



Speech by

Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

Hansard 16 May 2000

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT Gold Coast Convention Centre

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central— ALP) (Premier) (3.19 p.m.), by leave: As honourable members would be aware, Queensland is the most decentralised State in mainland Australia. This creates a strong demand for economic infrastructure, such as power, roads, water, railway lines and so on. It also generates a demand for social infrastructure, including parks, boardwalks and even community and convention centres.

That is why I am proud to inform honourable members that my Government has achieved something that was not done in the decades of coalition governments— including one under the leadership of the member for Surfers Paradise. That achievement is to deliver a world-class convention centre to the Gold Coast—a decision which will benefit all Queenslanders from Cairns and Cape York to the border because it will mean tourists coming into this State. It means that the bush and everyone else will benefit. That is the sort of can-do example one gets from a can-do Government. Those opposite talked. We delivered!

Representatives of Jupiters Limited, together with the Deputy Premier, Jim Elder, the Minister for Tourism, Merri Rose and I announced an historic agreement yesterday for a \$202m development, which includes a world-class convention centre for the Gold Coast. The State contribution to the cost of construction will be around \$100m, while Jupiters will enhance the project with an \$84m upgrade of its casino complex at Broadbeach.

Just to demonstrate that my Government is a Government for all Queenslanders, next week I will announce grants to 31 local councils throughout Queensland as part of the \$100m Regional Communities program put in place by this Government. Of course, there was the opening today of Sun Metals, to which we contributed. We are supporting those areas outside Brisbane with the most concrete assistance of all, and that is real dollars. On the Gold Coast, we are putting a cash contribution of \$100m into the convention centre, plus \$9m in land, while Jupiters are also making a similar contribution to the land.

This is a real commitment to the Gold Coast that the member for Surfers Paradise was unable to make or deliver when he was Premier. Labor Governments in this State have already supported convention centres in other parts of the State, such as Townsville and Cairns, and these northern communities have also benefited through infrastructure projects such as the CBD redevelopment at Cairns and the upgrade of The Strand at Townsville. We recognise that the problems and challenges of urban life are not solely in Brisbane. Regional cities such as the Gold Coast, Townsville, Cairns and Mackay have also benefited from projects, which will help revitalise those communities.

In relation to the Gold Coast convention centre, Jupiters has been the Government's preferred developer of the convention centre since November last year, and in the past five months has worked closely with the Government to refine the project. As I said, Jupiters will also be undertaking an \$84m upgrade of the casino so that, overall, this will be a \$202m development, which is the biggest project on the Gold Coast for many years and, as the Gold Coast Bulletin said this morning, the biggest project on the Gold Coast for at least a decade. Having a convention centre of this size on the Gold Coast will also add another string to the bow of the tourism industry on the Gold Coast, which is the coast's traditional industry. Conventions are already big business on the Gold Coast and having this facility in place

means that the Gold Coast can bid for virtually all the convention market in Australia and most conventions internationally.

But we have honoured our commitment to deliver to fund a convention centre on the Gold Coast—something no other Government has done. The member for Surfers Paradise refused to put in a cent to a convention centre when he was Premier. The action and commitment of \$100m by this Government stands in strong contrast. The importance of this and other major projects in regional Queensland is not just in improving the quality of life; it is also about jobs.

Subject to Jupiters clearing all of the normal development checks, work will start on the Gold Coast convention centre early next year, with 1,800 jobs being generated in the construction phase. At this stage, Jupiters expects the convention centre to be completed by the middle of 2003, after which there will be 300 direct jobs and many more indirectly.

So my Government sees our investment in the Gold Coast convention centre as money well spent. It is an investment in our tourism industry; it is an investment in the future of all of those people of the Gold Coast who will get jobs because of it. This Government is delivering for Queensland.
