

WEDNESDAY, 21 MARCH 2001

Mr SPEAKER (Hon. R. K. Hollis, Redcliffe) read prayers and took the chair at 2.10 p.m. in the late Legislative Council Chamber.

PRESENTATION OF MR SPEAKER

Mr SPEAKER: I have to report that this morning I presented myself to His Excellency the Governor as the member chosen to fill the high and honourable office of Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, and that His Excellency was pleased to congratulate me on my election.

ADDRESS OF WELCOME

Dr ROBERT ANDERSON (Chairperson of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Board and Ngugi Elder): Premier, the Chief Justice, Mr Speaker, Leader of the Opposition, ministers, members of the judiciary, representatives of the armed services and members of parliament, first I must pay tribute to the traditional owners of this country on which we now meet.

It is a privilege to be the second Aboriginal person to welcome you to this country and to wish you well in your deliberations.

In the words of my brother and friend the late Neville Bonner: Wunya! Wunya! Welcome to this country.

The last decade has brought about many changes that have the potential to improve the lives of Queensland Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples—

- The Aboriginal Land Act 1991
- The 1992 Mabo decision
- The Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody
- The motions in the Queensland parliament supporting 'reconciliation' and the 'apology' to the stolen generations
- The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Task Force on Violence report
- The Premier's Crime Prevention Task Force
- The Justice Agreement
- Education Queensland's *Partners for Success*.

Employment strategies have increased the numbers of indigenous people working in the public sector, some of which are helping to implement these reforms.

While we have all these initiatives and reports, we must also recognise that they won't help unless the right people are in place to design appropriate policies and implement, monitor and improve programs and services. There needs to be sufficient numbers of people in place who understand the history behind the reforms—people who will remain committed to seeing them through, year after year, across both the public and private sectors.

Policy and legislation need to be addressed through proper consultation—elders, traditional owners, law makers, law keepers, native title representative bodies, land councils, decision makers and young people gathering to discuss proposed changes for their cultural heritage and inform programs and laws.

Cultural affirmation is one of the key principles that empower Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples. To know where you come from and what your community responsibilities are is of great importance. Cultural heritage strikes at the very heart of our identity and involves the ownership and control of our heritage.

I have great confidence in your ability as a parliament to work with our people but I ask that you show confidence in them by inviting them to work in continuing partnership to achieve these goals.

I thank you for your invitation to give welcome and speak.

GOVERNOR'S OPENING SPEECH

Honourable members of the Legislative Assembly, you have been called together to give your attention to, and to make decisions upon, matters pertaining to the peace, welfare and good government of the state.

Consequent upon a general election held on 17 February 2001, I invited the honourable Peter Beattie to form an administration. Mr Beattie was sworn in as Premier and Minister for Trade of Queensland on 22 February 2001, with a new ministry.

The opening of this, the 50th Queensland Parliament, is a historic occasion as it brings the Queensland Parliament into the 21st century and coincides with our nation's Centenary of Federation.

In the last 100 years, we have enjoyed relative stability, peace and prosperity. Our great state has made significant contributions to Australia's fortunes, benefiting from the wealth of our resources and agriculture, the uniqueness of our environment, the richness of our cultural diversity, our creativity and our innovation.

Many challenges and opportunities lie ahead in this new century; ranging from an ever-globalising economy to reconciliation with our indigenous peoples. We need collective wisdom to guide our judgment, broad access to knowledge and experience to inform our decisions, and inclusive measures to engage our people.

There is strength in diversity. With this, our 50th Parliament of Queensland, we see the election of the state's first Chinese-Australian MP, which represents another step toward parliament reflecting the multicultural diversity of Queensland. And our parliament now has the highest female representation in any parliament in Australia, with women now comprising 37 per cent of the Queensland Parliament. Research of national parliaments suggests that only Sweden and Denmark have greater female representation.

In an age when many people are cynical about our system of government it is important to make government and parliament more accessible and relevant to people.

Once every term, parliament will be held in a regional centre. Parliamentary debates will be broadcast on the Internet, and an online petition system will be developed.

My government is also intent on involving young people in the democratic process. All draft government legislation will be posted on a special Internet web site for youth input. Young people will be invited to raise issues via the web site and this feedback will be reported to cabinet for whole-of-government consideration.

