of Online Australia Year.

Now on its third event, the Asia-Pacific Triennial has become a model for building economic and political ties through contemporary culture. Those who do business in Asia and the Pacific know that face-to-face cultural encounters are the necessary and often decisive preliminaries to any corporate deal making. To do business in these cultures, you must speak their language, see yourself through their eyes, understand their vision of themselves and share their aspirations for the future. An event such as the Asia-Pacific Triennial brings Queensland face to face with her economic partners in a way no mere balance sheet ever can. The arts become a bridge between us and our region, a role perfectly symbolised by Chinese artist Cai Guo Qiang's Bamboo Bridge, a Triennial focal point.

Initiated by the Goss Government in 1993, the Asia-Pacific Triennial is an ever-growing bridge, expanding in response to increased traffic. In 1993, the first triennial attracted 60,000 viewers. In 1996, that doubled to 120,000, 14% of whom were overseas attendants, highlighting its success as a cultural tourism drawcard. This year, attendance is expected to reach at least 200,000, with more than 600 delegates at the two-day forum. It will present more than 140 artworks by 77 artists from 20 countries and regions.

Artists will come from China—including Hong Kong—India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Samoa, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, Vietnam and Australia. New participants include Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Wallis and Futuna Islands, and Niue. This increasing participation highlights the potential for future triennial inspired events. Importantly, the Third Asia-Pacific Triennial hosts many of Queensland's major trading

partners: China, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore, Vietnam, India, New Zealand and New Caledonia.

Those who doubt the symbiosis between cultural exchange and economic growth need only look at the growth in exports from Queensland to New Caledonia, paralleling the APT's growth: from \$26m in 1997-98 to \$36m in 1998-99. Exports to India grew in the same period from \$694m to \$758m. The Asia-Pacific Triennial plays a vital role in promoting these economic ties. It boosts our profile and strengthens friendships in a region where, when markets get tougher, cultural ties attract a special premium.
