



Speech by

# Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

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Hansard 23 November 1999

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Wallabies; Rugby World Cup and Bledisloe Cup

**Hon. P. D. BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central— ALP) (Premier) (9.37 a.m.), by leave: Australia has a proud history of producing world champions. Indeed, the current honour roll of world champions features many Australians and many Australian teams: the women's netball team—in which the honourable member for Chatsworth has a keen interest; he has been involved in netball for some time—our cricket team and, more recently, the wonderful Wallabies, the all-conquering Rugby Union team. On behalf of the Government I recently had the pleasure of welcoming the world champion Wallabies to Brisbane for the ticker tape parade following their magnificent victory in the World Cup final against France to win the William Webb Ellis Trophy.

I am proud to say that although each and every Wallaby covered himself in football glory, the leading lights were Queenslanders. Tim Horan—the son of the honourable member for Toowoomba South—was named as the player of the series and the Wallabies' choice as the players' player. The honourable member for Toowoomba South can quite rightly be proud of his son. Well done! The other standout performer was, of course, Captain John Eales, who at the start of the football season suffered a serious injury to his shoulder and looked long odds to contest a club match line-out this year let alone a World Cup final. He did all of that because of his courage.

Tim and John share a rare distinction with two other Queensland Reds, Jason Little and Dan Crowley—all four were members of the 1991 Wallabies squad which also won the World Cup. I congratulate them on behalf of all members of the Parliament. Winning one World Cup must have been an unforgettable experience, but winning two or more is something that only the best of the best will ever experience.

The next Rugby World Cup will be held in Australia in the year 2003, with some matches being held in Brisbane. There are a number of former footballers in this Chamber who have played this both league and union. I am sure they share my enthusiasm and the Government's enthusiasm, as well the enthusiasm of the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing, to see one of the semi-finals, or indeed a quarter final, played right here in Brisbane at Lang Park. I know members like the member for Toowoomba South, the member for Southport, the member for Bundamba and even the member for Capalaba, who ran around on a field for a while, are looking forward to the opportunity of seeing the world's best Rugby players in Brisbane. In fact, I think we should make it a more regular experience. That is why I am pushing for a change of venue for the Bledisloe Cup matches. I told the ticker tape parade—and I repeat it here—that it is about time we had a Bledisloe Cup match in Brisbane.

Like many Rugby fans, I was aghast when the Australian Rugby Union decided to hold Bledisloe Cup matches between Australia and New Zealand in Melbourne. Holding a Rugby match in Melbourne makes as much sense to me as holding the world water skiing championships in the Arctic Ocean. I recognise that the dollars must have been tempting. There is a certain amount of irony in the amateur code taking the money and running, but things have changed in recent weeks.

I read with interest recently in the Australian newspaper that future Bledisloe Cup matches in Melbourne will be held at the new Docklands Stadium. The report said that, in its Rugby configuration, the Docklands complex would offer seating for 60,000 spectators. That is a fair bit lower than the 100,000 crowds at the MCG, but it is exactly the same as the number of spectators that the revamped Lang Park will hold.

I believe that the Bledisloe Cup matches should be held in Brisbane. After all, we have the Wallabies' skipper, we have the World Cup player of the series and—this is the bottom line—we know the difference between a ruck and a maul. I therefore call on the ARU to give this matter serious thought and give the game back to the people who support the code at the local football park. It is about time the Bledisloe Cup came home to Brisbane.

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