Mandatory training for new members of parliament, focusing on their roles and accountability, has already been introduced.

My government will continue the reform process of the electoral system to enable the independent Electoral Commission to implement the 'Good Government Plan' on enrolment and voting.

Honourable members, in the 21st century, innovation and technological capability will be the key to our future as a Smart State with the ability to generate thousands of long-term, New Age jobs for Queenslanders. My government is committed to reinforcing Queensland as the Smart State by providing existing programs and visionary policies to help raise general education levels, improve the workforce skills base and improve the quality of life for all Queenslanders.

My government's commitment to making Queensland the Smart State will be implemented through the new Ministry of Innovation and Information Economy.

Programs and strategies that will be implemented by this new ministry include fostering the development of ideas that will translate into commercial opportunities to generate new jobs and earn export dollars for Queensland, and establishing our industries' competitiveness in the global marketplace.

Research and development will be encouraged to take advantage of the state's unique and extensive biodiversity and of emerging growth industries, such as marine sciences, ecosystems, food and fibre production, biotechnology, pharmaceuticals and aviation.

A range of initiatives to address the information technology and telecommunications skills shortage will be provided to Queenslanders, with opportunities for lifelong learning and upgrading of skills. Improved telecommunications access and alternative technologies will also be encouraged.

My government will ensure that Queensland agencies are able to deliver services online so that people throughout Queensland will be able to access services online, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

A Queensland government electronic marketplace will be established to promote e-commerce throughout the business community to enable small and medium enterprises to trade in the global economy.

All this will contribute to the priority my government has in delivering jobs to the people of Queensland.

A \$2 billion Skilling Queensland policy will create one million student places during the second term, targeting information technology, biotechnology and engineering.

Other strategies include the Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative, which will be extended to the next three years at a cost of \$470 million, creating 28,000 additional job placements. Other specific programs will help facilitate training for 3,000 mature-aged people and will offer employers a \$4,000 mature workers' wage subsidy to provide jobs for people aged 45 and over.

My government will create 1,200 additional traineeships across the state in environmental protection, horticulture and waste management. The Kickstart for Youth program will assist communities with high youth unemployment by providing one-off intensive specialised employment and training assistance and a \$4,000 wage subsidy to prospective employers. Support will also be given for school-based apprenticeships and traineeships.

The establishment of the Australian Aerospace Centre of Excellence in partnership between TAFE Queensland and the private sector will drive growth in training and attract related services to the aviation industry.

My government will remain vigilant about opportunities to bolster the state's business by attracting leading international companies to establish their operations in Queensland. Business attraction, corporate investment and the creation of jobs remains paramount to attracting new business opportunities to the state and will be complemented by lower business taxes, our skilled work force and the commitment of my government to work with business.

My government will continue to recognise the important role small business plays in this economy and will continue to work to ease the burden on this important sector.

Low business taxes will be preserved by my government to maintain Queensland's competitive edge over the other states. The state's taxation legislation will be significantly modernised to deliver consistent administrative provisions across tax streams.

Queensland's financial management framework will be further strengthened in order to ensure that the community achieves better value for money.

The Department of Public Works will continue to play a vital role in the planning, provision and management of major government projects and will explore avenues for accelerating capital works projects.

The new Office of Energy will enable my government to take a coordinated approach to progress the development of a competitive and efficient energy market.

The development of competitively priced long-term gas supplies will be supported as part of the Cleaner Energy Strategy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Honourable members, education is a key priority as it lies at the heart of my government's vision to improve the quality of life of current and future generations and make Queensland the Smart State.

Education is the key to employment and training and to creating opportunities for all Queensland children.

To achieve this vision, my government is committed to building on its 2010 strategy to revitalise state education across Queensland.

Other key strategies include—

- the investment of \$132 million to employ an additional 800 teachers, over and above expected growth, to reduce class sizes;
- the expansion of the New Basics curriculum to an additional 20 schools; and

- the development of new centres of excellence in mathematics, science and technology in six schools across the state.

My government will also spend \$50 million over three years to establish the Triple R program to help maintain and enhance our excellent schools and a further \$40 million will be provided for much needed airconditioning to students in regional and rural parts of the state.

Honourable members, my government will continue to build on Queensland's proud tradition of having a strong public health care system by strengthening both clinical treatment services and prevention programs. Elective surgery waiting list times will be cut and oral health services will be improved.

