



Speech by

# Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

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Hansard 10 June 1999

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Licensing Agreement, Telecommunications

**Hon. P. D. BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central— ALP) (Premier) (9.45 a.m.), by leave: Today I wish to announce a major breakthrough. Last year I outlined how my Government planned to bring new-age communications to regional Queensland through a fibre-optic cable network. We deliver on our promises. At 11.30 this morning I will be witnessing the signing of a licensing agreement to provide the initial link—a fibre-optic cable from Brisbane all the way to Cairns. The cable will be a major communications highway, helping to bring people and businesses in our vast State closer together.

As a result of this agreement between Queensland Rail and Reef Networks Pty Ltd, regional Queensland will soon have access to a better and more price competitive communications system. The agreement between Reef Networks, a member of the Leightons Group, and QR is an initial licence document which, when finalised, will provide for a right of way for a fibre-optic cable to run within the railway corridor from Brisbane to Cairns. Ultimately, this will result in better and cheaper telecommunications options for the regions in our State. As well as increasing the telecommunications capacity of the State, there will be greater scope for telecommunications providers to deliver lower prices to consumers.

The negotiations for this 30-year agreement included a need to mesh any proposals involving QR with the State Government's initiative to roll out a Statewide fibre-optic communications network. From Queensland Rail's viewpoint, the organisation will receive diversity and improved reliability for its own communications needs. From my Government's viewpoint, the project is a major breakthrough for our State in delivering 21st century technology to regional Queensland.

I pay tribute to two of my Ministers who played a major role in making this agreement possible—the Minister for Communications and Information and the Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads. These are the strategies that my Government will continue to deliver. They add to the strategies that are being pursued by the Minister for and Department of State Development. This is a can-do Government.

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