



# Let's make our city great



TO become a truly great, young world city, we need to have everything going on.

This includes a strong economy, stable and proactive governance, a long-term vision and lots of exciting stuff to keep us all occupied.

On this last point, we're blessed with a vibrant nightlife, stunning beaches, sporting fields and national teams, a theme park haven and a beautiful Hinterland.

Sadly though, we have little in the way of cultural pursuits but that's a yarn for another day.

Part of the task of keeping ahead of the pack is the constant need to upgrade and refresh.

Which brings me to my central gripe with Queensland's racing authorities and their bid to take majority control of the Gold Coast Turf Club.

Look, I'm no punter (because basically I'm a bad one) and have never really been into the gee-gees unlike your average Aussie male. Like most of us, I'm a once-a-year racegoer for the Melbourne Cup; over the past decade I have spent the day of the race that stops a nation out at the Coast track.

It's got fair facilities, in my view but I've followed the various stou-

shes over the years about the need to upgrade the Magic Millions venue and the precinct generally.

It seems to me that racing administration is a lot like politics.

So given my political experience, I kind of get what's going down out there.

My worry is that the proposed majority takeover of the GCTC, as part of a multimillion-dollar refit package, risks the Coast losing its track altogether over time.

The Brisbane-based crew tasked with running the sport might disagree but I have no doubt that a move of the track north would be on the cards long term and that would be a travesty. That's why I'm backing the local club's board in its tiff with Queensland Racing.

The bid to convince turf club members and stakeholders that such a takeover is a good idea deserves to fail.

The Coast must retain its own local track close to the city heart, and those running the club locally have to find a way to convince the industry that the planned takeover risks its entire future.

QR is striking now to take advantage of past financial mismanagement of the GCTC but the

board should stand its ground.

It must convince doubting stakeholders that the financial future is a rosy one with new income from broadcasting rights and Magic Millions, sponsorship, and a leaner administration.

The new board is on track to have the club back in the black, so the scare-mongering of QR must be ignored.

The other industry in need of a refit in my view is our local tourism marketing fraternity. I really like the cut of Gold Coast Tourism and greatly respect the job being done by chairman Paul Donovan and CEO Martin Winter. They know their stuff.

Instead of the council collecting and investing \$10 million a year for GCT, I'd like to see it kick in at least another \$10 million or more rather than finding ways to nip and tuck tourism in the budget.

What should be looked at are the additional local area marketing bodies in Surfers, Broadie, and the southern Coast.

I encourage budget boss Eddy Sarroff to again put amalgamation of the groups back on the agenda.