During this term, my government will complete the \$2.8 billion statewide Health Building Program, the largest program of its type ever undertaken in Australia. An extra \$13 million will be committed to meet medical equipment priorities to boost the amount to be spent on new equipment over the next three years to \$270 million.

During the next five years, my government will provide \$120 million towards a program to upgrade the 21 state government nursing homes to the highest standard.

Other strategies include my government's commitment to the recruitment of at least 1,500 graduate nurses and the introduction of tougher anti-smoking legislation.

Honourable members, my government will continue to ensure that the Queensland Police Service and other law enforcement agencies have the powers and funding necessary to meet the demands of effective law enforcement into the future.

Through existing law and order policies, my government is committed to building a stronger Police Service, providing more secure prisons and focusing on crime prevention. Emphasis will be placed on the Queensland Crime Prevention Program as part of a long-term commitment to fighting the causes of crime.

In managing the prison system, my government will maintain its approach of delivering strong but fair control. Programs will be introduced to break the cycle of offending that sees people returning to the prison system, and a program of building modern, secure prisons will also be completed.

My government will be working to implement measures that enhance fairness and justice for all Queenslanders.

Legislation will be introduced to target public forms of racial and religious hatred that could undermine the social stability and cohesion of our community.

The number of drug courts, which are designed to break the cycle of drug dependence and divert people with drug addiction away from prison, will be expanded.

The juvenile justice legislation will be amended to give judges an expanded range of enforcement options for dealing with juvenile offenders. Further action will be taken to keep fine defaulters out of our prisons and court facilities will be improved in metropolitan and regional areas.

There will be training programs for justices of the peace in remote indigenous communities and proposals are being developed to deal with the interpreting needs of indigenous people in our courts.

My government will do everything it can to ensure all Queenslanders have access to legal representation. Funding will be allocated to assist Legal Aid in the provision of court support services for domestic violence victims in the Brisbane Magistrates Court and across the state. In addition, a further \$2.5 million a year will fund additional legal aid services and community legal centres across the state.

My government will continue to consult closely with residents, community groups, councils and other government agencies associated with the Community Renewal Program in improving local services and facilities, generating employment and training, and tackling the causes of crime as well as the fear of crime. This term my government will spend \$37 million to continue the Community Renewal Program currently operating in 13 communities throughout Queensland.

In the interests of fair trading, my government will introduce the Property Agents and Motor Dealers Act as a matter of priority to eliminate unlicensed and unscrupulous real estate agents, property marketeers and motor dealers.

My government will work with other states and the Commonwealth to develop an online fraud prevention strategy to inform consumers and bring Internet fraudsters to justice. A comprehensive online system to handle complaints and to share consumer intelligence will be implemented by the end of 2001.

Honourable members, my government will continue to give a strong focus to the arts by focusing on links with business and industry to create new jobs and support workplace relations. The Arts Built-In policy will continue to direct two per cent of all capital works building project budgets toward art and design, creating hundreds of jobs for Queensland artists.

As part of the Arts Built-In Project, we will honour Queensland greats with a statewide program of plaques and signs to permanently mark places of historical interest. And five Queensland greats will be announced on Queensland Day each year to honour outstanding contributors to the life of the state.

Work will begin on the \$260 million Millennium Arts Project for the new Gallery of Modern Art and the expansion of the State Library, and a further \$15 million will be provided for 16 regional projects.

Over the next three years, \$3 million will be spent on programs for our young artists, performers and musicians and 32 projects will be rolled out across the state through the \$110 million Queensland Heritage Trails Network.

During this term, my government's major objective in sport and recreation will be to get more Queenslanders involved in regular physical activities. A physical activity strategy will be developed and a range of programs and initiatives will be implemented, with a particular emphasis on improving access to sport and recreation facilities and opportunities for people in regional and indigenous communities.

Honourable members, Queensland Transport will continue to develop a world-class integrated transport network. Two major steps towards this goal will be the opening of the busway component of the \$600 million South East Transit Project and the opening of the privately funded \$220 million Airtrain Citylink from Brisbane Airport to the CBD.

In the regions, \$80 million will be provided towards an upgrade of the rail line between Rockhampton and Cairns, \$208 million for capital works on ports throughout Queensland, and \$2.5 million for rural and remote aviation infrastructure.

