



Speech by

Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

Hansard 11 March 2003

APPOINTMENT OF GOVERNOR OF QUEENSLAND

Ms Quentin Bryce AO

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (2.30 p.m.): I move—

That this House welcomes the appointment of Quentin Alice Louise Bryce AO, BA, LLB Qld, LL.Dhc Macq, Hon DLitt CSturt, a distinguished Queenslander and advocate for human rights, as the 24th Governor of Queensland, the personal representative of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in the state and is pleased to give parliamentary recognition to the appointment.

It is vitally important in the appointment of state governors that the choice of the incumbent government is seen to rely on merit with no heed to party politics and that appointees receive bipartisan support. The traditional process in Queensland involves the Premier's Department and the Premier conducting an evaluation of prominent Queenslanders which results in the Premier making a recommendation to the monarch—in this case, Queen Elizabeth II. The decision of the monarch is then communicated to the Premier, who then announces the identity of the Governor designate to the public. This was the process followed by then Premier Rob Borbidge in 1997 when he announced that the Queen had approved the appointment of Major General Peter Arnison to the position. I was Opposition Leader at the time. As the Opposition Leader I was not consulted, but I fully supported the appointment. Indeed, so well did Major General Peter Arnison and his wife, Barbara, perform their duties that in 2001 I asked him to continue as Governor until July this year. I put on the public record my appreciation and thanks to the current Governor, Major General Peter Arnison, for the way he has conducted himself and opened up Government House to the people of this state.

I also believe it is appropriate that with the first appointment of a Queensland Governor in the 21st century we acknowledge the right of electors to play an ever greater role in our democracy and our democratic institutions. Our institutions have to be alive. They need vibrancy. That vibrancy means change from time to time. What I am proposing in this motion today is a tentative step to involve the people in the selection of the Governor, and I think in any true democracy that is a very important even though tentative step. The first stage in this process is to place this appointment before the people's forum—that is, the parliament—so that elected members have the opportunity of giving the decision parliamentary recognition.

This is a historic debate. Today through the debate on this motion the Queensland parliament makes history. We will be the first parliament in Australia to allow the nomination of the Governor designate to be put before the parliament. It is the first time that any Australian parliament—and I want to underline this—has been given a role in the appointment of a governor. I have asked that parliament's support for this appointment should be clearly demonstrated by two-thirds of members voting in favour of the motion. I would hope that this in fact would be a unanimous motion of the parliament, but I certainly seek two-thirds of members voting in favour of my motion. In doing that, I ask that members consider the very evident merits of the distinguished Queenslander approved by Her Majesty and bear in mind the tradition of bipartisan support with the aim of achieving a unanimous decision. The appointment will then have the formal support of both the monarch and the parliament. I should say that yesterday I met with the Leader of the Opposition, the Leader of the Liberal Party and the Leader of One Nation and they all indicated to me the respect they had for this being a government decision and of course the tradition of not in any way criticising the Governor, and I thank them for that indication.

Let me deal with the appointment. I believe that members will find it very easy to give their full support to the choice of distinguished Queensland lawyer and advocate for human rights Quentin Bryce, whose appointment as Governor of Queensland from July this year has been approved by Her Majesty the Queen. To assist the House, I want to table and incorporate a number of documents in *Hansard* because of the importance of this occasion. I will seek leave to incorporate a letter dated 3 February 2003 from the Premier to the private secretary to Her Majesty the Queen seeking Her Majesty's informal approval for the appointment of Ms Quentin Bryce AO as Governor of Queensland; a letter dated 12 February 2003 from the assistant private secretary to the Queen to the Premier indicating that Her Majesty had informally approved the appointment of Ms Quentin Bryce AO as Governor of Queensland; a letter dated 28 February 2003 from the Premier to the private secretary to Her Majesty the Queen seeking Her Majesty's formal approval for the appointment of Ms Quentin Bryce AO as Governor of Queensland; a letter dated 28 February 2003 from the Premier to Her Majesty the Queen seeking Her Majesty's approval of Ms Quentin Bryce AO as Governor of Queensland; the commission of appointment of Ms Quentin Bryce AO as Governor of Queensland signed by Her Majesty the Queen on 4 March 2003; and an Executive Council minute dated 10 March 2003 seeking Governor in Council approval that the public seal of the state be affixed to the commission appointing Ms Quentin Bryce as Governor of Queensland. Because of the importance of this historic debate, I seek leave to incorporate those documents in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

03 FEB 2003

The Right Honourable Sir Robin Janvrin KCVO CB
Private Secretary to Her Majesty The Queen
Buckingham Palace
LONDON SW1A 1AA
UNITED KINGDOM

Dear Sir Robin

I wrote to Her Majesty The Queen on 19 December 2002 informing Her Majesty the appointment of Major General Peter Arnison AC CVO as Governor of Queensland will end on 29 July 2003.

