

First and foremost I want Queensland and the world to know that Great Keppel Island is well and truly open for business! I admire all of the business operators on the Island who have kept pushing on, persevering in the face of adversity over the last 8 years. Great Keppel Island is a beautiful island with white sandy beaches, blue water, great bushwalking, excellent quality snorkelling and many friendly locals.

I would also like to acknowledge the Woppaburra people, the traditional owners of Great Keppel Island, and the important role that they play in preserving the Island's history and culture.

I have spoken with many, many community members and I know the vast majority of constituents are eager to see some form of the development start on the island.

I know our local community needs jobs and we need them now. I work hard every single day in this job to grow jobs now and jobs for the future.

Which is why I want to see this development started just as much as the majority of my electorate does!

This issue has been going on far too long.

I called a meeting in Sydney with Tower Holdings two weeks ago to find solutions to the stalled development and get shovel to ground as soon as possible.

It was a positive meeting where I identified some real opportunities to help kick start this development.

I have written to the Federal Minister for Northern Australia and Federal Member for Capricornia because we need Tower Holdings to apply for a slice of this \$5 billion Northern Australia Infrastructure Fund to assist in the provision of infrastructure. This is a legitimate pathway forward. I table a copy of my letter.

I asked Tower whether the development could be revised or staged differently so it can be started sooner rather than later.

Tower said that if they didn't get a casino licence, they would start work on a scaled back version of Stage 1 of their planned development.

I argue that they need to start that **NOW!!!**

We heard today from the General Manager of the Department of Justice and the Attorney-General that it is unlikely that the Governor-in-Council or the Minister would approve an applicant for a casino licence without an agreement with a suitable casino operator.

Tower Holdings does not have an agreement with any casino operator.

I table, Mister Speaker, letters from Australia's two largest casino operators, Crown and Echo, both confirming that they **do not** have an agreement with Tower.

Casino operators must have a serious lack of confidence in Tower's ability to deliver the development.

In May 2014 Tower was told by the Newman Government that they had missed out on a casino licence.

Why did Tower holdings that same month, go out to the global investment market with their proposed development and advertise a casino opportunity?

Page 55 of Tower's 2014 investment prospectus, and I table a copy for the house, advertises a casino opportunity, despite that they weren't awarded a licence!

Also I table Tower's project website which is also still advertising a casino opportunity.

This is extremely misleading to genuine investors – false advertising almost.

Page 55 of the investment prospectus also forecasts almost **half a billion dollars** in revenue from a casino in the first five years.

This is an extraordinarily inflated revenue forecast given that the Reef Casino in Cairns reported \$24 million in 2013 and \$23 million in 2014. A far cry from the hundreds of millions of dollars in revenue Tower forecasts a casino on Great Keppel will generate. I table a copy of the Reef Casino's 2014 Profit and loss statement.

According to Mr Agnew, Tower's cash flow projections are based on 70% of casino revenue from the local market; essentially lining investors' pockets with hundreds of millions of dollars and bleeding local Central Queenslanders dry.

In September 2014, four months after they were told by the Newman Government that they didn't get a licence, Tower signed detailed lease agreements with the Government which require them to start work within 3 years.

The reality is that it even if there was another casino licence was made available, there is no guarantee Tower Holdings would be a successful bidder.

I was as adamant as you all that a casino licence was the only way forward.

But Mr Agnew promised in 2014 that work would start in the second half of 2015 "whether or not a casino license is granted". I table a copy of Mr Agnew's promise for the house.

Tower Holdings should be focused on getting shovel to ground on this project, however it is clear that, sadly, Tower Holdings has a political agenda.

They need to honour their numerous promises and get to work. Tower must apply for the Northern Australia Infrastructure Fund and start the scaled back version of Stage 1.