



Speech by

# Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

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Hansard 26 November 1999

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Government Achievements

**Hon. P. D. BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central— ALP) (Premier) (9.33 a.m.), by leave: It is 17 months today since Labor was sworn into office. In those 17 months, positive things have been happening in Queensland which just were not happening under the previous coalition Government. My Government has issued three times more mining grants than the former coalition Government. We have removed the freeze and have progressed Commonwealth rights to negotiate processes where companies have been willing to do so. My Government has issued 102 mining grants and 61 exploration permits since we took office. By contrast, in the last 18 months of the Borbidge administration, only 38 mining grants and 42 exploration permits were granted. And the former coalition Government offered no hope of any workable solution to native title.

Later today I will be addressing the annual luncheon of the Queensland Mining Council. I will be pointing out to the 400-odd miners who will be there that, while there is some frustration with the current processes in relation to native title, my Government has done everything possible to get mining and exploration moving again. Things are starting to move. Santos has just announced a \$200m exploration program. The Marlborough nickel project has gone ahead. Twenty leases have been issued in the Winton area to the small miners, the gem miners. We are working through those native title issues. The Federal Attorney-General has approved our native title regime to go out to public consultation and we hope to have a final approval in February next year. We are the only State which has presented a workable alternative to the Commonwealth regime.

The mining industry is also very conscious of the need to enhance its competitiveness in the face of low commodity prices. Today at the luncheon I will be telling the mining industry that my Government has worked in partnership with the industry to address the costs of mining, and we will continue to address these costs. We are committed to doing that. But the mining industry should also understand what my Government has already done to reduce costs for industry. For example, the Ports Corporation has delivered a \$45m saving to the mining industry through lower port prices. The Gladstone Port Authority has cut its charges by a significant 7%. We have extracted de facto royalties from coal rail freights and then progressively eliminated them. We have introduced a uniform royalty rate which levels the playing field for the coal industry, costing the budget \$60m this year. In just 17 months, my Government has delivered for the mining industry, and we will continue to deliver better policies which enhance the global competitiveness of this vital sector to the Queensland economy.

Another welcome boost to Australia's international competitiveness is the bipartisan approach to business tax reform in Australia. I congratulate the Federal Labor Opposition for supporting a new business tax system introduced by the Federal Government which should create massive new opportunities for investment, particularly in venture capital, biotechnology and information technology. Those tax reforms will be an important shot in the arm for the development of business, growth and jobs in this country. I am delighted to see that level of bipartisanship between a Federal coalition Government and a Federal Labor Opposition. We need more of it.

Also it gives me great pleasure to tell the House of yet another Queensland success story. Under this can-do Government, things just keep getting better. I shared this success story yesterday with the Urban Development Institute of Australia lunch—their last lunch of the century. According to Access Economics in its June Property Investment Monitor, Queensland is now the property development capital of Australia. We lead the rest of the States, with more than 32% of property

projects across the nation. This is the greatest investment in property projects of any State in Australia—\$17 billion, up \$6 billion on last year. That is a rise of almost 35%. Access says that, given Queensland's expanding population and resort-based tourism industry, we dominate the country in the residential estate, retail trade, resort, education, and health and community services property sectors. No wonder that in August Access rated us the best place in Australia in which to invest. It is right. Business investment grew by an estimated 10.75% last financial year, at one stage hitting a high of 22%. Business conditions in Queensland are the healthiest they have been in five years, and are still improving. I applaud the business sector for this success and wish it well in its continuing partnership with my Government.

I want to make it clear that my Government is keen to work in partnership with the private sector to strengthen every area of our economy as much as we can. Brisbane, as the State's capital city, is responsible for much of our economic success. Of course, on a regional basis that extends across the State. It is in this sort of economic climate that the State Government has begun or progressed a number of major projects to transform our city over the next few years so it can be a magnet for development across the whole of the State. What we are doing is exciting stuff. We have more than \$1 billion invested in projects either planned or in progress in Brisbane alone. As we know, our Capital Works Program is \$5.3 billion across the State, and similar projects are being developed Statewide. These will deliver big results for the city as well as the State—at the same time as they support our top Government priority: to create jobs. I will list some of the things that are happening across the State. Let us start with Brisbane—

the light rail project;

the redevelopment of South Bank;

the pedestrian and bicycle bridge;

the \$72m redevelopment of the Roma Street railyards site in conjunction with the Smithsonian Institution;

the City West Precinct also includes redevelopment of the Suncorp Stadium, the former Lang Park, as a major stadium;

the air/train/city link;

Australia TradeCoast;

the Port Road was announced the other day;

Tarong has been announced; and

Millmerran.