Since I wrote to Her Majesty I have taken the opportunity of having discussions with Ms Quentin Bryce AO. Ms Bryce has a long and distinguished legal, academic and community advocacy record, in particular, championing the rights of women and children.

Ms Bryce was born in 1942 and educated at the Moreton Bay College in Brisbane and at the University of Queensland where she graduated with the degree of Bachelor of Arts with a Bachelor of Laws. She was one of the first Queensland women to be admitted to the Queensland Bar in 1965. In 1997, she was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Laws at Macquarie University and an Honorary Doctorate of Letters by Charles Sturt University in 2002.

In 1978, she was appointed to the National Women's Advisory Council where she played an important role redefining the relationship between government, bureaucracy, women's groups and the community, and highlighting the concerns of Aboriginal women and women who live in remote areas.

She was the Founding Director of the Queensland Women's Information Service and then Queensland Director of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission. In 1988, she became the Federal Sex Discrimination Commissioner where she distinguished herself in the evolution of human rights law and the resolution and abolition of discriminatory practices.

She has been a member of an Australian delegation to the United Nation's Human Rights Commission and has held numerous other high profile government and community positions. In 1988, she was made an officer of the Order of Australia in recognition of her contribution to the community.

Ms Bryce is married and has five adult children. Ms Bryce has been an outstanding community leader over many years and, I believe, is eminently suited to the role of Governor of Queensland. I am very confident that her appointment will be welcomed by all Queenslanders.

Ms Bryce has indicated to me that she would accept appointment as Governor of Queensland should Her Majesty choose to offer it to her.

Accordingly, I shall be grateful if you would raise the question of Ms Bryce's appointment with Her Majesty on an informal basis to ascertain if she would be acceptable to Her Majesty as her personal representative in Queensland.

Yours sincerely

(signed)

PETER BEATTIE MP
PREMIER AND MINISTER FOR TRADE

BUCKINGHAM PALACE

12th February, 2003.

Mr Peter Beattie, MP,
Premier of Queensland and Minister for Trade,
Executive Building,
100 George Street,
Brisbane,
Queensland 4002,
AUSTRALIA

Dear Mr Beattie,

Thank you for your letter of 3rd February to Sir Robin Janvrin which I have shown to The Queen. Her Majesty has informally approved the proposed appointment of Ms Quentin Bryce as The Queen's personal representative in Queensland.

Yours sincerely,

(signed)

STUART SHILSON

Assistant Private Secretary to The Queen

28 February 2003

The Right Honourable Sir Robin Janvrin KCVO CB
Private Secretary to Her Majesty The Queen
Buckingham Palace
LONDON SW1A 1AA
UNITED KINGDOM

Dear Sir Robin

Mr Stuart Shilson wrote to me on 12 February 2003 indicating that Her Majesty The Queen has given her informal approval to the appointment of Ms Quentin Bryce AO as Governor of Queensland in succession to His Excellency Major General Peter Arnison AC CVO.

Accordingly, I would appreciate you placing before Her Majesty the attached submission seeking her formal approval to the appointment.

The Commission appointing Ms Bryce to be Governor is enclosed for Her Majesty's signature. The date of signature is to be inserted in the second page of the Commission. Upon return of the Commission to Queensland I will countersign the Commission and arrange for a meeting of the Executive Council to seek approval for the Public Seal of the State to be affixed to the Commission. Two spare copies of the Commission are also enclosed.

I also advise that immediately following my announcement of Her Majesty's appointment of Ms Bryce to succeed Major General Arnison, the Queensland Parliament will formally give recognition to Her Majesty's appointment.

In due course, I will provide you with a copy of my media release announcing Ms Bryce's appointment.

Yours sincerely

(signed)

PETER BEATTIE MP

PREMIER AND MINISTER FOR TRADE

28 February 2003

The Honourable Peter Douglas Beattie, MP, has the honour to submit for your Majesty's approval the appointment of Ms Quentin Bryce AO as Governor of the State of Queensland in the Commonwealth of Australia from 29 July 2003.

