



Speech by

Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

Hansard 9 November 1999

APEC TECHNOMART

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central— ALP) (Premier) (6.15 p.m.) I move—

"All words after 'That this House' be deleted and the following be inserted—

'applauds the way in which the Beattie Government has restored Queensland's reputation, integrity and image after two and a quarter years of damage by the lacklustre and bumbling Borbidge Government; and

congratulates the Beattie Government for its immediate action in organising a successful venture capital conference to protect the reputation of Queensland and the Gold Coast in the wake of the failure of a company organising the APEC Technomart III conference and expo.'."

We moved very quickly and precisely to protect the reputation of Queensland and the Gold Coast. All we have had today in question time and again tonight is this attempt by the Opposition to undermine this State's reputation and to undermine the reputation of the Gold Coast as a venue for holding conferences.

What do those opposite think happens with this attack on the Government? All it does is keep the media going—the international reporting and the national reporting. The people who are damaging this State's reputation are those opposite who continue this nonsense debate about the APEC Technomart.

The Leader of the Liberal Party said that we should have got on to the net. We did put a clear message on the Internet in terms of the Government's position in order to protect the reputation of this State. In addition to that, I table for incorporation in Hansard a copy of a letter that I will be sending to all delegates.

Leave granted.

Queensland Government

Premier of Queensland

Dear

I am writing to you to advise of my disappointment regarding the collapse of a company running APEC Technomart III on the Gold Coast.

My Government is determined to support the development of high tech industries so that we create thousands of long-term, new-age jobs in the Smart State, especially in areas such as biotechnology and IT&T. We joined the Federal Government in sponsoring Technomart because it had the potential to be the biggest such conference ever staged in the Southern Hemisphere and had the backing of the Asia-Pacific Economic Community.

Although the Federal and State Governments were not the organisers of the conference and expo, I share with you a profound disappointment resulting from the failure of the conference and expo.

I would ask that you do not let this one particular incident cast a cloud over the excellent reputation and work being carried out elsewhere in Queensland.

We were able, at very short notice, to organise the Government's own very successful venture capital conference to ensure that all those people who had travelled from all over the world for the conference associated with Technomart did have a worthwhile and valuable conference to attend.

A range of other events and business matching opportunities were also salvaged. I am pleased to say there were a range of benefits that emerged from these. I thank particularly all of those who supported those initiatives.

I have great faith in the future of Queensland's knowledge-intensive industries. As a Government we remain committed to a long-term future based on the full development of those industries.

We are very much open for business and looking for partners both in research and in the commercialisation of the results of that research.

Some useful contact points are the Department of State Development at www.statedevelopment.qld.gov.au; and the Department of Communication and Information at www.ci.qld.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

(sgd) P Beattie

Peter Beattie, MLA,

Premier of Queensland

Mr BEATTIE: What we have sought to do is protect the State's reputation, and we will continue to do that. Even though we have the knockers and the whingers who want to undermine the State, we will move to protect this State's reputation.

Let us look at the record of the previous Government. Today, the Deputy Premier mentioned the Starland project. If we look at the scenario in Hong Kong where this matter has ended up coming to fruition, we find that in November 1999—that is this month—Disney announced an AUD\$5 billion theme park in Hong Kong, with the Hong Kong Government contributing about AUD\$4.5 billion and acquiring a 57% stake in the project, with Disney initially investing about AUD\$500m.

What that means is that had the proposal gone ahead which the former Premier, Mr Borbidge, had advocated, this State would have been up for a bill of \$4.5 billion. That would have meant that our AAA rating would have become a ZZZ or a 000 rating. It would have destroyed the financial basis of this State and would have destroyed the underlying financial security of this State. That is the sort of economic incompetence that we inherited from the previous Government.

The list goes on. The coalition had a secret MOU to cripple the CJC. The coalition wasted \$14.5m on the biased Connolly/Ryan inquiry. We had a capital works freeze and power blackouts. Then we come to Indy with Sunbelt Developments who defaulted on the payments for the naming rights. We had the Great South Pacific cruise ship disaster where unemployed people were promised training which never eventuated. We had the rhinos fiasco.

The entire Cabinet revolted on the super stadium issue and voted 16-2 against the Premier and Treasurer of the day—an unprecedented vote of no confidence in Mr Borbidge and Mrs Sheldon so close to an election. Four Ministers had to be sacked. By 1998, the coalition's policies had resulted in 10,000 more Queenslanders being unemployed than when it took over Government in February 1996. Under the Borbidge Government, 10,000 people lost their jobs. Unemployment continued to rise. In its last Budget, the coalition predicted that unemployment would continue to rise.

What has my Government done? We have provided 45,500 jobs in our first year. We have the Smart State. We have had vision. We have sorted out native title. Let us talk about what we did. When we moved to protect the Gold Coast's reputation, look at what happened with the successful Gold Coast venture capital conference. Giles Stapleton of the Australian Stock Exchange Enterprise Market congratulated the Government for the leadership and commitment displayed. James Paulsen, the executive director of Corporation Builders, said the support we had given sent a positive message interstate and internationally. The list goes on. I table that list.

We showed leadership. While the previous Government almost destroyed the financial base of this State, we showed leadership. Yes, I am happy to go anywhere and be a supersalesman for Queensland, the Smart State, because I believe in this State and I will do anything that I can to advance its interests.
