



Speech by

**Hon. PETER BEATTIE**

**MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL**

---

Hansard 18 September 1998

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

**Queensland-Asia Links**

**Hon. P. D. BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central— ALP) (Premier) (9.32 a.m.), by leave: While the Leader of the Opposition seems to take pleasure in talking down Queensland in light of the Asian economic crisis, my Government is working hard to strengthen our links with Asia. Our approach is that all our trading partners are important—those in Europe, the Americas or the Asian region. Building relationships is just as much about the little things as it is about grand gestures—things such as the Sir Edward Weary Dunlop Asia Awards which recognise and reward excellence in those aspiring to enhance Australia-Asia relations. I recently approved a \$10,000 donation from Queensland to the Weary Dunlop awards, because we think it is important to encourage individuals to establish constructive, harmonious relations with our neighbours.

I have also recently indicated my support for the Young Entrepreneurs Organisation Asia Pacific Conference to be held at Sanctuary Cove in May next year. I will be opening the conference, which is expected to attract more than 200 young people from the Asia-Pacific, who each operate businesses with annual turnover greater than \$1m. The local organisers of the conference are hoping to give their Asian colleagues a more positive image of Queensland than has been portrayed in the media in recent times.

Another decision taken by my Government aimed at strengthening our Asian links is to support the application of Korean Air for traffic rights between Brisbane and Auckland. If this application is successful, it will result in an additional two weekly air services between Seoul and Brisbane. While Korean tourism has fallen off dramatically, it was Queensland's major source of tourism growth until the recent crisis. There is every reason to suggest that it will be a major source of tourists again in the future. Each of these measures is small in isolation, but a consistent and concerted effort to maintain and expand our links with Asia will pay off for Queensland over time. Sooner or later, the current crisis will pass, and the Asian tigers will be roaring again. When that happens, Queensland will be ready and waiting to take full advantage of the opportunities that will arise and the jobs that will arise with those opportunities.

Honourable members would be aware that I recently visited Hong Kong and Japan to ensure that Queensland remains a highly preferred destination for tourists and investment dollars. The Deputy Premier has also made two overseas trips to Taiwan and Korea and, more recently, to Singapore. Today I announce that next month I will visit the People's Republic of China to reinforce the trade and cultural ties that successive Queensland Governments have developed with Shanghai. I will also be visiting Beijing and the ancient city of Chongqing, which is being restored. A number of Queensland companies are bidding to be part of the restoration and I will certainly be supporting their cause. As I said, the Asian economies are crucial to Queensland's continuing economic growth. My Government will be doing everything it can to ensure that we ride out these short-term economic problems in Asia, and that we are placed in a prime position to take advantage of the next surge of Asian economic growth.

---