



Speech by

# Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

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Hansard 16 September 1999

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Electricity Generation Projects

**Hon. P. D. BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central— ALP) (Premier) (9.39 a.m.), by leave: There has been some controversy recently over the amount of money spent in Australia by companies engaged in large projects on behalf of the State Government. My office has sought estimates of spending from Bechtel Australia Pty Ltd, which is involved in the Millmerran power project, the \$1.4 billion project. The project will have a total construction cost of approximately \$890m. Some major power station equipment is not available in Australia and has to be sourced from overseas. About \$250m, or 28% of the total, will have to be committed overseas. A further \$390m, or 44% of the total, of equipment and material will be put out to tender in Australia and overseas.

This means that Queensland and Australian suppliers will have the opportunity to compete for these contracts. About \$250m, or 28%, will be reserved for Queensland and Australia for materials, equipment, services and labour. So about 72% of the value of the construction of the Millmerran project represents opportunities for Queensland and Australian industry. That is about \$3 out of every \$4. This is in addition to the significant benefits to industry that will occur from opening up the power generation market to competition.

It is also worth noting that Bechtel's headquarters for Australia, New Zealand and PNG is located in Brisbane and that Bechtel has been permanently established in Australia for 40 years. Over the past five years, Bechtel has procured over \$2 billion of equipment and services in Australia, much of it in Queensland. For export around the world, Bechtel has, over the past five years, procured over \$580m of material, equipment and services from Australia. So while Bechtel is obtaining some supplies from overseas, it is seeking to maximise the amount of local content in its investment.

My Government is concerned about this issue. My Government calls on all investors in Queensland to take advantage of the technical skills and capacity of Queensland industry, which is a world leader. We will be seeking to ensure that investors provide every opportunity for Queensland manufacturers and suppliers to compete for these massive contracts. We will be working closely with Queensland industry and unions to ensure that they have the best chance to participate in the economic development of this State.

While we are talking about major projects, I point out that the Leader of the Opposition yesterday stated that my Government had not delivered one new project for Queensland. The Opposition criticisms of my Government are bordering on the comical. It is like Monty Python. Do honourable members remember the Life of Brian and Eric Idle? We have our own Eric Idle over there. Remember he asked that question: what has the Beattie Government ever done for us? What have the Romans ever done for us? What has the Beattie Government ever done for us? Remember Eric Idle? Let us go through it.

**Ms Bligh** interjected.

**Mr BEATTIE:** That is right. Yes, all of that. We all remember. We have our own Monty Python here.

Let us go through it. There is the \$1.4 billion coalmine and power station at Millmerran that I mentioned. The Darling Downs—National Party heartland—has been asking for a power station for 30 years. They had to wait for a Labor Government to deliver one. Then there is the 1,300 jobs expansion of the meat industry.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr BEATTIE:** I can hear the Romans bellowing over there. We will send a few lions over shortly.

There is the 1,300 job expansion in the meat processing industry with new investments from AMH at Dinmore, Townsville and Australian Country Choice at Cannon Hill. When the conservative Government betrayed the meat industry, my Government saved it. That is what happened.

The Leader of the Opposition would probably ask: apart from the Millmerran power station and the new meat processing facilities, what has the Beattie Government ever delivered for Queensland? There is the \$800m Marlborough nickel project which should reach financial close by the end of the year. We have created more than 1,000 jobs through call centres for IBM, Stellar and Citibank. We have ensured that the Century Zinc mine started on time. We helped Boeing win a \$1.5 billion defence contract. We have kept the PNG pipeline project on track to the point where preliminary contracts have been signed. Apart from that, I suppose we have to do more. That is what we are doing, Mr Speaker. You ain't seen nothing yet!

Access Economics has reported \$33 billion of investment projects on the books for Queensland, a 25% increase since my Government took office. It is just not credible to say that this Government has not delivered. The Opposition—and I have thought about this—is like the pet shop owner trying to bring a dead parrot back to life. He is sitting there on the perch, but he has not moved for the last 14 months. I am sorry to break this one to you, Mr Speaker, but the parrot is gone. He is deceased. He has had it. He is no more. You can bang him on the table all you like, but he will not move, Mr Speaker. You see, Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition is the late parrot.

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