



Speech by

Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

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EAST TIMOR; MAJOR GENERAL COSGROVE

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central— ALP) (Premier): I have great pleasure in rising to address the House on this historic occasion. Today we welcome a non-member to the Chamber, Major General Peter Cosgrove, and I will soon invite him to address the House. I believe that this invitation, made in a bipartisan way, is unprecedented and it shows the high regard in which Major General Cosgrove is held. That regard extends beyond this place. Queenslanders and Australians generally regard the Major General with great admiration and respect, and well they might.

As commander of the Interfet mission in East Timor, Major General Cosgrove brought a great deal of credit to Australia. He engineered peace with straight talking, with dignity, with wisdom and with commonsense. He inspired his troops. He inspired the East Timorese and he inspired those of us who watched from afar. Media images of murder and violence made all too apparent the imminent dangers of that journey, and the nation watched and waited to see the outcomes of the Interfet mission.

The presence of Major General Peter Cosgrove in our State Parliament today pays fitting tribute to the bravery, professionalism and compassion with which the force fulfilled its duties in East Timor. Major General Peter Cosgrove demonstrates that the Anzac spirit is alive and well. Major General Peter Cosgrove personifies the Anzac tradition.

Many of the men and women in Major General Cosgrove's command were Queenslanders or from Queensland based units. We thank him sincerely for bringing those people home safely. We thank him also for being a champion of the rights of the East Timorese and helping to diffuse a situation that threatened to destroy the cultural and political life of their country.

Major General Cosgrove was born in Sydney in 1947 and served in South Vietnam where he commanded a rifle platoon and was awarded the Military Cross. He served some time in Brisbane as Commander of the 6th Brigade from 1992 to 1994 and was appointed on 7 March 1998 as Commander of the 1st Division Deployable Joint Force Headquarters based at Enoggera.

Major General Cosgrove was appointed Commander of the International Force East Timor, Interfet, on 18 September 1999. He handed over command of the remaining Interfet forces just last month and returned home to a well-deserved hero's welcome. I congratulate Major General Cosgrove on his achievements in East Timor. It will be a privilege to hear his address. I say on behalf of all members of this Parliament and all Queenslanders: welcome home.
