



# VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS

NO. 2 – WEDNESDAY, 17 MARCH 2004

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**MEETING OF PARLIAMENT**

The Assembly met in the former Legislative Council Chamber at 2.10 pm, pursuant to adjournment. The Speaker (Honourable R K Hollis) read prayers.

**PRESENTATION OF SPEAKER**

Mr Speaker reported that on Tuesday, 16 March 2004, he had presented himself to Her Excellency the Governor as the Member chosen to fill the high and honourable office of Speaker, and that Her Excellency was pleased to congratulate him upon his election.

**WELCOME BY UNCLE HERB BLIGH**

Mr Speaker called upon Uncle Herb Bligh, President of the Brisbane Council of Elders, to address the new Parliament.

**OPENING SPEECH BY HER EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR**

Her Excellency the Governor, being announced, was conducted to the dais by Mr Speaker and officers of the Legislative Assembly.

Her Excellency then read the following speech—

"Honourable Members—

You have been called together to make decisions on matters relating to the welfare and governance of our State.

Following a general election, held on 7 February 2004, I invited the Honourable Peter Beattie to form an administration. He did so, and a new Ministry was sworn in on 12 February 2004.

My Government has set out a program to enhance the welfare and prosperity of the people and State of Queensland and to continue the strategy of making Queensland the Smart State.

It will improve the child protection system by implementing the recommendations delivered by the recent Crime and Misconduct Commission inquiry into the abuse of children in foster care. These improvements will be delivered through the new portfolio of Child Safety, which will be the lead agency in a whole-of-government response to child protection issues. My Government is determined to use this opportunity to create the best child protection system in the country.

The Productivity Commission has found that Queensland enjoys the most efficient public hospital system, with Australia's shortest waiting times for elective surgery. However, my Government has made it clear that it recognises that, while there are still people having to wait too long for surgery, further improvements are necessary. Over the next three years, it will be implementing a \$468 million package of additional initiatives to further improve health services.

This will include:

- treating up to 18,000 extra elective patients and reducing waiting lists for elective surgery even further;
- opening 242 new public hospital beds at the Mater, the Prince Charles and Caloundra hospitals; and
- employing 1,500 new graduate nurses.

New emergency departments will be sited at the Prince Charles and Robina hospitals and the emergency departments at Redcliffe and Redlands will be enlarged. A new Health Hotline will be established to inform members of the public of their options in obtaining treatment. This will reduce pressure on hospital emergency departments. The Government also plans to test whether establishing bulk billing clinics near hospitals reduces pressure on emergency departments. There will be major improvements to cancer prevention and treatment, state-wide cardiac services, renal services and stroke prevention, treatment and rehabilitation, together with 18,000 more dental treatments.

My Government will continue to have a major focus on enabling all Queenslanders to reach their full potential through opportunities for learning and training throughout life. This education and skilling of Queenslanders is a crucial part of the strategy to transform Queensland into Australia's

Smart State, with a wider economic base and new, high technology jobs to complement our traditional industries. The challenge is to enhance the learning environment for children and press ahead with reforms to improve literacy and numeracy rates and career prospects.

My Government will introduce a universally-available, voluntary preparatory year of schooling in 2007, putting Queensland children on the same footing as their interstate peers. It will also reduce class size targets for Years 4 to 10, from 30 to 28 by the start of the 2007 school year, to give Queensland the smallest class size targets in Australia in these crucial middle years.

A major review of the *Education (General Provisions) Act 1989* and the *Education (Teacher Registration) Act 1988* will ensure the maintenance of the quality of the teaching profession.

My Government will continue long term investment in:

- maintaining and upgrading Queensland schools;
- installing air conditioning in schools in the hottest and most humid parts of our State; and
- in classroom information and communication technologies.

It will also invest in the Safe and Healthier Schools Program, backed up by legislation passed by the Queensland Parliament in 2003, which provides for the banning of violent or aggressive intruders from school grounds. Legislation passed by the Queensland Parliament will come into force in 2006 to ensure young people are 'learning or earning' until they are 17.

During this term, my Government will continue to modernise training in Queensland and will invest more than \$2.5 billion in vocational education and training to provide skilled workers required by businesses to grow, innovate and prosper in traditional and new industry sectors.

