



Speech by

MIKE REYNOLDS

MEMBER FOR TOWNSVILLE

Hansard 25 May 1999

TOWNSVILLE CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT TASK FORCE

Mr REYNOLDS (Townsville—ALP) (12.19 p.m.): It is with pleasure that I inform members in the House that, in my capacity as the Premier's north Queensland representative and member for Townsville, I recently announced the 11 members of a CBD task force to drive a new era of development in Townsville's inner city. Good quality representation from both business and the community in general will ensure that the new central business district task force adds value to the development boom that is already occurring within the city's heart.

The State Government and Townsville City Council will have three representatives on this new CBD task force. The remaining members will be drawn from Townsville Enterprise, the Townsville Chamber of Commerce, the National Trust and the community. The three State Government representatives will be myself, Peter Jones, who is the north Queensland regional manager with the Department of Communication and Information, Local Government and Planning, and Peter Mellor, who is the director of the State Development Centre in Townsville. The three council representatives will be Mayor Tony Mooney, Deputy Mayor Anne Bunnell and the chief executive officer of the Townsville City Council, Brian Guthrie. The two community representatives will be Jim Bunnell, who as its president will also represent the National Trust, and Simon Turner, a partner in the law firm Connolly Suthers, which owns the historic AMP building in Flinders Mall. Mr David Carmichael will represent Townsville Enterprise and Mr Col Harkness, a partner in Wilson Ryan and Grose, will represent the Townsville Chamber of Commerce.

As has been previously announced, the CBD task force will be chaired by Mr Trevor Reddacliff. From the work that he has done in Brisbane as the independent chair of the task force, I know that Trevor Reddacliff brings a great deal of experience and credibility to the position of independent chair of the CBD task force in Townsville. He will be served by a secretariat from within the Department of Premier and Cabinet in Townsville.

We are embarking on an important new era of development in the inner city of Townsville. The State has invested around \$19m in the development of the new-look Strand and \$17.5m in the Pandora Museum. This major capital outlay has already sparked a private investment boom and will continue to have a major impact on both the aesthetic and commercial aspects of Townsville's CBD. In addition, a vision group appointed by the State is now considering options for the future use of the three-hectare North Ward hospital site, which can also play a part in revitalising the inner city. I stress that what we need now is a collective vision to create a master plan for the CBD that is acceptable to the Government, the council and the community. This is a tremendous partnership between the key players: the State Government, the city council, the business community and the community at large.

I am pleased to report to the House today that the first meeting of the CBD task force took place at the offices of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet last Wednesday, 19 May. We started our initial meeting by looking at the strategies that we will implement and the work that we will be doing over the next few months. Some of the key issues for the task force include the relocation of the historical great northern railway station and the loop line associated with it. That strategy has been endorsed by Queensland Rail. The task force will also be examining the revitalisation of Flinders Mall, which won three national awards in 1979 and 1980. We are looking at the role that the Flinders Mall will play in the revitalisation of the city heart itself. We are looking at the Victoria Bridge revamp and the Flinders Street East/Palmer Street connection across Ross Creek. We are also concentrating on

Government and council property that will be available for development. We will be looking at the links between the CBD and the enormously exciting Strand development that I referred to a moment ago. Also, the Hanran Park residential and commercial development proposal will be a key component of the work that we will be doing over the next few months.

The State Government and the Townsville City Council, with the support of private sector interests in Townsville, recognise an urgent need for urban renewal in the Townsville inner city area to correct urban decay and address future international market forces. The State and the council recognise a vision for the Townsville inner city of the future. We believe that it should embrace the following elements: first, a revitalised inner city, together with the harbour and The Strand precincts, which will be the hub of the Townsville region. We also recognise a unique identity for Townsville's inner city, focusing on water frontages and heritage buildings. As the former Mayor of Townsville, in the early 1980s I took a great deal of pride in introducing development control plans that really recognise the heritage of the city. Unlike some cities where heritage has disappeared, our heritage is very much a living component of the central business district.

We also recognise that a new inner city living, work and leisure environment for people of the Townsville region is a very important component of the future of the CBD. Over the past 20 years, the CBD has changed enormously. We have seen retail development move into suburban areas and we have seen the growth of professional and some administrative services in suburban areas as well. Included in our vision is a new commercial and cultural hub for the Townsville region, ensuring that we enhance and grow on the strength that is in the CBD now. We also recognise that enhanced infrastructure will attract international tourism. When we look at the tourism elements that are being put in place and we look at Flinders Street East, The Strand and Palmer Street, we see the bringing together of enormously important urban precincts that are going to be very much enhanced by this CBD task force.

A Government member: It's a great place to live.

Mr REYNOLDS: Townsville is a great place to live and I am very proud to be the State member for Townsville. I know that this will be a great development for Townsville.

The State Government and the Townsville City Council recognise that the strategies for the achievement of the objectives of the Townsville inner city urban renewal project and the fulfilment of that vision should embrace a range of criteria, including the exploitation of regional, national and international opportunities in the dynamic and diverse fields of education, health, defence, mineral processing, public administration, tourism and maritime activities. We also need to include a focus on the arts, entertainment, and sport and recreation as important elements of the community life of the Townsville/Thuringowa region. How many things can we point to as marvellous examples of the partnership between the State Government and the Townsville City Council? The entertainment centre and the Cowboys facility at Thuringowa are great examples of a partnership between a strong local government and a strong Labor Government. The achievement of the objectives of the task force must also include the encouragement of joint ventures and other cooperative arrangements between the public and private sectors. Some projects that I have just mentioned are excellent examples of that as well. Encapsulated in the strategy will also be proactive and effective marketing of the Townsville city area.

We have an enormous challenge ahead of us. The building blocks that we put in place now are important for the future of the CBD, because they will mean that the CBD task force can get on with its job with a great deal of positiveness. The task force's priorities are described in three phases: an establishment and planning phase, followed by a statutory phase and then an implementation phase.

This is a major achievement of the Beattie Labor Government. I was very proud to be associated with Premier Peter Beattie and the Mayor of Townsville, Councillor Tony Mooney, when we signed this agreement just a month ago at the Townsville Community Cabinet meeting. This is a tremendous opportunity for the inner city and the people of Townsville will seize it with a great deal of interest. It provides a great challenge. I look forward to taking part, on behalf of the State Government, in the CBD task force for Townsville.