(signed)

PETER BEATTIE MP

PREMIER AND MINISTER FOR TRADE

(signed) Elizabeth R

Elizabeth the Second,

by the Grace of God Queen of Australia and Her other Realms and Territories, Head of the Commonwealth

To Our Trusty and Well-beloved QUENTIN BRYCE, Officer of the Order of Australia

Greeting:

Appointment of Quentin Bryce to be Governor.

I. We do, by this Our Commission under Our Sign Manual and the Public Seal of the State of Queensland, appoint you, the said Quentin Bryce, A.O., to be, during Our pleasure, Our Governor in and over Our State of Queensland and its Dependencies, in the Commonwealth of Australia, with all the powers, rights, privileges and advantages to the said Office belonging or appertaining.

Powers and Authorities.

II. And We do hereby authorise, empower and command you to exercise and perform all and singular the powers and functions appertaining to that office.

Commission of 19 March 1997, superseded.

III. And We do hereby appoint that so soon as you shall have taken the prescribed oaths and have entered upon the duties of your Office, this Our present Commission shall supersede the Commission under Our Sign Manual and Signet, bearing date the Nineteenth day of March 1997, appointing Our Trusty and Well-beloved Major-General Peter Arnison, AC, CVO.

Officers, etc. to obey the Governor.

IV. And We do hereby command all and singular Our Officers, Ministers, and loving subjects in Our said State and its Dependencies, and all others whom it may concern, to take due notice hereof and to give their ready obedience accordingly.

Given at Our Court of Saint James's, this fourth day of March 2003, in the Fifty-second Year of Our Reign.

BY HER MAJESTY'S COMMAND,

(signed) P Beattie

Premier of Queensland

COMMISSION appointing Quentin Bryce to be Governor of the State of QUEENSLAND.

ENTERED on Record by me in the Register of Patents, No. 46, page this ... day of ..., A.D., Two thousand and three

Clerk of the Executive Council

Date 10 MAR 2003 Minute No. 155

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OF QUEENSLAND
DEPARTMENT OF THE PREMIER AND CABINET

Constitution of Queensland 2001

AUTHORITY TO AFFIX PUBLIC SEAL OF QUEENSLAND

The Council recommends to His Excellency the Governor that the Public Seal of the State of Queensland be affixed to the Commission signed by Her Majesty The Queen on 4 March 2003 appointing Ms Quentin Bryce AO to be Governor of the State of Queensland.(MINUTE ENDS)

(signed)

Approved

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

Minister

Premier and Minister for Trade

Subject

Authority to affix the Public Seal of the State to The Queen's Commission appointing Ms Quentin Bryce AO to be the next Governor of Queensland.

Legislative Provision

Constitution of Queensland 2001

Background

Her Majesty The Queen has approved the appointment of Ms Quentin Bryce AO as the next Governor of Queensland.

In relation to the Commission of appointment, constitutional practice provides that the following steps occur—

- i) Commission to be signed by the Queen;
- ii) Commission to be counter-signed by the Premier; and
- iii) Governor in Council approval be obtained to affix the Public Seal of the State of Queensland to the Commission.

Her Majesty signed the Commission on 4 March 2003 and the Premier has counter-signed the Commission.

The Commission does not become effective until the requirements of s.31 of the *Constitution of Queensland 2001* have been observed, ie. the Commission is read and published at the Seat of Government and the prescribed oaths or affirmations of allegiance and office are taken.

In accordance with constitutional practice it is now necessary to seek approval of the Governor in Council for the Public Seal of the State of Queensland to be affixed to the Commission.

Purpose and Consequence

The purpose of this Executive Council Minute is to seek the approval of the Governor in Council to affix the Public Seal of the State of Queensland to the Commission signed by Her Majesty The Queen on 4 March 2003 appointing Ms Quentin Bryce AO to be Governor of the State of Queensland.

Consultation

Procedures adopted for the appointment are in accordance with those recommended previously by the Crown Solicitor.

(signed)

(signed)

Dr Leo Keliher
Director-General

Peter Beattie, MP
Premier and Minister for Trade

Date 10.3.03

Date 10-3-03

Mr BEATTIE: I am delighted, I have to say, that someone as distinguished and respected as Ms Quentin Bryce agreed to be nominated and that the Queen has agreed to the appointment. I had the honour of in fact ringing the Governor designate on her 60th birthday. As she has reported publicly—and I would not have indicated this but she did—when I asked her if she would care for some time to think, being a person of very clear mind she knew exactly what her view was and she accepted. I believe that that is the very nature of this very distinguished woman. Before I go through her qualities and her impressive record, I have say that I am delighted to see the member for Gregory in here, because the Governor designate, Quentin Bryce, was born in Brisbane but she spent her early years in Ilfracombe near Longreach in his electorate. One does not get any more solid than that—born in Brisbane and her family came from Ilfracombe. I know that the member for Gregory would agree with me. What a great tradition. Here is a Queenslander who is not just distinguished in Queensland but has

a national reputation and, in some aspects, indeed an international reputation. She is someone whom we should all be very proud of.