Support will continue for the State's public training system, TAFE Queensland and the Queensland Agricultural Colleges, delivering training to around 230,000 students each year. There will also be a focus on securing new employment opportunities, developing business and industry and driving economic growth and innovation. The Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative will be extended for a further three years at an additional cost of \$275 million, including up to \$15 million for the Worker Assistance Program. This initiative is designed to create an additional 34,000 jobs.

My Government's trade efforts to drive the expansion of Queensland's export base are founded on the Trade Strategy, Export Solutions. During this term, my Government will advance trade programs, including a new exporter development program to help potential exporters break into international markets. Other programs will position Queensland as a leading exporter of Indigenous art and increase the involvement of public and private sectors in international aid and development business.

There will be a focus on the commercialisation of Queensland expertise by building on industries such as aviation, biotechnology and e-security.

New initiatives for economic development will be implemented, including:

- the Advanced Manufacturing Plan, to which an additional \$8 million has been allocated,
- the Creative Industries Strategy, which will receive an extra \$8.9 million, and
- the \$5.1 million Smart Small Business Strategy.

The Creative Industries Strategy will generate jobs in the arts and entertainment industries by marrying Queensland creativity with business to promote ideas and products in Australia and overseas.

Important issues, such as the continued development of infrastructure and the need for a steady supply of major projects, including public private partnerships, will continue to be addressed.

World-class science infrastructure will continue to be developed through a \$20 million investment in the establishment of the Queensland Brain Institute. In addition, work is continuing on large scale projects like the Burnett River water infrastructure project, Gold Coast Convention Centre, Mackay Multipurpose Centre and Fitzroy Riverfront Development in Rockhampton.

There will be an investment of \$2 million in stage two of the Drive Tourism Program and my Government will work to secure expanded air and cruise shipping services for tourism industry development. The establishment of the new portfolio of Wine Industry Development highlights a long-standing determination to put Queensland wine on a par with the world's leading production areas.

My Government remains committed to the Charter of Social and Fiscal Responsibility, which informs the public of the Government's fiscal intent, provides internal guidelines for fiscal management and establishes benchmarks for the Government's fiscal performance.

The Treasurer will table a revised Charter of Social and Fiscal responsibility early in the term. Queensland's taxes remain at very low levels, preserving Queensland's competitive edge over other states. My Government will continue to make representations to the Commonwealth Grants Commission to ensure that Queensland receives an equitable distribution of GST revenue.

Smart State strategies will ensure that individuals and families have access to services that meet their needs, and will build a stronger Queensland by supporting strong and healthy communities. A clear focus on community service will be maintained through the establishment of the new portfolio of Communities.

During the term, additional funding of \$65 million will be provided to the disability services sector to increase support for adults, children and families, and to support the disability services sector.

My Government will work to address volatile substance misuse by supporting retailers to promote the responsible sale and supply of volatile substances, enhancing police responses and improving services and treatment, with legislation passed by the Queensland Parliament to come into force this year.

It will continue to pursue reforms to improve the availability and affordability of liability insurance, and will continue negotiations regarding underwriting liability insurance for the not-for-profit sector.

Diversity within our communities is to be celebrated and represents an opportunity to support social progress and economic prosperity.

My Government will enhance grant funding for multicultural initiatives to just over \$10 million in total over the term for the benefit of the whole community by improving community relations and development, and working to improve access to services.

Similarly, it will deliver initiatives under the five-year plan for Queensland women, Women in the Smart State Directions Statement 2003-2008. These initiatives aim to improve health and wellbeing outcomes for women, and help women balance their work and family commitments, achieve economic security, be safe, and increase their participation in leadership and community building roles.

My Government will continue to implement reforms to overcome Indigenous disadvantage and, in particular, ensure the safety and wellbeing of women and children. Action designed to curb the supply of alcohol and the incidence of alcohol-related violence will be taken through the completion of restricted area declarations for Indigenous communities. A new alcohol management program will be supported by helping community justice groups deal with the problem.

A community governance improvement strategy will complement legislative reforms, and the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy will continue to lead a whole-of-government effort to improve educational, health and social outcomes for Indigenous Queenslanders.

World-class emergency services and a focus on response times and community safety throughout the State will be maintained. Investment in the Queensland Ambulance Service will include recruiting at least 240 extra paramedics.