We have delivered a new Brisbane Watch-house. Some of these projects are both in and outside of Brisbane. We have delivered on the Townsville Strand and the Townsville CBD redevelopment. We are about to sign the contract for the redevelopment of the Cairns Esplanade. There are prisons in Maryborough and Rockhampton. There is also the Mackay boat harbour project, and the list goes on. The Deputy Premier has been working very hard with the State Government on the Convention Centre for the Gold Coast. These things are happening. This is a can-do Government.

Let us deal with a couple of the projects in a little more detail. The light rail project, which will give us a modern, integrated transport system for the inner city, is estimated to service 45,000 passengers a day by the year 2002 and 50,000 by the year 2011. The redevelopment of South Bank will turn the area into one of the world's great inner city outdoor recreation areas.

**Mr McGrady:** Did you mention the \$1 billion Tarong Power Station?

**Mr BEATTIE:** Yes, I mentioned the Tarong Power Station, and Millmerran. They are important projects. I congratulate the Minister on the foresight that he has shown in that area, and the commitment to gas.

**Mr McGrady:** And Callide C.

**Mr BEATTIE:** And Callide C. What a can-do Government!

Let me get back to the redevelopment of South Bank, which will turn that area into one of the world's great inner city outdoor recreation areas. This includes the revitalisation of Grey Street, the development of a one kilometre harbour and the construction of a pedestrian cycle bridge, which I mentioned before. This Grey Street redevelopment will create a new landscape with better pedestrian access, shade trees, seven metre high pergolas and on-street parking.

**Dr Watson** interjected.

**Mr BEATTIE:** Yes, it will be. The honourable member should have come and listened to it because he would be better educated and better off if he did. He should not try to undermine this great State. The member should not worry about this. He should have come to the lunch. The member should have paid his fee and come to the lunch to learn something.

Another \$100m project due to start at South Bank in March includes a mixed use complex with 180 apartments and a ground floor retail precinct with restaurants and shops and a pedestrian and bicycle bridge, which I mentioned before. It is planned that this will connect to the Maritime Museum at South Bank and the Queensland University of Technology. That project will cost about \$13.5m and give jobs to people across the south-east corner.

The \$72m redevelopment of the Roma Street railway yard site will turn an inner city eyesore into the green lungs of this city with parklands and world-class gardens. This means a rebirth for the heart of Brisbane—a 16 hectare green heartland for people to enjoy with spectacular gardens, water features, boardwalks, pedestrian and cycle paths, a central lookout, an activity precinct, lagoons, fern gullies and palm forests. We are connecting parts of Brisbane that have been separated for 125 years—Petrie Terrace, Spring Hill, Wickham Terrace, Roma Street, the city and the river surrounds, including South Bank. This City West precinct, which is defined by what I have been referring to, also includes the redevelopment of the Suncorp Stadium—the former Lang Park—as a major stadium.

In all these big-ticket items we want the community and the private sector to be involved. At the urban development lunch yesterday, I indicated very clearly that we are looking at private sector involvement in public infrastructure. I encourage them to participate. We want to work with industry to provide a menu of projects which can be developed by the private sector.

**Dr Watson** interjected.

**Mr BEATTIE:** I should say that I was told that it was indeed the biggest lunch that the Urban Development Institute has had this year. It was surpassed in numbers by only one previous event.

**Mr Elder:** The biggest breakfast.

**Mr BEATTIE:** Yes, the biggest breakfast they ever had where the then Minister for information technology addressed them. I am a little concerned about that. But, between us, we had the biggest luncheon audience and the biggest breakfast audience. Why wouldn't they want to come and listen to a can-do Government?

**Mr Foley:** Big Mac—big banger.

**Mr BEATTIE:** That is right. The Big Mac for breakfast. They are hungry for information. As I said, I want more private sector involvement because I want more jobs, as my Government does. That is why the Government is looking to identify specific projects which the private sector could develop either exclusively or in partnership with the State Government. My Government is already putting together a list of projects to offer to the private sector. That list will be offered early in the new year by the Minister for State Development. I am willing to bet that it will be one of the best read documents in Queensland. This is a can-do Government that is taking Queensland into the next millennium.

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