



Speech by

Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

East Trinity; Million Paws Walkathon

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central— ALP) (Premier) (9.36 a.m.), by leave: My Government's recent purchase of the East Trinity site adjacent to Cairns has been applauded by a wide range of community and business groups. This is an enormous shot in the arm for the Cairns tourism industry. It guarantees Cairns and far-north Queensland as a first-class national and international tourism destination indefinitely into the future.

This purchase brings to an end the long-running land use debate in far-north Queensland that has repeatedly divided the Cairns community. My Government takes great pride in successfully negotiating this outcome in the best interests of this State, its natural environment and the lucrative tourism industry on which Cairns' long-term future depends.

This 1,000 hectare site has a colourful past. Once owned by the Emmanuel Group, it has at various times been seen as possible cane fields, a major resort proposal called Royal Reef and a mini city named East Trinity. Over the years, significant parts of it have been clear-felled, filled and reclaimed. It was this past development that first disturbed acid sulfate soils which are characteristic of East Trinity. In fact, scientific reports have indicated that past development has created potentially serious acid sulfate problems on part of the site.

East Trinity was one of far north Queensland's major environmental issues in the 1980s and the 1990s. Many members of this House will remember the prominent role that East Trinity played in the 1995 State election when there was a proposal to build a bridge across Trinity Inlet to service the proposed development. The present Leader of the Opposition was most vocal on the issue, ruling out such a bridge across the inlet very early in that campaign. The Goss Labor Government went further by ruling out State support for infrastructure funding on the site. The issue again came to prominence during the Mulgrave by-election in 1998—which, I might point out, Labor won, as Warren Pitt is only too delighted to acknowledge today. Things have improved since he has been here.

Aside from environmental considerations, the basis of the prosperity of Cairns lies in tourism and the thousands of jobs that flow from tourism. It is essential that the green tropical background that has made Cairns so attractive and different should remain. What we have done is save the picture postcard scenery that brings tourists to Cairns from all over the world. While there is a place for sensible development in and around Cairns, this land purchase will ensure the magnificent green backdrop that is East Trinity strikes an appropriate balance. We have something very similar with Noosa, where significant State and council acquisitions on the north shore of the Noosa River have combined with the famous Noosa National Park to produce booming property prices and tourists flocking to the area.

I have nothing but praise for the previous owner of the land, NatWest Markets Australia Limited, for its positive response when approached by the Department of State Development regarding this purchase. For those members not familiar with the issue, NatWest is the mortgagee in possession of the land. It has proven to be a very good corporate citizen in the negotiations over this very sensitive site. The purchase of East Trinity seals the future prosperity of Cairns by ensuring that this unique setting is preserved forever.

While on the subject of the environment, it would be remiss of me not to inform the House of another failure by the Federal Environment Minister to protect the environment. That is in stark contrast to what we are doing. A feature of last week's Federal Budget was the 50% slashing of funding for the

national pollutant inventory. This inventory lists those pollutants likely to cause the greatest damage to the Australian environment. Senator Robert Hill has halved the funding for it. As late as last week, Senator Hill was telling the States that they should insist on a more stringent imposition on industry to measure these pollutants. This exposes the hypocrisy of his moves to gut the State's capacity to implement what he was demanding. This man's handling of environment issues continues to amaze me.

Just on a lighter note, on Sunday morning the RSPCA is organising its Million Paws walkathon in which participants raise money for the RSPCA in events held all over Queensland. I just want to indicate to the House that everyone is invited to bring their pet. My mate Rusty will be there. He was a dog rescued by the RSPCA. I urge all dog owners to take part in the Million Paws walkathon. As I said, I will be there. It is at 10 a.m. at the South Bank Parklands flag court.