My government, in partnership with local government under the Transport Infrastructure Development Scheme, will continue construction and maintenance on our rural roads and highway system. This will include reconstruction of the Cairns to Cooktown road link to complement National Highway improvements, funded by the Commonwealth government.

On a statewide basis, my government will continue to provide more accessible public transport for rail, bus and taxi, particularly for the disabled.

Main Roads has committed \$5 billion over five years towards a Roads Implementation Program that will connect people and places, provide substantial employment, and encourage economic development.

Honourable members, my government will continue to ensure an appropriate balance in the gambling industry. A responsible gambling strategy will be developed to coordinate government, industry and community efforts to minimise the harm from gambling while allowing the industry to continue its important role in the leisure and entertainment sector.

My government's commitment to social justice and strengthening Queensland families will remain a priority.

Improvements will be implemented through a three-year program to address the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry into Abuse of Children in Queensland Institutions.

A new child protection and family support services will be established in regional Queensland to improve child-care, prevent domestic violence, support foster parents, and assist vulnerable families.

My government will continue working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to help them break free of welfare and build stronger, healthier communities.

My government is committed to improving the lifestyles of people with a disability by providing funding for new respite services, adult lifestyle support packages, and capital improvements, as well as reviewing the Disability Services Act 1992 and developing a Carer's Recognition Act.

Honourable members, my government will continue to promote and encourage the mining industry while ensuring the highest possible safety and health standards and environmental responsibilities. There will be strong support for further development within the huge Carpentaria-Mount Isa mineral province and within the state's known coal and petroleum regions.

My government recognises that primary industries form an important part of the state's economic and social foundation. A major challenge for my government is to ensure the sustainability of agriculture production and the viability of many regional communities by preventing degradation of our land and water. Partnerships between all levels of government and communities, particularly in identifying priorities, targets and standards for natural resource management will facilitate this process.

My government will commit \$81 million over the next seven years to the Commonwealth's National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality, which addresses dryland salinity and deteriorating water quality in a number of key catchments and embodies a new approach to natural resource management by supporting community-driven action.

My government's commitment to primary industries will focus on groundbreaking science and innovation, trade development, quarantine, market access, animal welfare and environment programs.

My government will continue to encourage the growth of Queensland's food and fibre industries, which generate a third of the state's exports and more than 20 per cent of Australia's total rural exports. This will add to the 15,000 jobs already created in the agriculture, fisheries and forestry sectors.

The contribution of family farms is valued and my government is committed to enhancing the delivery of services and assistance to meet the needs of rural and regional Queensland through the assistance of the Department of Primary Industries and the Queensland Rural Adjustment Authority.

Importantly, my government will assist more rural women and youth to assume decision-making roles to help chart the future for rural Queensland.

Existing government services in rural Queensland will be expanded through the Queensland government Agent Program and the Queensland Rural Ministerial Advisory Council, which are complemented by Community Cabinet meetings and Ministerial Regional Community Forums.

My government also remains committed to regional planning through the Regional Centres Program and the Rural Living Infrastructure Program, where more than 180 community infrastructure projects will be completed by local governments across the state. These will attract investment and new jobs and provide infrastructure and services to regional communities.

A Regional Event Development Scheme with annual funding of \$1 million will be established to encourage the development and growth of smaller regional events throughout Queensland.

Honourable members, my government will continue to build on its outstanding natural environment record by protecting this valuable resource through a number of strategies.

An extra \$10 million per year will be committed to the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service to improve the maintenance and facilities in our national parks and employ up to 140 new rangers.

Work will continue with the parties to the historic Cape York Heads of Agreement to advance community development, to protect the area's unique conservation values and to resolve native title, land use and tenure issues by negotiation.

The South East Queensland Forest Agreement will be implemented to create a world-class Great Southern Forests Reserve covering 1.25 million hectares and providing certainty to industry.

My government will spend \$10 million in creating a world-class walking track system called the Great Walks of Queensland allowing locals and visitors to enjoy our unique natural assets. The South East Queensland Regional Landscape Strategy will be expanded into a statewide program to coordinate the protection of open space and regional landscape values.

My government will spend \$1 million to eradicate the crown-of-thorns starfish and preserve our magnificent Great Barrier Reef by initiating a comprehensive Reef Protection Plan to coordinate water quality management.