My Government will support comprehensive fire safety programs and ensure that Queensland's 85,000 emergency volunteers receive additional equipment and training to improve standards and capacity throughout the State. Implementation of the *Disaster Management Act 2003* in 2004 will ensure communities are better prepared for disasters and emergency situations and ensure emergency service responders are better coordinated and more effective during all phases of disaster management.

In light of world events, my Government will also ensure all emergency services are better prepared and better equipped to respond to any terrorism incident. Construction of an \$8.6 million multi-service Special Operations Unit complex in Brisbane will raise Queensland's preparedness for terrorism, natural disasters and building collapses to an all-time high.

My Government will continue to increase the number of police officers to ensure that Queensland reaches a level above the national average for the ratio of police to population and that this level is

then maintained. It will also deliver a range of innovative policing strategies to reduce crime, including police beats, school-based police officers, DNA profiling and crime scene sample analysis, digital fingerprints and other operational equipment and support.

Programs that are effective in reducing recidivism and improving the reintegration of people convicted of offences will be investigated. Additional places will be created at Woodford Correctional Centre to provide an alternative option for placement of offenders in south east Queensland.

My Government will continue work to implement measures that enhance fairness and justice for all Queenslanders. To maintain public confidence in the justice system, an effective complaints and discipline regime for the legal profession will be introduced.

There will be greater independence, accountability and transparency brought to the regulation of the profession through the appointment of a Legal Services Commissioner. Court facilities in city and regional areas will be improved. These initiatives include completing the new Brisbane Magistrates Court Complex, building new courthouses at Petrie, Caloundra and Thursday Island and upgrading courthouses in Mackay, Hervey Bay and Bowen.

My Government will continue to provide training programs for Justices of the Peace in remote Indigenous communities to ensure people in these communities have greater access to justice and greater knowledge and understanding of the justice system itself.

It will ensure that Queensland workplaces are fair and safe, with initiatives including the Queensland Workplace Health and Safety Strategy 2004-2012, protection for outworkers, the Electrical Safety Plan for Queensland and the continued operation of WorkCover Queensland.

Queensland has the most dispersed population of any mainland Australian state.

The growth of the Smart State will see planning taking account of the needs of all communities and the demands of a growing population. My Government will also pay particular attention to the south east Queensland region, where the population is expected to grow to 3.5 million by 2021. A new Office of Urban Management, headed by the Deputy Premier, will help meet the challenges this growth will bring.

It brings together all of the work being done across government departments, agencies and local government to ensure we have a better, more coordinated approach to planning for future growth and development in the region. It will oversee the completion of the SEQ2021 regional plan, and also ensure this integrated regional planning is actually addressed in the portfolio plans and programs of State agencies and individual council planning schemes.

My Government is building a planning regime that is accessible, consistent, and responsive to all interests. It will work in partnership with local government and with the development industry and community to finalise planning schemes that are flexible and modern, while being climate appropriate, resource sensitive and environmentally friendly.

Over the term, my Government will provide subsidies to various councils, including in Mackay, Toowoomba, Isis, Livingstone, Hervey Bay and Caloundra, for a range of sewerage and water treatment and re-use projects.

To make it easier for all Queenslanders to access information, \$6.3 million will be invested in a web-based information portal to give the people of this State quick, easy access to information about the physical, social, environmental and economic characteristics of the State.

My Government will continue work through the Five Year Roads Program, with the allocation of an additional \$568 million in funding through programs such as the Smart State Building Fund and Safer Roads Funding. These programs deliver projects across Queensland including \$107.8 million for road upgrades through the Smart State Building Fund as well as \$13.5 million for public transport services in regional centres. My Government will also deliver new freight corridors to the regions and an infrastructure upgrade for Queensland's boating industry.

A major step towards meeting the challenge of a growing population is through the launch of Queensland's world-class Translink, a \$1.4 billion integrated transport network to ease public transport congestion. The \$400 million upgrade of the Citytrain Network will see new services and trains for heavily-used lines such as Brisbane to the Gold Coast, providing an additional 3,760 seats per day.

My Government will continue to expand its role in influencing the broader housing sector. The first home transfer duty rebate threshold will be increased from \$80,000 to \$250,000, with the rebate phasing out for homes valued at \$500,000. In addition, the first home borrower's mortgage duty exemption threshold will be increased from \$100,000 to \$250,000.

