



Speech by

Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

Hansard 21 June 2000

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

State Government Achievements

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central— ALP) (Premier) (9.37 a.m.), by leave: As all honourable members in this House know, particularly those in the Opposition, this is a can-do Government. Indeed, the Government celebrates its first two years in office next Monday with a Community Cabinet meeting in Cairns. The meeting is on Sunday and Monday, 25 and 26 June.

The Government has achieved what the Opposition failed to do during its period in Government. We are emptying the too-hard basket that the Borbidge/Sheldon administration left Queenslanders as their legacy of two years and four months of inactivity, characterised by more than 250 inquiries and reviews. We are rebuilding confidence in Queensland as a place in which to invest, to holiday and, indeed, to live.

Mr Borbidge interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: I am delighted to see that the candidate for Moncrieff is still with us. Every morning when I come in here, I have to check whether the Leader of the Opposition is still the Leader of the Opposition and whether the Leader of the Liberal Party is still the Leader of the Liberal Party.

An honourable member: He's still here.

Mr BEATTIE: But not for much longer.

We are rebuilding confidence in Queensland as a place in which to invest, to holiday and, indeed, to live. There have been many highlights of the past two years, and I table a summary for the benefit of honourable members. I point out that this document comes to Queenslanders free of charge, while the Borbidge/Sheldon administration spent \$400,000 of taxpayers' funds to publish a glossy brochure that told those same taxpayers that the coalition had achieved nothing.

My Government continues to deliver, especially in important social justice areas such as reconciliation. Queensland is now a tolerant, multicultural community. This was reflected, as honourable members will recall, earlier this month—on Sunday, 4 June, in fact—when there was a massive demonstration of public support for reconciliation at the People's Walk across the William Jolly Bridge. I thank those honourable members who participated in that reconciliation process. They joined at least 50,000 other Queenslanders—and we think the figure may have been as high as 70,000—who participated in that walk for reconciliation.

Honourable members will also recall that I urged the Leaders of the National and Liberal Parties to join me at the head of the march. I am sorry to inform the House that neither did. I am wondering whether or not the two honourable gentlemen will find the time to attend this year's Honda Indy 300 on the Gold Coast. As honourable members know, I am a charitable person. I am prepared to extend a warm welcome to both gentlemen at this year's event. I would love to see them there.

A little later today, the Minister for Sport, Terry Mackenroth, along with the Tourism Minister, Merri Rose, and I will be officially announcing that Honda Australia is continuing as the major sponsor of this great event until 2002, with an option for a third year. This is a significant announcement because Honda Australia has been the naming sponsor of the event since 1998 and the extended agreement will bring Honda's support for the event into its fifth year. We are fortunate to have such a successful, proven, and credible "name" linked with our event. It is an association to which motorsports fans and potential car buyers can easily relate.

This has been a great partnership between one of the world's leading motor vehicle companies—Honda—and the State Government and I record Queensland's appreciation of Honda Australia's great support both on and off the Surfers Paradise street track.

The Honda Indy 300 is more than a motorsports event—it is a jobs generator for all Queenslanders. As all Queenslanders know, my Government's top priority is jobs, jobs, jobs. That is one of the reasons why I table a petition received in my office from members of the Communications, Electrical and Plumbing Union in relation to Telstra. It is a non-conforming petition but, in the interests of the views being expressed and in the interests of fairness, I table the petition. My Government will continue to lobby the Commonwealth Government and Telstra with regard to the proposed job losses and service levels in rural and remote Queensland.

The justification for job shedding appears to rest primarily on the objective of raising Telstra's statistic of revenue per employee against a benchmark of telecommunications carriers overseas, given that changing this statistic through improvements in revenue is unlikely as other carriers and service producers are making inroads into Telstra's markets.

It is estimated that reducing Telstra's work force by 10,000 employees—which is a cut of about one-sixth—could move Telstra into the top 10 carriers in terms of revenue realised per employee. This assumes, however, that there would be no adverse impact on revenue, which is highly unlikely given the predicted loss of service. In a decentralised State such as Queensland, I—and I hope all members of Parliament—am concerned about Telstra's job shedding and what it means for services in the bush.

Finally, I also table the report of the Strategic Management Review of the Offices of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administrative Investigations, better known as the Ombudsman, and the Information Commissioner. This review follows a recommendation from the Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee and a subsequent resolution passed by this House on 15 September 1999 calling on me to conduct a strategic management review of the Ombudsman's office pursuant to section 32 of the Parliamentary Commissioner Act 1974. A process of strategically reviewing the office of the Ombudsman is now complete.

The resulting report, which is presented in two volumes, is a thorough examination of the issues confronting both offices. I look forward to any follow-up comments to this review that the parliamentary committee may wish to make, whether through its current review of the Freedom of Information Act 1992 or otherwise. I commend the report of the Strategic Management Review of the Offices of the Ombudsman and the Information Commissioner to the House.
