



Speech by

Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Turkish Earthquake

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central— ALP) (Premier) (9.32 a.m.), by leave: On behalf of all Queenslanders, I want to offer the people of Turkey our profound sympathy for the terrible loss that they suffered after the earthquake which struck on Tuesday, 17 August 1999. In this lucky country of ours, the sheer scale of the tragedy is almost beyond our comprehension. Whole communities between Istanbul and Izmit were destroyed. Thousands of lives were lost and many thousands more were injured and left homeless.

When the first terrible news reached us in Queensland, we were horrified by the appalling loss of life. As the days unfolded and the scale of the tragedy increased, we all felt a deepening sense of sorrow. Our thoughts and prayers go out to all those who are suffering, particularly those who must now try to pick up the pieces and rebuild—not just buildings, towns and cities but lives shattered by the loss of family, friends and livelihoods. We hope that somehow they will be able to find the strength to carry on.

This is a tragedy which touches us personally in Queensland. Across the State, Queenslanders of Turkish origin are dealing with this heartbreak. All of them are saddened by the news. Some are grieving for lost friends and relatives. In Brisbane, the Gold Coast, Bundaberg, Gatton and other towns, Queenslanders of Turkish origin are filled with a sense of loss made more acute by the fact that they are so far away from people who need them now. They are already rallying to help their country of origin in its time of great need.

The Brisbane-based Turkish Welfare Association has established an appeal, the proceeds of which will be forwarded to the Turkish Government-run appeal organised by TRT, which is Turkish Radio and Television. Major aid agencies are also launching appeals.

May I say that in the midst of all of this suffering, we can only be filled with admiration and respect for the resilience and courage of the people of Turkey. We acknowledge also the efforts of the international community who have worked so tirelessly to give assistance and support to those in need.

I am sure that all honourable members of this House will join with me in offering our sincere condolences to the Government and the people of Turkey. I move—

"That the expression of our heartfelt sympathy be noted."
