



Speech by

# Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

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Hansard 17 November 1998

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Expo 2002

**Hon. P. D. BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central— ALP) (Premier) (9.43 a.m.), by leave: I rise today to inform the House that the Bureau of International Expositions will be meeting in Paris on 27 November 1998. As most members would be aware, the Philippines Government is currently encountering difficulty with its bid to hold Expo 2002 and is presently reviewing the bid with a view to securing private sector involvement. Whilst there have been reports that the Philippines may formally withdraw from Expo 2002, indications are that it is highly unlikely that this will occur before late December 1998.

The Queensland Government has been working closely with the Commonwealth, with Australian embassies and through its own contacts in business and Government to monitor developments. We have been careful to act in full consultation with the Federal Government to ensure that Queensland's interests are not forgotten as the Bureau of International Expositions moves towards resolution. Given the long delays, the process has been somewhat frustrating, but it is important to work within the accepted rules in order to secure Expo 2002 for Queensland, should the opportunity arise. However, to date the Philippines have not withdrawn. While this provides the potential for Queensland to reinstate its bid to host Expo 2002, it would be clearly counterproductive for the Government to try to force the Philippines to withdraw.

There had been suggestions that I could go to Paris for the next meeting of the Bureau of International Expositions on 27 November 1998. In other circumstances, this would be an important opportunity to lobby key Bureau of International Expositions representatives about Queensland's bid. However, as the Philippines have not formally withdrawn, a senior presence by the Queensland Government would be premature. Hence, as I indicated to Parliament last week, I have decided not to go.

We are advised by the Australian Embassy in Paris that the question of Expo 2002 will now not be considered at the November meeting of the Bureau of International Expositions. Should the Philippines withdraw by the end of 1998, we are advised that there may be a special meeting of the Bureau of International Expositions in February 1999. Should this occur, Queensland will be appropriately represented as we make our case to host Expo 2002.

The House will appreciate the disappointment from all sides of politics that this matter remains in limbo—notwithstanding the best efforts of the Queensland Government and the Commonwealth Government. There has been wide support for Queensland to host the Expo bid. However— and the House needs to be aware of this—the longer this issue drags on, the more difficult it will be to meet the time lines contained in the original bid. It will become more difficult for Queensland to host the bid. The Queensland Government is committed to pursuing our bid for Expo, but I must acknowledge the difficulties if, first the Philippines, and then the Bureau of International Expositions, is unable to reach a decision in a reasonable time. That is an obstacle. The Government will continue to monitor the situation through its overseas representatives and in consultation with the Commonwealth Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Should the Philippines formally withdraw, I would anticipate some advice from the Bureau of International Expositions early in the new year. Should this occur, members can be assured that the Government will make every effort to secure the event for Queensland.

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