



Speech by

# Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

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Hansard 26 August 1999

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Charter of Social and Fiscal Responsibility

**Hon. P. D. BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central— ALP) (Premier) (9.36 a.m.), by leave: My Government was elected a little over a year ago—in fact, 14 months ago—on a clear platform of restoring public faith in Government, that is, public faith in honest and transparent Government, public faith in Government that will maintain the State's economic strengths and provide the leadership and services that the community deserves. In the past 14 months, we have made significant steps towards restoring that public faith in Government. Through initiatives such as regional forums and Community Cabinet, we are listening to the people of Queensland. Indeed, there will be a Community Cabinet this weekend.

Today is a landmark not just for the standards of accountability in this Parliament but in all Australian Parliaments. Today I wish to introduce my Government's commitment to the people of Queensland, and that is the Charter of Social and Fiscal Responsibility. The charter is a unique statement of this Government's principles. It states the core policy commitments of Government and demonstrates how we use one of our most powerful tools, that is, fiscal policy, towards the achievement of these goals.

Queensland is in the strongest financial position of any State in Australia. This position is the result of many years of sound economic management, which my Government is continuing. The charter that I am tabling today on behalf of the whole Government will ensure maintenance of that standing. This charter commits this Government to five fiscal principles, those being: firstly, a competitive tax environment; secondly, affordable service provision; thirdly, strict requirements for borrowings—we will borrow only for capital and only where those borrowings can be serviced within operational surplus; fourthly, prudent management of financial risk; and, fifthly, a commitment to at least maintain the State's net worth.

Whilst a charter of fiscal responsibility is not in itself a new concept, this charter is unique because for the first time it places a new emphasis on social objectives. It commits this Government to delivering real social policy outcomes in areas such as health, education, access to justice and employment growth.

The charter makes plain that a strong financial position is not an end in itself but an important element in achieving the broader range of policy objectives necessary to advance the prosperity, welfare and quality of life of all Queenslanders. Our charter enshrines the Government's responsibility for delivery of social outcomes. For the first time, these social objectives are elevated to equal billing at the centre of Government policy making.

My Government is committed to building a better Queensland. We have seven clear priorities that include job creation, building communities, fostering innovation and valuing the environment. This charter underscores our commitment to manage for outcomes. Furthermore, this charter will ensure full accountability, requiring that the Government provides detailed reports on its effectiveness in achieving these outcomes and providing the services that we have committed to deliver. I now table for the information of all members and the people of Queensland our Charter of Social and Fiscal Responsibility.

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