Let me deal with her qualifications. Ms Bryce is on the record as saying that as a teenager she wanted to become a lawyer because she was 'imbued with altruistic notions of making the world a better place'. Her CV shows that for well over 30 years she has devoted herself to working hard in her public and private lives to fighting for the changes necessary to make life better for many, especially children and women. I believe that she will be able to build even further on the work of Major General Arnison in making the role of Governor meaningful and relevant to all Queenslanders. But members do not need me simply to extol the virtues of Ms Bryce. When Ms Bryce was awarded an honorary doctorate of laws by Macquarie University in 1998 the citation said this, and I want to share it with the House—

She has a long and distinguished record of advocacy for human rights and in particular the rights of women and children.

...

Quentin Bryce is an outstanding role model for others to emulate. She is a courageous and articulate person, always in the forefront of social change and responsibility often facing strong opposition but prepared to challenge aspects of legal practice and opinion which inhibit social process.

When she was awarded an honorary doctorate of letters by Charles Sturt University last year, the citation referred to her outstanding leadership in Australian society and stated—

She was one of the first women to be admitted to the Queensland Bar.

She was the first woman appointed to the Law Faculty of the University of Queensland.

She was a founder of the National Women's Advisory Council; the Founding Director of the Women's Information Services; the Founding Chair and CEO of the National Childcare Accreditation Council; and the first chair of the Board of Management for the Diploma of Policing Practice.

The courage and dedication Ms Bryce has brought to her service to our community was well illustrated during her years as CEO of the National Childcare Accreditation Council.

In leading the campaign to establish appropriate standards in this important field, she encountered strong opposition from powerful economic interests in the then childcare industry.

She has been an inspiring model of service to the Australian community.

What a citation! That says it all—a very impeccable record of someone who will be outstanding as the governor of this state.

Ms Bryce is currently the Principal of the Women's College within the University of Sydney, and she will come home to become governor. What a way to come home. She has also been a member of or led more than 20 organisations as diverse as the Association for the Welfare of Children in Hospital, the Australian Women's Cricket Board, the National Breast Cancer Centre Network, the Children's Television Foundation, Plan International, YWCA, Mindease Mental Health Foundation and the National Institute for Law Ethics and Public Affairs Advisory Board.

As I have already indicated—it will be contained in the documents—on 4 March 2003 Her Majesty the Queen signed the commission appointing Quentin Bryce to become the 24th Governor of Queensland from 29 July 2003. Yesterday the Governor in Council—it was attended by the Deputy Premier, Terry Mackenroth; the Leader of the House and Minister for Education, Anna Bligh; and me—approved that the public seal of the state be affixed to the commission. On behalf of the people of Queensland, I therefore had the great honour of formally notifying Quentin of her appointment as Governor designate for the state of Queensland.

I am planning a state government farewell reception on 9 July to honour the six-year governorship of Major General Arnison. He will attend his final Executive Council meeting on 16 July and will officially say farewell on 29 July. Later that day Ms Bryce will be sworn in here at Parliament House. She will attend her first Executive Council meeting on 31 July.

I have given all members details of the Governor designate's outstanding credentials. I believe that she will be an outstanding governor. I ask members to join with me in making this a unanimous vote of parliamentary recognition of the appointment. In doing so, I table for the information of the House a full CV of Ms Quentin Bryce—that sets out her detailed history—the citations from the two universities and the news release I issued yesterday for her appointment.

This debate is an important one not just for this parliament but also for the future. There has been a republican debate in this country in recent times. When the issue was put to a referendum, Queenslanders voted overwhelmingly to retain the current system. In other words, they voted for the retention of the monarchy. That is one of the reasons that, in the re-appointment of the current Governor, I followed the tradition that existed and that had been followed by my predecessors. It was followed by Rob Borbidge when he appointed Peter Arnison. When I re-appointed the current Governor, Peter Arnison, I followed the same tradition for that year's extension. Wayne Goss followed this procedure when he appointed Leneen Forde. However, I wanted to add a new dimension, but I wanted to do it in a tentative way. I have done that to respect the result of the referendum, because Queenslanders expressed their view.

