



Speech by

Hon. S. ROBERTSON

MEMBER FOR STRETTON

Hansard 31 May 2001

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Beattie Labor Government; Natural Resources Management

Hon. S. ROBERTSON (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Minister for Mines) (9.56 a.m.), by leave: The proper management of our natural resources is one of the biggest issues facing Queensland today. To ensure the future social, economic and ecological health of our state, we need to strike a balance now between environmental sustainability and the economic viability of communities throughout Queensland. The Beattie Labor government recognises the importance of this task, and during its first 100 days of this term has demonstrated its commitment to this goal.

We are working in partnership with land-holders, conservationists and community groups throughout Queensland to achieve effective natural resource management outcomes. For example, the government is currently finalising water resource strategies for the entire state. We now have tough vegetation management controls in place and have established a number of initiatives to stop salinity becoming a major problem in Queensland. We have also introduced water laws aimed at improving the security of supply for users, ensuring that future water developments are sustainable, and protecting the health of our rivers and catchments.

In March, I had the pleasure of launching a number of workshops to kick off the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality in Queensland. Queensland has committed \$81 million over seven years to this initiative, with matching funding coming from the Commonwealth government. The national action plan aims to enhance water quality in priority catchments and waterways and to identify and repair areas of existing land and water degradation caused by salinity.

Another achievement has been the resounding success of the Beattie government's rural water use efficiency financial incentives scheme, with well over 900 primary producers participating in the \$11 million scheme. Water is a precious resource that affects everything we do as Queenslanders, whether it be in the home, on the land in primary production, or turning the wheels of industry. Because water is such a finite resource, particularly in rural areas, it is essential that primary producers are encouraged to use water in the most cost effective and efficient way possible.

The Rural Water Use Efficiency Initiative is about helping farmers access the best technology available to get the most out of every drop of water available. The Beattie government is also helping farmers to make the most out of our increasing efforts to protect and preserve the environment. Earlier this year, cabinet gave authority for the preparation of the Forestry Act amendment bill. This legislation will make it possible for Queensland landowners to use the carbon-absorbing properties of trees and other vegetation on their land to profit from an anticipated worldwide carbon credit trading scheme.

These are just a few of the major initiatives undertaken so far by the Beattie government to ensure the proper management of Queensland's natural resources now and into the future.
