



Speech by

Hon. Margaret Keech

MEMBER FOR ALBERT

Hansard Wednesday, 28 October 2009

MOTION: A1GP

Hon. MM KEECH (Albert—ALP) (6.00 pm): We heard the member for Mudgeeraba say the words 'out of touch' and 'arrogant'. When it comes to support for the SuperGP, only one group is out of touch and arrogant, and that is the Leader of the Opposition—

Mr Horan interjected.

Mrs KEECH: Mr Speaker, I am trying to contribute to the debate and all I am getting from the member for Toowoomba South is rude interjections. As I said, they are out of touch and arrogant when it comes to support for the SuperGP. Let us get some balance back into the argument. I can understand why the member for Toowoomba South and others on his side do not want to hear the facts. It is a fact that more than 200,000 people attended the event, and every one of those 200,000 people thoroughly enjoyed themselves. The opposition would have us believe that it was a complete failure, but nothing could be further from the truth.

Certainly crowd numbers were down, and the minister has recognised that. Like all other major events, not only in Queensland but throughout Australia and the world, numbers have been down because of the global financial crisis. Congratulations go to the minister for his hard work in bringing the event together. The crowd numbers highlight the importance of major events not only for the Gold Coast but also for Queensland. With the Gold Coast economy and local businesses dependent on regular visitor influxes such as we saw last weekend, events such as the SuperGP will continue to boost the bottom line of hotels, restaurants, shops and local attractions.

We heard from members opposite that hoteliers were complaining. I heard nothing like that. I heard that numbers were up and, further afield from the precinct, that shopkeepers were really enjoying the contribution from tourists and those attracted to the V8s. I commend the V8 Supercars chairman. At the government reception, in congratulating not only the government but also the minister, he said that he believed that the V8 Supercars would be a major drawcard and he was absolutely right. He also commended the minister for his incredible hard work. The minister worked 24 hours a day, seven days a week to ensure that the event would be a success. The chairman predicted that the V8 Supercars would be the major drawcard, as they were in Townsville, where 168,000 people attended a three-day V8 event. It was a tremendous success.

I join the minister in thanking the organisers of the V8 Supercars for putting together at short notice a revised racing format, for their enthusiasm and for putting on such an exciting and crowd-pleasing show for fans and visitors. The drivers and their teams worked tremendously hard and we can be very proud of the way that they pulled together at the very last minute to provide such great successes. The day was marked by nostalgia. My favourite moment was the Jack Brabham re-enactment by Jack's grandson Matthew Brabham. I saw Matthew race go-karts as a nine-year-old. He has a great future ahead of him. He was a real crowd-pleaser.

Based on previous events and the crowd numbers over the weekend, the estimated benefits for the Gold Coast are expected to be in the tens of millions of dollars, with hundreds of jobs created locally. Like the minister, I particularly thank the volunteers, who did a great job. They looked very smart in their grey outfits. They worked long and hard to ensure the event ran very smoothly. Events like the SuperGP are

incredibly important, not only for attracting tourists to the Gold Coast but also for branding the Gold Coast as a tourist destination. As we know, the Gold Coast is Australia's No. 1 holiday destination and events such as the SuperGP will go a long way to ensure the Gold Coast continues to attract visitors. When it comes to support for tourism and major events, Gold Coasters know that they can rely on the Bligh Labor government.