It is well known that I am a republican. I have always been committed to republican ideals. Having said that, I am also a servant of the people. Therefore, I have to respect the people and their will. A very clear message came out of that referendum. Queenslanders were opposed to a republic. Therefore, I have respected the will of the people. The appointment of the governor has been made in accordance with the traditions I inherited. However, I do believe that in the 21st century—Ms Bryce will be the first governor appointed in this century—we should involve the people and we should involve the parliament.

The motion I have moved is a sensitive one. As I indicated yesterday to the Leader of the Opposition, the Leader of the Liberal Party and the Leader of One Nation, it has been a cautious, tentative move and it seeks to get the parliament to give recognition to the appointment. I have done that in a clear bid to get bipartisanship and a unanimous decision today. The words could have been stronger, but I have not sought to do that because I wanted to respect the outcome of the referendum, the parliamentary process and the make-up of this parliament so that, as much as humanly possible, we could get a unanimous decision. If we do not do that that is fine, but I believe that we can and I have sought to do so. That is what we have done today. That is all I have put before the parliament.

Let us talk about the future. I would hope that when the position of governor comes up for consideration in the future the process is a little broader. I would hope that the Premier of the day, whoever that may be—whether I am fortunate enough to be here or it is someone else, and that is in the hands of the people—would actually seek the views of the community. That has not been done this time, but I hope that if people want to nominate they will be able to indicate to the Premier of the day that they are interested in the position. I suggest that the Premier of the day then consider those people who are interested as well as people that he or she believes would be appropriate governors and then come to this parliament with a recommendation—perhaps one name—in the same way we are doing today. If the parliament agreed to that—I would suggest two-thirds, because that would guarantee the appointment of a quality person who is non-political and bipartisan—then the Premier would make that recommendation to Her Majesty the Queen.

Convention allows the Premier discretion in terms of how the recommendation is made. My advice is that there is nothing preventing that procedure being followed because, in essence, the Premier is still making the recommendation to Her Majesty the Queen. So I would hope that in five years' time—the term of the current governor is five years; an extension is reasonably frequent if the Governor has performed well and wishes to continue or is asked to continue by the Premier of the day—whoever is the Premier would give some thought to that process. It does not require a constitutional amendment and it does not require a legislative change, but it does involve the parliament.

If anyone here is concerned about involving the parliament—we represent the people here—I simply say: don't be. It is not a matter to be frightened about. We are the democratically elected representatives of the people. At present there is a very arbitrary system. That is, the Premier has total discretion on the recommendation to Her Majesty as to who the governor will be. Frankly, that is not a very democratic process. In my view, involving the parliament enhances the nomination. It enhances not just the nomination but also the stature of the person who will be in that position. That is very important. It can be done with dignity.

A number of people have said to me—I have said this publicly—that there is not enough political maturity in the Australian political system for this yet to be done, that we need to have more maturity across the party system to enable an open process such as I have talked about to be gone through, to maintain the dignity of the position of governor. Maybe to some extent there is some truth in that, but inevitably there is a maturing in politics. There is a maturing process. I believe that we can maintain the dignity of the position but at the same time involve the people and involve the parliament. This is a tentative step today—I do not present it to be anything other than a tentative step—but a very important tentative step for the first time that we appoint a governor in this century.

As I said to Lawrence Springborg, Bob Quinn and Bill Flynn yesterday, I have tried to move a motion that would embrace them, not disenfranchise them or break them away from this process. The views they take are entirely a matter for them. I have tried to do this in a non-political, bipartisan way, in the spirit of bringing people together.

The reality is that Quentin Bryce is a fantastic choice. She has been well received by the community, and there are messages of support which my office has received this morning. She is a very distinguished Australian, not just a distinguished Queensland. She will do a magnificent job. However—and this is the last piece of information I want to share with the House—before we had completed her appointment I indicated to her that I wished to bring her nomination to this parliament and move the motion that I have moved, and she was supportive of that.

I have also advised Her Majesty in the letter seeking final appointment—because, as members can see from what I provided, there is an informal appointment and a formal appointment—that I would be informing the House. So there was no discourtesy either to the Governor designate, who knows this

was the process I intended to follow, or to Her Majesty the Queen because I have advised her of it. So no-one should be concerned about those issues. This is a very important day, as far as I am concerned, because today we begin a process which years down the road will have greater community and people involvement. After all, we work for the people in the selection of the governor.