



Speech by

# Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

Hansard 18 October 2001

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Premier's Literary Awards

**Hon. P. D. BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.38 a.m.), by leave: Last night I had the privilege of presenting Australia's richest literary awards to some of the country's most talented writers. The occasion was the 2001 Queensland Premier's Literary Awards at Brisbane's Hilton Hotel. I presented a selection of Australia's finest professional and aspiring authors with awards worth almost \$150,000 at the Brisbane Writers Festival Gala Dinner. The decision-making process was a difficult one for the judging committee, with the awards attracting almost 500 high-quality entries from across the country, 191 of those from Queensland writers.

I started these awards to promote the Australian literary industry and offer support for Queensland's unpublished authors as part of my government's policy of recognising, supporting and enhancing the arts throughout the state and making Queensland the Smart State. I am proud to announce that the 2001 awards achieved that goal, with an extremely high calibre of Australian authors gaining recognition and receiving financial assistance to help in the production of their writing. Arts Minister Matt Foley demonstrated another facet of our support for writers by presenting the \$15,000 Judith Wright Colanthe Award for Poetry to Brook Emery and the \$15,000 Steele Rudd Award for Short Story Writing to Judith Clarke.

The standard of entries in the Premier's Awards is clearly evident in the prize for the best fiction book, which was accepted from London by highly acclaimed author and winner of many international awards, including the Booker Prize—which he has just won—Peter Carey for *True History of the Kelly Gang*. I congratulate Peter for pulling off one of the most sought-after quinellas in the world of literature: the Queensland Premier's Award followed by the Booker Prize, which he was awarded this morning, Queensland time.

This year's best emerging Queensland author winner, Deborah Carlyon, has not only won \$20,000 but also the opportunity to have her book, *Mama Kuma: One Woman, Two Cultures*, published by the University of Queensland Press within a year. I extend my congratulations to the winners of the 2001 Queensland Premier's Literary Awards and to all those who entered the awards for their tremendous talents. The winners were:

Best fiction book—\$25,000, Peter Carey for *True History of the Kelly Gang* (University of Queensland Press);

Best emerging Queensland author—\$20,000, Deborah Carlyon for *Mama Kuma: One Woman, Two Cultures*;

Best non-fiction book—\$15,000, Brian Matthews for *A Fine and Private Place* (Pan MacMillan);

Best literary or media work advancing public debate—\$25,000, Michael Gordon for *Reconciliation: A Journey* (UNSW Press);

Peter Mares for *Borderline: Australia's Treatment of Refugees and Asylum Seekers* (UNSW Press);

David Fagan & Dossier Team for *Dossier Inside the ABC*—they are from the *Australian*;

Best children's book—\$15,000, Margaret Wild and Ron Brooks for *Fox* (Allen & Unwin);

Best history book—\$15,000, Tim Bonyhady for *The Colonial Earth* (Melbourne University Press);

Best drama (stage)—\$15,000, Duong Le Quy for *Meat Party* (Playbox); and  
Best film or television script—\$15,000, Christine Olsen for *Rabbit-proof Fence*.

Mr Speaker, as you would have noticed, there were advertisements today in the *Australian* newspaper and a story in the *Australian* as well as in the *Courier-Mail* today to highlight those awards. I table a copy of the *Australian* advertisement for the information of the House. It would be great to see the *Courier-Mail* cover these awards. They are part of the Smart State education philosophy of my government, supported strongly—at least the education component—by Rupert Murdoch's recent speech on education.

In conclusion on this matter, I want to do two things. I want to pay tribute to Dr Glyn Davis, who is the head of the Premier's Department and who will soon be leaving to become the vice-chancellor of Griffith University. Glyn and I worked together to create these awards when we came to office and took a considerable time planning them. As members can see, there is a suite of awards, not just one book. It was about developing an opportunity for emerging Queensland writers. It was about ensuring that there is Australian writing, not just American slang. And it was also part of the Smart State.

Glyn was instrumental in helping me develop this whole package of incentives to encourage Queensland writers. And on the eve of his departure, which will be next month, I want to thank him for his contribution in helping to develop this whole suite of awards for the Premier's Literary Awards.

But there is more happening in the arts. At lunchtime today Matt Foley, the Minister for the Arts, and I will be opening the Judith Wright Centre of Contemporary Art, which will be a nice incentive for and a considerable boost to the arts in this state.

---