Having established the unique not-for-profit Brisbane Housing Company, my Government, with the Brisbane City Council, will provide low-cost homes in the city. This will help to deal with the displacement of low-income earners from the inner-city due to increasing property values and rents. The \$15 million Transitional Housing Partnership will help address homelessness by providing an additional 60 transitional homes this financial year. The successful Community Renewal Program will be expanded into nine new areas, with a further \$41.9 million set aside for projects over the term, to give communities a greater sense of safety and security.

My Government will also support the artistic and cultural life of Queenslanders, creating a better quality of life, enriching community identity and boosting the economy. The Millennium Arts Project will upgrade and expand arts and cultural facilities throughout Queensland, including construction of the nation's largest Gallery of Modern Art, a major redevelopment of the State Library of Queensland and 16 projects in regional areas.

More Queenslanders, in particular children and young people, will be encouraged to participate in sport and recreation through the Get Active Queensland Children and Young People Strategy.

During this term, Queensland's reputation as a premier sporting state will be enhanced, with the completion of the Brisbane Cricket Ground redevelopment, further development of facilities at Queensland Sport and Athletics Centre and support to attract national high performance sports programs.

Sustainable use of the environment is a matter of local, national and global interest. Smart State policies will preserve Queensland's unique environment and create profitable primary industries for the benefit of all Queenslanders, supported by cutting edge science to enhance production, exports and regional capacity.

My Government will support a Trust for Nature to help protect Queensland's open space, with \$5 million to start the initiative and a further \$2.5 million to be provided over the term to establish and run an Open Space Secretariat. Five million dollars will be invested in strategic parcels of land of high conservation value, to add to the National Parks estate. Fire, weed and feral management and visitor facilities in our National Parks will all be improved.

My Government will continue to protect Cape York's natural and cultural assets and will invest more than \$10 million over the term to ensure its world class values are enhanced, including support for Indigenous Land and Sea Management Centres to help integrate traditional knowledge into managing the Cape's natural resources.

One of the most far-reaching environmental commitments for many years will result in broad-scale clearing of remnant vegetation being phased out by 2006 to protect Queensland's native vegetation, water quality and biodiversity. The Bill to end broad scale land clearing by December 2006 will be the first legislation introduced to Parliament in 2004 and will be designed to reduce the clearing of about 250,000 hectares of remnant vegetation every year to virtually nothing. It will help Australia to meet its international greenhouse reduction obligations, protect Queensland's rich biodiversity and address economic and environmental problems such as salinity, soil degradation, erosion and declining water quality. A full incentives package of \$150 million will be provided to help affected landholders. It will include structural adjustment, encouragement for best management practice and incentives to manage and maintain valuable remnant vegetation.

My Government will oversee an expansion of the State's softwood forestry plantations and the further establishment of hardwood plantations to phase-out native forest logging.

Legislation will be introduced to limit certain developments or management activities that could harm Queensland's pristine rivers. There will be a continuation of support for primary producers and businesses during the prolonged drought and, when the drought breaks, to assist them to better prepare for the next such circumstances. Recent rain and flooding in some areas have provided reason for hope, however, significant areas of Australia remain in the firm grip of drought. A Drought Urban Water Taskforce will be established to review and improve the State's readiness to deal with drought.

My Government will protect the State's reputation as a safe and clean producer of food and fibre, and will work with other governments and industry to prevent the introduction of exotic pests and diseases. It will also ensure that fisheries management arrangements support a fishing future for commercial operators, recreational anglers and the wider community.

The community of Queensland expects its system of government to be responsive to its needs and aspirations, co-ordinated in its efforts and accountable for its decisions and conduct.

My Government will drive implementation of these initiatives across its various agencies, and engage with the Queensland community in responding to the complex policy issues facing the State and the nation.

To ensure that the Government and Parliament are accessible and responsive to Queenslanders, my Government will continue to hold Community Cabinet meetings in regional Queensland where anyone can walk in off the street and talk to a Minister. Taking the Queensland Parliament to regional Queensland in the last term was a resounding success in enabling Queenslanders young and old to see their democracy in action. This term, the Queensland Parliament will again sit for a week in regional Queensland, with the second regional sitting to be held in central Queensland at Rockhampton.

