



Speech by

Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

Hansard 25 May 1999

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Queensland Constitution

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central— ALP) (Premier) (9.40 a.m.), by leave: I advise members of an important initiative of my Government in building a better, stronger, more relevant Constitution which reflects the aspirations of all Queenslanders. My Government has established an independent Queensland Constitutional Review Commission to drive Statewide community consultation to create a meaningful Queensland Constitution.

Professor Colin Hughes will head a commission comprising Manfred Cross, Virginia Hall, Jacki Huggins and Sir James Killen. In Opposition, we gave an election commitment to consolidate and review the Queensland Constitution regardless of the outcome of the November Federal referendum, and we are honouring that commitment. At the moment the Queensland Constitution is scattered in about 10 different Acts of Parliament as well as the Queensland Constitution Act 1867.

The language contained in these Acts is archaic and often difficult to understand, which means that the Constitution has little understanding in the wider community and is irrelevant to many people. The Queensland Constitution was last consolidated in 1867 but has been the subject of ongoing public examination since 1993 following the Fitzgerald-inspired review of public institutions.

The Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee has delivered a report on the consolidation of the Queensland Constitution. The Government will carefully consider the report before consolidating the Constitution into a single document so that its contents can be reviewed.

My Government is committed to producing a Constitution which reflects the hopes, needs and pride of Queenslanders as we enter the start of a new millennium. No matter what the outcome of the Federal referendum, I am committed to implementing a reviewed Queensland Constitution by 1 January 2001.

To ensure that the outcome of the Commonwealth's republican referendum is incorporated in the new Queensland Constitution, the committee will be required to furnish its report and draft legislation after the November referendum but before February 2000. Because the present Queensland Constitution contains provisions that are "doubly entrenched", a State referendum will be required before some of the existing provisions can be incorporated in a consolidated and reviewed Queensland Constitution. This State referendum is planned for around September 2000, depending upon the outcome of the November 1999 republican referendum.
