



Speech by

# Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

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Hansard 11 April 2000

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Indonesian Trade Mission

**Hon. P. D. BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central— ALP) (Premier) (9.46 a.m.), by leave: I am pleased to report to the Parliament on another successful trade mission, this time to Indonesia. During the visit I enjoyed productive meetings with the Indonesian President, Abdurrahman Wahid, and Vice-President, Megawati Soekarnoputri, as well as the Indonesian Minister for Mines and Energy. My talks with the President and Vice-President concentrated on the opportunities for increased trade and business investment and cooperation between Queensland and Indonesia. President Wahid told me that he seeks business and investment from Queensland and Australia. His message to me was that it was time to put the past behind us. It is now time to return to a friendly positive relationship based on the mutual benefit of trade and friendship. This State is strategically well positioned to work with Indonesia in its recovery from the Asian economic crisis. I have invited President Wahid to visit Queensland during his proposed trip to Australia.

With a population of about 210 million, the fourth largest in the world, Indonesia is our tenth largest trading partner and a neighbour we cannot afford to ignore. Even during the economic crisis in 1998-99, Indonesia imported goods and services worth \$462m from Queensland. The International Monetary Fund is forecasting growth of 3% to 4% in 2000 and the Indonesian Government is aiming for growth of 5% to 6% in the medium term. Queensland should seek a return to pre-crisis exports to Indonesia of \$583m and then build on that figure.

I told the President that we have much to offer his country in terms of professional expertise and education and training services, as well as our more traditional exports such as cotton, live cattle and minerals and in operations of companies such as Thiess Contractors and Mincom, both of whom are very active in Indonesia. With two trade and investment offices in Jakarta and Semarang, we are clearly committed to increased trade. We have in place a proactive trade team with the State Government's special representative for South-East Asia, Sallyanne Atkinson, and a new Trade Commissioner for Indonesia, Wilfred Schulz, and Deputy Trade Commissioner, Robert Wardrobe, all of whom accompanied me on the visit to Indonesia.

Mrs Atkinson gained international recognition for her work as Senior Trade Commissioner for Austrade based in Paris. I am delighted that she is now working for the Queensland Government as a special representative for South-East Asia. Mrs Atkinson will oversee the building of new relationships and opportunities with Indonesia. As a former Lord Mayor, she has the negotiating expertise that comes from high level political experience. Mr Schulz will be permanently based in Jakarta and use his success in private sector business in Indonesia to drive new business links between Indonesia and Queensland. Mr Wardrobe will utilise his sound knowledge of the Indonesian business environment to develop our trade with Central Java. He will be located in Semarang. He speaks Bahasa. In fact, both our representatives speak Bahasa.

During my visit we renewed our long-term sister-State relationship with Central Java and signed a memorandum of understanding on health with the Government of Central Java. The President has accepted my offer to send public servants with special expertise to investigate areas of cooperation including biotechnology, environmental management, reef preservation, education and other areas.

I have also announced that my Government has appointed an expert in international aid contracts. What we are talking about here is not just aid and compassion; it is potential business for Queensland companies. The Deputy Premier and I have worked on this appointment, along with the department, of course. Once aid is granted, someone has to win the contracts to provide the schools and clinics that the money is earmarked for. In the past, Queensland companies have failed to gain their fair share of aid contracts. We do not even get our fair share of AusAID contracts. Our expert is a former high ranking Army officer who knows his way through the maze of protocols and tendering systems that lead to billions of dollars worth of aid contracts. Many contracts are available in Indonesia, and in East Timor alone there are contracts worth about \$700m. I urge Queensland companies to capitalise on the opportunities presented by the Government's negotiations in Indonesia.

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