



Speech by

Hon. MARGARET KEECH

MEMBER FOR ALBERT

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Division of Wine Industry Development

Hon. M. M. KEECH (Albert—ALP) (Minister for Tourism, Fair Trading and Wine Industry Development) (10.11 a.m.): Queensland's wine industry knows it has been given a once in a lifetime opportunity by the Beattie government to uncork its potential. Establishment of the new division of Wine Industry Development within my department highlights the Premier's longstanding determination to put Queensland wine on a par with the world's leading production areas.

The potential of this industry is enormous. It is not surprising then that the industry reaction to the creation of the portfolio has been simply overwhelming. Grape growers and wine producers travelled long distances to attend our first industry forum at Highfields on 31 March. The Queensland Wine Industry Association told me the industry was determined to repay the Premier's confidence in its potential. It has vowed to show that the Premier's faith is not misplaced. The industry knows it has a great opportunity, and it knows the Beattie government is serious about working in partnership to develop the industry.

The first forum was a sensational success. It gave me the opportunity to listen to the industry's views, hopes and concerns and gain an understanding of its development priorities. The next step is to conduct follow-up workshops in other wine growing regions. Developing strategic relationships with the industry will help us provide winemakers, vineyard operators and other industry participants with the support they need.

The Premier has given me the job of taking Queensland wines to Australia and the world. I am determined to work with the industry to continue to improve the quality of its product. But that is not to say we do not already produce fantastic quality wines. Over the past year, Queensland wines have won medals at several national and international wine shows. To take our wines to the world we need to convince Queenslanders and Australians to take our wine seriously. That is where you can play a part, honourable members: to buy it, to drink it, to give it to friends as a gift.

I am advised that if every adult Queenslanders each year buys three bottles of Queensland wine it would create 1,000 new jobs. That is the potential the Premier recognised in this industry—thousands of new jobs in regional Queensland. Those who watched ABC TV's *Landline* program on Sunday would have seen the energy, confidence and passion that exists within the Queensland wine industry. It is that potential the Beattie government will work with the industry to uncork.