



Speech by

Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

Hansard 22 October 1998

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

National Greenhouse Strategy

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central— ALP) (Premier) (9.37 a.m.), by leave: The Commonwealth has committed Australia to playing a part in the global effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. At an international forum in Kyoto in 1997, Australia signed the framework convention on climate change. The so-called Kyoto agreement sets targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Under the agreement, Australia is committed to limit growth in emissions to 8% above 1990 levels by 2008-2012. The Commonwealth's primary tool for meeting this commitment is a national greenhouse strategy, which was finalised in June this year. The Prime Minister has asked every State and Territory to endorse this strategy.

I am pleased to be able to advise the House today that Cabinet this week gave approval for me to give such endorsement on Queensland's behalf. Accordingly, I have written to the Prime Minister advising him that the strategy has Queensland's support, and I table a copy of that letter. So Queensland is committed to contributing its fair share to the national effort to cut emissions, but it is a commitment made with a careful eye on protecting Queensland jobs and industries. In my letter, I have reminded the Prime Minister that Queensland has a high dependence on energy-intensive export industries and the State's international competitiveness must be protected. I have advised the Prime Minister that my Government requires that the Queensland implementation plan be based on certain principles. They are the full exploration of no-regrets options and market-based solutions, protection of employment levels in Queensland, maintenance of international competitiveness for Queensland's industry, and continuing progress on the introduction of competition reform in the energy sector.

As well, my Government believes that three other issues must be addressed for the national strategy to be successfully implemented. We must develop a domestic emissions trading system and we must do it quickly. This would be a valuable tool to help minimise the total national cost in reducing emissions. Queensland also believes that there must be quick action to develop a comprehensive system for forecasting greenhouse gas emission levels to help Governments and industry in their policy development.

Finally, turning the strategy into reality will require substantial resources. While the strategy provides a cost-effective mechanism for achieving reductions, Queensland considers it essential that the Commonwealth assist in funding programs that will be implemented cooperatively. Without Commonwealth funding, Queensland would find it difficult to meet these challenges. As I have said, Queensland is committed to playing its part in the national effort, but we are just as committed to protecting the interests of this State. I table a copy of that letter to the Prime Minister for the information of members.