Honourable Members—

In opening this first session of the 51<sup>st</sup> Parliament, I have outlined key initiatives of my Government's program for this term.

I trust that the deliberations of this Parliament will reflect the spirit of democracy, from which it has been formed.

I further trust that your individual and combined efforts in representing the 89 electorates of Queensland will improve the lives of our people and communities and promote the current and future interests of our State."

*Her Excellency having been conducted to the entrance to the Chamber by Mr Speaker—*

Mr Speaker announced that the sitting would continue in the Legislative Assembly Chamber, and requested Honourable Members to attend in that Chamber.

*In the Legislative Assembly Chamber – Mr Speaker having taken the Chair—*

#### **PHOTOGRAPHIC SESSION IN LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY CHAMBER**

Mr Speaker drew the attention of Members to the memorandum advising that there would be a photographic session in the Chamber at 9.15 am on Thursday, 17 March 2004.

#### **MOTION WITHOUT NOTICE – ADDRESS BY UNCLE HERB BLIGH**

Premier and Minister for Trade (Mr Beattie), by leave, moved – That the speech by Uncle Herb Bligh be incorporated into the *Hansard* record of today's official opening of the 51<sup>st</sup> Queensland Parliament. Question put and agreed to.

#### **SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT**

Premier and Minister for Trade (Mr Beattie) moved – That the House at its rising do adjourn until 9.30 am tomorrow.

Question put and agreed to.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Premier and Minister for Trade (Mr Beattie) moved – That this House do now adjourn.

Question put and agreed to.

The House adjourned at 2.53 pm.

**ATTENDANCE**

The following members were present—

<i>Attwood</i>	<i>English</i>	<i>Keech</i>	<i>McNamara</i>	<i>Pratt</i>	<i>Simpson</i>
<i>Barry</i>	<i>Fenlon</i>	<i>Knuth</i>	<i>Menkens</i>	<i>Purcell</i>	<i>Smith</i>
<i>Barton</i>	<i>Finn</i>	<i>Langbroek</i>	<i>Messenger</i>	<i>Quinn</i>	<i>Spence</i>
<i>Beattie</i>	<i>Flegg</i>	<i>Lavarch</i>	<i>Mickel</i>	<i>Reeves</i>	<i>Springborg</i>
<i>Bligh</i>	<i>Foley</i>	<i>Lawlor</i>	<i>Miller</i>	<i>Reilly</i>	<i>Stone</i>
<i>Boyle</i>	<i>Fouras</i>	<i>Lee</i>	<i>Molloy</i>	<i>Reynolds</i>	<i>Struthers</i>
<i>Briskey</i>	<i>Fraser</i>	<i>Lee Long</i>	<i>Mulherin</i>	<i>Rickuss</i>	<i>Stuckey</i>
<i>Choi</i>	<i>Hayward</i>	<i>Lingard</i>	<i>Nelson—Carr</i>	<i>Roberts, E</i>	<i>Sullivan, C</i>
<i>Clark, E</i>	<i>Hobbs</i>	<i>Livingstone</i>	<i>Nolan</i>	<i>Roberts, N</i>	<i>Sullivan, T</i>
<i>Clark, L</i>	<i>Hollis</i>	<i>Lucas</i>	<i>Nuttall</i>	<i>Robertson</i>	<i>Wallace</i>
<i>Copeland</i>	<i>Hoolihan</i>	<i>Mackenroth</i>	<i>O'Brien</i>	<i>Rowell</i>	<i>Wellington</i>
<i>Croft</i>	<i>Hopper</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Palaszczuk</i>	<i>Schwarten</i>	<i>Wells</i>
<i>Cummins</i>	<i>Horan</i>	<i>Malone</i>	<i>Pearce</i>	<i>Scott</i>	<i>Wilson</i>
<i>Cunningham, E</i>	<i>Jarratt</i>	<i>McArdle</i>	<i>Pitt</i>	<i>Seeney</i>	
<i>Cunningham, J</i>	<i>Johnson</i>	<i>McGrady</i>	<i>Poole</i>	<i>Shine</i>	

**R K HOLLIS**  
**SPEAKER**

**N J LAURIE**  
**CLERK OF THE PARLIAMENT**