



Speech by

Lindy Nelson-Carr

MEMBER FOR MUNDINGBURRA

Hansard Tuesday, 22 February 2005

INVESTMENT IN TOWNSVILLE-THURINGOWA

Ms NELSON-CARR (Mundingburra—ALP) (11.54 am): On 1 January the *Townsville Bulletin* ran a front-page story headlined 'Giant strides by twin cities'. The story went on to say that more than \$4 billion worth of major projects are planned or under way for Townsville and Thuringowa in 2005.

Let me turn the clock back to January 1998, when raging floods in the aftermath of Cyclone Sid devastated Townsville's Strand along 2.3 kilometres of beachfront from Kissing Point to Tobruk Pool. Actually, Sid finished off the work of Cyclone Justin in March 1997 which caused severe damage to the Strand's rock wall. In March 1998 the Townsville City Council adopted in principle a \$24.44 million plan to reconstruct the Strand in such a way as to not only beautify the beachfront strip but also protect it against major storm events. There was a catch, though. For the council's visionary project to become a reality, it needed substantial state government financial support. The Borbidge government offered a piddling \$5 million, which was well short of the amount needed for the redevelopment to go ahead, but the Beattie Labor opposition pledged \$15 million if it won the June 1998 election. The rest, as they say, is history.

The ultimate cost of the redevelopment was \$28.9 million—\$15 million from the state, \$5 million from ratepayers, \$4 million from the Townsville Thuringowa Water Supply Board and the remainder from disaster relief. It is worth noting that, apart from a disaster relief component, the Howard government gave nothing. In fact, I recall the federal member for Herbert, Peter Lindsay, knocking the project.

As we know, the Strand opened to rapturous acclaim on 23 and 24 October 1999. The accolades have not stopped coming, nor has investment in the city. It is worth noting at this point that it is alarming, to say the least, that John Howard's race to control the states is stepping up a beat with quiet acceptance from Peter Lindsay. Just when is a promise not a promise and when is a lie not a lie? The previously pre-election promise of road funding is now mysteriously tied to industrial reform in the building industry. There was not a mention of that before the election. Now it is a case of, 'Well, tough! No reform, no money!'

For us in the north, road funding is critical. We are dependent on roads to our busy ports, to transport minerals and to cater for the tourists who flock to north Queensland all year round but particularly during seven months of the year. Certainly there would have been private enterprise investment in Townsville without the Strand, but it was the redeveloped Strand that made the rest of Queensland, and Australia for that matter, sit up and take notice.

That \$15 million from the Beattie government, which enabled the Strand redevelopment to proceed in the late 1990s, has paid handsome dividends many, many times over. It was the Strand that fuelled the construction boom in Townsville, and it is still a driving force behind private investment in the city, especially in the form of apartment construction on or near the Strand and in other parts of the city. Several big-ticket items referred to in that 1 January *Townsville Bulletin* article such as the nearly completed Douglas Arterial Road, the Ross River Dam upgrade, Townsville City Council infrastructure projects and Thuringowa City Council's Riverway also have multimillion dollar input from the Beattie government.

A classic case of flow-on effect from state government investment in Townsville and Thuringowa is Dairy Farmers Stadium. The Goss and Beattie governments spent \$10.5 million to bring the venue to standard for National Rugby League competition. Independent research found that the North Queensland

Cowboys have generated upwards of \$500 million in the region. Go the Cowboys! Only last month the Minister for Sport, Terry Mackenroth, announced a \$4 million stadium upgrade, which will include new lighting to enable Channel 9 to televise Cowboys matches played at the stadium. This in turn will give Townsville great coverage and bring more visitors to the city. It is long overdue. The evidence is there for everyone to see.

Mr Finn interjected.

Ms NELSON-CARR: These are the only reasons you need to come to Townsville—the great twin cities.

Mr Lucas: It is the Broncos versus the Cowboys in a couple of weeks time.

Ms NELSON-CARR: We know who is going to win that! There has been a megabucks multiplying effect from money spent by the Beattie government in the Townsville region. The Townsville and Thuringowa communities are the direct beneficiaries. Once again, go the mighty Cowboys.