



Speech by
Grace Grace

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

Hansard Wednesday, 19 May 2010

BRISBANE CENTRAL ELECTORATE, COCHLEAR FACILITY

Ms GRACE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (10.25 pm): Members interested in visiting a world-leading firm helping millions to hear, employing world-leading, value added manufacturing and start-of-the-art technology need only travel about 10 minutes from Parliament House to the Cochlear facilities in Teneriffe in the heart of my electorate. This manufacturer is developing cutting-edge cochlear implants to allow millions of people around the world to hear.

Together with the Treasurer, I recently visited the Cochlear plant where they are about to invest up to \$3.6 million to expand their Queensland facility. This is great news for Queensland as this investment will mean a ramping up of production, an increase in staff numbers and a strengthening of ties with the state's top research institutes. Cochlear is one of the world's most successful manufacturers of hearing devices and is providing the gift of being able to hear to people across the globe. It was wonderful to see their products up close, walk through their high-tech plant and see their trained staff and modern manufacturing production machines in operation.

The fact is that this is a highly successful Australian company. Through the support of the Queensland government, Cochlear has set up a facility right here in the electorate of Brisbane Central. The fact that it is about to ramp up its production is also a real coup for the state. Cochlear already exports cochlear implants to more than 100 countries and demand for its product continues to grow. Already it is exporting approximately 95 per cent of production. This is yet another success story of a company Invest Queensland has attracted to the state which will boost the economy and create jobs. Around an additional 50 staff will be employed over the next five years, taking the Brisbane plant to a total of approximately 230 staff.

Cochlear also has an international reputation for its research and development in the medical devices field. A stronger Queensland presence will mean the organisation will have greater access to collaborations with our leading research institutes as well as greater links to industry stakeholders like our Hear and Say Centre.

For those who do not know, Cochlear has been operating from Helen Street, Teneriffe, since 2006. Its decision to expand this facility has come about after 18 months of consultation with and support from the Queensland government. Cochlear's Chief Executive Officer, Dr Chris Roberts, said over 278 million people suffer from moderate to profound hearing loss globally and ongoing investment in technology is critical.

I take this opportunity to thank the CEO and all staff at the Teneriffe plant for their warm welcome and for giving the Treasurer and I the opportunity to view inside their factory and office facilities. It was truly eye opening and extremely interesting and great talking to the staff whose main complaint was the cost of parking, particularly following the recent installation of parking meters throughout the area by the Lord Mayor. This cost is proving to be prohibitive for many of the process workers. I wish the company well and look forward to its involvement in the soon to be held Teneriffe Festival.