



Speech by

Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

Hansard 30 May 2000

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Energy Policy; Cape York Partnership Plan

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central— ALP) (Premier) (9.34 a.m.), by leave: In the last two weeks the Queensland Government has announced two key policy initiatives. The first related to energy and the second to a partnership with indigenous communities on Cape York.

Last week I launched the Queensland Government's energy policy—a cleaner, smarter energy strategy—which aims to satisfy the complex and often competing demands of growth, efficiency and sustainability. Our growing industrial base demands a growing supply of electricity and gas in all parts of the State. Currently, coal generates nearly all of Queensland's power supply, and coal will continue to play a prominent role in our energy supply. However, we must strengthen our position by offering a greater diversity in cleaner energy sources. That is because large energy consumers are seeking a competitive supply of energy that also minimises greenhouse emissions and also because a total reliance on coal could result in economic penalties under future national or international greenhouse policies. We have to prepare for the future.

Our policy aims to ensure that customers throughout Queensland have access to adequate, reliable and competitively priced energy. We are also committed to ensuring that there is appropriate management of the greenhouse impacts of energy generation. Our smart energy strategy objectives are these—

- diversify the State's energy mix towards the greater use of gas and renewables;
- facilitate the supply of abundant and competitively priced gas in Queensland;
- facilitate the development of gas-fired power stations, particularly a base load power capacity in Townsville to ensure cheaper electricity for north Queenslanders; and
- reduce the growth in greenhouse gases.

There are several key elements to our Cleaner Energy Strategy. A licence scheme will require electricity retailers that operate in Queensland to source 15% of their electricity sold in Queensland from gas fired or renewable generation from 1 January 2005. My Government will continue to work with the developers of the PNG gas pipeline, AGL Petronas, to advance the construction of the Townsville-Gladstone section of the PNG gas pipeline.

The construction of the PNG gas pipeline, if it goes ahead, would be the largest project in Australia's history after the Snowy Mountains scheme. The Wallumbilla to Gladstone pipeline, started by Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen and signed off by the National Party Premier Mike Ahern in 1988, cost taxpayers \$110m. It was sold by Treasurer Sheldon for \$162m in 1997—a \$52m difference.

Subject to the successful facilitation of gas into Townsville, the Government will build a gas-fired base load power station in Townsville or will negotiate the conversion of one or more of the existing peaking power stations in Townsville to gas and base load operation. No further generating licences for new coal-fired power stations will be issued by the State unless there is a clear and demonstrated need.

During the next five years, the Government will spend more than \$50m on programs targeted at supporting renewable and innovative energy technologies and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. These programs will include—

- \$1.5m in funding to assist the coal industry to capture and use waste mine gas;

an increase in solar hot water rebates from \$250 to a maximum of \$750 with the scheme extended until 2005;

an increase in green energy purchases for Government buildings and activities to 5% of its total electricity consumption, which will make the Queensland Government the largest purchaser of green energy in Australia;

an extension and increase in funding for the Queensland Sustainable Energy Innovation Fund until 2005;

a new demand side management program, including voluntary efficiency targets for electricity retailers to encourage them to work with householders and small to medium businesses to help them use energy more efficiently;

new programs to encourage greater energy efficiency in the built environment; and

new industry initiatives aimed at assisting business to improve energy efficiency.

Our Cleaner Energy Strategy is estimated to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by more than 30 million tonnes over 10 years. This is equivalent to removing the greenhouse gas emission of around one million cars. If legally binding greenhouse gas emission targets are established, this initiative could save the Queensland economy around \$80m a year.

I encourage all sections of the community to work with my Government to deliver this smart, cleaner energy policy and the promise of sustainable development which is now within grasp. This is a long-term vision for Queensland's future. I table a copy of the policy and associated material for the information of the House and indicate that copies of this policy will be distributed to all honourable members.

The second policy is the Government's Cape York Partnerships offer—a new partnership with indigenous people on Cape York. On Saturday I was proud to take my place alongside other political leaders, including two Ministers, at Corroboree 2000 at the Sydney Opera House. Corroboree 2000 was a major step forward on the road to reconciliation. The event gave us the opportunity to send the strongest message to all Australians and the rest of the world that we are determined to achieve reconciliation between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians.

My Government has taken a lead in seeking reconciliation. On 26 May last year this Parliament extended an unreserved apology to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families who were forcibly separated under the policies of past Governments. We have also committed \$25m to indigenous people who were not paid award wages by Governments between 1975 and 1986 and we have set up a 10-year plan to improve service delivery to indigenous communities.

This Sunday morning, 4 June, along with other Ministers and honourable members, I will be participating in the Reconciliation Walk across William Jolly Bridge. I urge all honourable members and Queenslanders to join us in reconciliation and to learn from our past so that we can build a better future.

Just over a week ago, on behalf of my Government I released the Cape York Partnerships offer in Cairns. This is a formal offer from the Queensland Government to work in partnerships with indigenous people to improve the quality of life on Cape York communities. A vital component of the partnerships will be economic development to provide jobs and break the cycle of welfare dependency by indigenous communities. The Queensland Government will kick-start this process by hosting an economic summit in Cairns before the end of August. I am calling on the Prime Minister and Australian business leaders to give their backing to an economic summit to be held, as I said, before the end of August.

The summit's aim is to promote economic development in indigenous communities at Cape York. The goal is to drive economic development in communities where local businesses, such as bakers and hairdressers, are completely missing. We want to attract new investment into these and larger industries, such as resource exploration, mining and tourism. We also want to identify opportunities for indigenous involvement in commercial development of marine resources and examine the potential for commercialising the existing intellectual, cultural and natural capital of Cape York.

I am asking for the support of leaders in business, politics, the indigenous community and the general community for this innovative Cape York Partnerships offer. The partnerships will involve—

economic development to break the cycle of welfare dependency and provide jobs;

social development to set new principles where communities have greater power to set priorities and have greater ownership of programs delivered by State Government departments, such as Education, Health and Families, Youth and Community Care;

community development to build on the capacity of communities to take real ownership of their problems and decide how to solve them;

governance, where proposals include the creation of negotiating tables involving representatives from communities and the Government.

The document is available on the Internet through www.premiers.qld.gov.au.

The Cape York Partnerships offer is an initiative that demonstrates my Government's commitment to reconciliation. This program offers opportunity and hope for indigenous communities. That is real reconciliation. I table a copy of the partnerships policy document for the information of the House and note that copies of it are also being distributed to honourable members.