My government is committed to the continued growth of the tourism industry. Queensland's 14 regional tourism organisations will be provided with an additional \$1.5 million during my

government's second term to boost regional marketing and drive employment creation. Regional tourism infrastructure will be enhanced through projects such as the Heritage Trails Network and the Turtle Interpretive Centre in Bundaberg.

Further, a review of liquor licensing legislation to provide the liquor industry with a modern and innovative basis on which to operate in the community will be finalised.

Honourable members, local government remains a priority for my government. My government will continue to support local government councils to provide infrastructure and services to meet the needs of their communities.

Strategies to implement this will include funding to improve access by communities to better water and sewerage, and community facilities and security infrastructure in public places. An emphasis will be placed on providing these services to regional and rural Queensland.

During this term, amendments will be made to the Integrated Planning Act 1997 to achieve a fully integrated development assessment system. My government will continue to consult with local government councils to ensure an integrated planning scheme is in place by March 2003.

Honourable members, in relation to emergency services, my government will continue its dual focus on emergency response times and the delivery of effective community safety programs. This integrated approach will ensure that emphasis is placed on equipment and training to enable a rapid response, together with a range of preventative activities and community safety initiatives.

Community protection from hazardous materials will be enhanced through the introduction of the Dangerous Goods Safety Management legislation.

Honourable members, new laws regulating the workplace will ensure stability and economic growth and will also reflect fundamental human rights and responsibilities. They will also take account of the key issues affecting our community, in particular, balancing work and family life, and the need to ensure safe and healthy workplaces.

A renewed focus on compliance and enforcement, with additional inspectors in high-risk industries, will be complemented by appropriate regulations. In addition, a new workers' compensation reform package with improvements to worker entitlements, both in access to common law and in statutory benefits, will be implemented.

Other strategies my government will implement include the development of new industry codes of practice that will take account of industry and employee needs, health and safety and fair community standards.

Honourable members, in opening this first session of the 50th Parliament, I have outlined the major components of my government's program. I trust that your deliberations will be guided by sound judgment and reasoning in advancing the welfare of the people of Queensland.

His Excellency then left the chamber.

Mr SPEAKER announced that the sitting would be continued in the Legislative Assembly chamber, where he took the chair at 2.49 p.m.

ELECTORAL DISTRICT OF SURFERS PARADISE

Resignation of Member

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have to report that yesterday, as Speaker, I received the following letter from the Honourable Robert Edward Borbidge, member for the electoral district of Surfers Paradise—

Dear Mr Speaker

I hereby tender my resignation as Member for Surfers Paradise in the Parliament of Queensland.

I would like to extend to all Members of the new Parliament my best wishes.

Yours sincerely

Rob Borbidge

Member for Surfers Paradise.

Seat Declared Vacant

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (2.49 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

That the seat in this House for the electoral district of Surfers Paradise hath become and is now vacant by reason of the resignation of the Honourable Robert Edward Borbidge.

Motion agreed to.

ADDRESS OF WELCOME BY DR R. ANDERSON

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (2.49 p.m.), by leave, without notice: The official opening of the 50th Queensland Parliament included an address by one of this state's most respected elders. I refer to the address by Dr Robert Anderson—or, as some of you have come to know him affectionately as, Uncle Bob—who welcomed the Governor and all honourable members to this parliament on behalf of the traditional owners of the site on which this House stands. As Dr Anderson is not a member of this House, the contribution he made before all honourable members is not automatically included in *Hansard*. To do so will require a formal resolution of this parliament. It is therefore with pride that I move—

That the speech by Dr Anderson be incorporated into the *Hansard* record of today's official opening of the 50th Queensland parliament.

Motion agreed to.

TIME CAPSULE

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (2.50 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

That the parliament notes that yesterday the Premier and Speaker laid a time capsule on the Speaker's Green as part of the Centenary of Federation celebrations.

The contents of the time capsule have already been noted during yesterday's sitting of parliament. Parliament requests that the Premier and Speaker on 20 March 2101 open the time capsule on behalf of the people of Queensland as part of Australia's bicentennial celebrations of Federation in 2101.

Motion agreed to.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (2.51 p.m.): I move—

That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until 9.30 a.m. tomorrow.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 2.51 p.m.