



Speech by

# Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

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Hansard 17 October 2001

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Terrorist Attacks

**Hon. P. D. BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.43 a.m.), by leave: It is right for the Queensland government to give \$5,000 to the Islamic school at the Kuraby Mosque to replace schoolbooks and desks that were destroyed by fire on Saturday, 22 September. I visited the site of the fire on that Saturday morning to reassure the Muslim community of the rule of law, our government's commitment to the rule of law and our strong belief in multiculturalism. The \$5,000 gift was organised and approved by cabinet the following Monday and presented later in the week by cabinet minister Stephen Robertson. This was done by the state government to show the Muslim community that Queensland is a welcoming, friendly, multicultural society and one that actively supports freedom of religious belief. We must all be free to practise our religious beliefs.

That \$5,000 also sits well with the estimated 7,000 people who joined us in multicultural support for the multi-faith gathering in the Roma Street Parkland on 20 September. The gathering was to honour and pay our respects to those Queenslanders and Australians who died in the 11 September terrorist attacks in the United States. It was led by the Catholic Archbishop of Brisbane, John Bathersby, and included multi-faith representatives. As I have previously said in this place, there is no place for terrorism in the world. The 11 September tragedy was an attack on democracy and has changed the world forever. By their signing of our condolence books and attending multi-faith gatherings, Queenslanders have shown their desire to be part of a united world against terrorism. These acts of goodwill offer us a clear solidarity with the American people and are part of the world coming together to reject terrorism attacks and those who perpetrate them.

Integral with that spirit of goodwill, and in a show of our own solidarity, there is an urgent demand that we as a state show that there is no place in Australian society for minorities to be targeted for any reason. The Australian spirit of a fair go and tolerance is a key part of the Australian character—that is, not making judgments on people regardless of their religion, their sex or the like. The loss of schoolbooks and desks will be especially upsetting for the children, and it is important that they be shown that people are thinking of them and that they, too, belong in a united and caring society. To all those who turned up to multi-faith gatherings across the state and all those who have signed the condolence books, I simply say thank you.

Virginia Murray from the Consulate General of the United States, who was present for the Roma Street Parkland multi-faith gathering, has written to me thanking all those attending the gathering, especially for the unity of spirit shown by the speakers present and the messages of peace they shared. The Governor of South Carolina, our sister state, Mr Jim Hodges, has also written extending his thanks to us for our support to the American people. As well, I have correspondence from the Embassy of the United States, and I table those letters. I call on all members to have their condolence sheets and books closed off by the end of the month and returned for binding and presentation to the United States Ambassador, His Excellency Mr J. Thomas Schieffer, on his first official visit to Queensland next month when I will present those condolence books to him.