



Speech by

Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

Hansard 10 November 1999

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Smithsonian Institution

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central— ALP) (Premier) (9.34 a.m.), by leave: I am pleased to inform the House that the first stage of my Government's memorandum of understanding with the world-famous Smithsonian Institution in Washington is now being implemented. We are now hosting a visit to Queensland of senior Smithsonian representatives so they can see at first-hand some of our scientific, educational and cultural institutions, especially the centres of excellence which might play a part in future scientific and cultural collaboration. They are also seeing at first-hand the biodiversity that we have in our rainforest and reef, which are, of course, of considerable interest to the Smithsonian.

On Friday evening I was delighted to host a reception for the provost of the institution, Dr J. Dennis O'Connor, and a number of his colleagues. On Saturday morning I was pleased to take Dr O'Connor on a helicopter overview of the proposed Roma Street Parkland in particular and also the port of Brisbane, the South Bank precinct, the University of Queensland and the whole City West precinct. The Roma Street Parkland is where we are planning an icon building which will act as a major attraction for both Queenslanders and tourists and, in particular, be interactive for our young school students and young people generally. The Queensland Government is preparing plans for a reef and rainforest interactive education centre as a central attraction to our Roma Street gardens redevelopment.

The world-renowned institution has asked to be involved in the venture, including the provision of technical advice. We are aiming for a centre which will contain interactive displays to teach visitors about scientific research involving our unique rainforests and the Great Barrier Reef. It will be an exciting, fascinating state-of-the-art interpretive centre which will use cutting-edge interactive technology to present to the public the wonders of our spectacular natural environment. And it will use advanced communication links to interpret the scientific findings from our research.

The itinerary for the Smithsonian representatives included a briefing at the James Cook University in Cairns on research into the reef and rainforest, a see-for-yourself trip on the Skyrail from Cairns to Kuranda, a briefing on Lizard Island by the Director of the Australian Museum Research Unit, Dr Anne Hoggett, and snorkelling on the reef. In Townsville the itinerary included a visit to the Museum of Tropical Queensland, the Reef HQ, the Australian Institute of Marine Sciences and the James Cook University-CRC Reef Research Centre.

The institution is the largest museum and research complex in the world. It has never signed an agreement like this before so this is a tremendous coup for Queensland and an opportunity not only to do the things that I have outlined in this ministerial statement but also to promote tourism to the American market and the world market in an unprecedented way.
