



Speech by

Wayne Wendt

MEMBER FOR IPSWICH WEST

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SEKISUI HOUSE

Mr WENDT (Ipswich West—ALP) (10.41 pm): Tonight I want to advise the House of a significant win last week for Australia, Queensland and particularly Ipswich. For those who know anything about the building game, the name Sekisui House will certainly make their ears prick up. However, for those who have not yet heard of Sekisui let me give you some details. Sekisui House is one of Japan's leading property developers and the largest house builder in their country. 'How large?', I hear you ask. Well, they are, in fact, the second largest home builder in the world with around 50,000 dwellings built last year. The company specialises in designing and building residential houses, condominiums and commercial retail buildings and was established in 1960. Last year, the company had sales of around A\$20 billion and it has completed around two million dwellings to date. What is even better is the fact that the company has committed itself to designing and completing a range of carbon neutral houses and, as such, it is expected that all future developments will, in fact, be carbon neutral, which is a huge win for our environment and puts the company ahead of the pack as a world leader in this field.

The reason I am telling members about this company is that last week I had the pleasure of joining with the Mayor of Ipswich, Paul Pisasale, in welcoming Mr Toru Abe and Mr Satoshi Yoshimura from Sekisui's Japanese office. They were in Ipswich to finalise and sign off on a deal which will see their company invest around \$190 million in partnership with the Australian listed company Payce Consolidated.

This new joint venture agreement will mean that the Ripley Valley project, which many members know is located south of Ipswich, will proceed as planned. As some may be aware, the development of this important section of the western corridor was placed in jeopardy with the recent demise of the previous developer, Babcock and Brown. It needs to be acknowledged that this deal is not just significant for Ipswich but also for Queensland and Australia. We all know Ripley Valley is a major initiative, master planned by the state government to expand Queensland's population along the western corridor and I for one think it is fantastic to see a major Japanese developer come on board to ensure the sustainability of the project. The fact that we can forge ahead with such a major development despite the economic downturn across the globe means that a new journey for Ipswich, Queensland and Australia is about to get underway.

I think that the important thing to remember here is that to survive the economic pressures of the world it is necessary to forge global partnerships like this and cast away not just the picket fences between cities but between states and across the globe.

In addition, I believe that there are many other opportunities that will come out of this alliance. Specifically, I know that there are discussions currently going on which involve how Ipswich can assist Sekisui House develop a large manufacturing plant which could be used to service our region and hopefully the rest of Australia. As members can imagine, a company that plans on designing and building thousands of houses will need a large headquarters in the region. What better location than Ipswich, which has 43 per cent of the available industrial land in South-East Queensland?

I suppose it is no secret that Sekisui House had been presented with a number of competing prospects to invest in across Australia. However, I am proud to say that they chose South-East Queensland and Ipswich as their best opportunity. It should be acknowledged that the catalyst for much of this work was the enthusiasm shown by the Ipswich mayor and his able council.