

Senator the Hon Richard Colbeck

Assistant Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources

Friday 12 October 2018

Opening of Stage One of Living City, Devonport

paranaple Centre

E&OE...

Welcome to my Parliamentary colleagues, Premier, Deputy Premier, Leader of the Opposition, Senator Martin, Senator Urquhart, Justine - actually someone said this venue has a capacity of 800, there's nearly 800 MPs and local Government members here today. Success has a thousand fathers, doesn't it?

It is good to see you all here. To the project team, other local Government members, those who worked on the project, and members of the community, it is a very special day for Devonport.

The opening of this building takes us to the next stage in the development of the City, and one that's been aspired to for a long, long time.

I can recall the original concept of opening Devonport up to the City, and I think I might still have a copy of the newspaper clipping from that which goes back to the early 1990s.

The aspiration to change this City has been around for a long, long time.

There has been a number of false starts, and even a few missed opportunities over that time, but the Devonport City Council over recent years should be congratulated for biting the bullet finally.

There's been some criticism of Council but, in my view, overwhelmingly unwarranted.

This is an important decision for the City - and yes, it creates a number of new civic buildings for the City - but those buildings bring huge opportunities for the City.

This convention centre, in particular, will be an attractor for the City in the future and will facilitate other elements of the City that will see it continue to grow.

One of the major attractions, from my perspective, for the Commonwealth providing that initial \$10 million into this investment, was the creation of a joined-up building envelope - or envelopes as it turns out - that can be available as major attractors for significant vital investment.

The investment that Council has made, the State Government has made, and the Commonwealth Government has made, has taken away some of the roadblocks that have hindered private sector investment - or major consolidated private sector investment - into this City over a number of years.

That is one of the things that Governments should do, to facilitate investment into our communities so that they can continue to grow and those investments that are required to develop, particularly the liveability of a City, can be facilitated.

So it's that facilitation of investment that from my perspective was a significant element in the decision that we made as an Australian Government to invest in this project because it took away the inhibitors that had been there for a significant period of time.

So, that investment of \$10 million was clearly warranted when you consider the amount of money that the Tasmanian Government put in, but a significant amount the community in the form of the Devonport City Council has invested in this magnificent facility.

My congratulations to those who conceptualised it - the designers, the architects - and of course Fairbrothers, the builders, who have created a significant asset for the City.

It's worth noting that - and having a chat with Paul at a recent event here - the City Council's footprint in this site is half what it was in its old buildings up in Best Street.

So they have recognised a) the importance of the building but b) being very frugal in the amount of space they've taken up and left for the rest of the community to utilise.

It is fantastic that we've got so many different community uses that now come into this building.

We've also facilitated the potential investment in the hotel we saw with a significant, major opportunity for investment in the space between Fenton Street and the Coles and Woolworths complex.

So a real pleasure to be here representing the Australian Government today, to play a role in what is a significant facilitation in future investment, future growth, and future opportunities for the City.

Thank you.