



Speech by

Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

Hansard 18 March 2004

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Report on Ministerial Expenses; Premier's Residence, Security Upgrade

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (10.15 a.m.): I wish to table the public report of ministerial expenses for the period 1 July to 31 December 2003. I intend to start this third term of my government with the same strong commitment to openness and accountability that I have demonstrated since becoming Premier in 1998. The public report gives the community maximum transparency about the expenses of ministers, parliamentary secretaries and their offices.

This report shows that my government has continued to keep costs to a minimum. Compared to last year it shows substantial savings in administrative costs for ministerial offices and only moderate increases in salary costs. These are due to enterprise bargaining pay rises for all staff and incremental pay increases for some staff, which is logical. The government has made significant improvements across portfolios pursuing Smart State initiatives all while continuing community engagement. This report clearly shows that expenditure has been maintained at reasonable levels.

I want to raise a matter of some personal sensitivity. Because of accountability mechanisms which I am committed to, I want to share this with the House. I wish to advise the House that, due to security threats to my family and me, the police have recommended a security upgrade to my home. I brought the matter to the attention of both the Auditor-General and the Crime and Misconduct Commissioner. Cabinet, in my absence, has approved the upgrade. The matter was handled by my Deputy Premier and Treasurer. I absented myself from the cabinet meeting.

Work is currently under way to implement the police recommendations. Security for ministers, and indeed the Opposition Leader, has always been a matter that has been treated very seriously and in a bipartisan way. Security upgrades in the residences of these people have always been available where required and based on independent formal police security recommendations. For the information of the House, and with the maximum amount of openness and accountability, I seek leave to have the letters I sent to the Auditor-General and the Crime and Misconduct Commission on these matters and their replies to me incorporated.

Leave granted.

1 March 2004

Mr Len Scanlan
Auditor-General of Queensland
GPO Box 1139
BRISBANE 4001

Dear Len

Re: Security Upgrade of my Residence following a Home Invasion

You will no doubt be aware from media reports last Sunday week, 22 February 2004, a woman named Mary Shelley invaded my home. She subsequently pleaded guilty in the Magistrates Court and was fined \$200.00.

This incident has been very disturbing for my family and I have asked the Police Crime Prevention Unit to give a security assessment on my home and to make recommendations for improvements.

Attached for your information is:

4. Police Report on the incident.
5. Security assessment on my residence by the Crime Prevention Unit.

6. Architectural site inspection and report by the Department of Public Works.

Following the incident there was significant media exposure of my home and there was a threat of a copy cat invasion. This threat was referred to the Police.

In light of the above, it is imperative that there be a security upgrade of my home, which I have asked the Ministerial Services Branch of my Department to expedite as soon as possible.

The reason for this letter is to provide you with the relevant reports and to indicate that I have instructed the security upgrade of my home to be completed as soon as possible. This work will be carried out at public expense, except for the clearing of foliage, for which I will be responsible.

Naturally, this upgrade will incur reasonable costs, but I believe that in the circumstances, it is appropriate. I am happy with my home as it is. If I were not the Premier, this change would not be made, nor would it be necessary.

In light of the amount of time I spend away from home, it is imperative that my family be protected.

If you have any concerns relating to the way I proposed to handle this matter, I would be grateful if you would notify me immediately. In addition, I would welcome any involvement you or your staff might have in this process.

Yours sincerely

(sgd)

PETER BEATTIE MP
PREMIER AND MINISTER FOR TRADE

1 March 2004

Mr Brendan Butler SC
Chairperson
Crime and Misconduct Commission
Level 3, Terrica Place
140 Creek Street (Cnr Adelaide and Creek Streets)
BRISBANE 4000

Dear Brendan

Re: Security Upgrade of my Residence following a Home Invasion

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Yours sincerely

(sgd)

PETER BEATTIE MP
PREMIER AND MINISTER FOR TRADE

Office of the Auditor-General of Queensland
Level II, Central Plaza One,
345 Queen Street
Brisbane QLD 4000

3 March 2004

The Honourable P D Beattie, MP
Premier and Minister for Trade
Level 15, Executive Building
100 George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Premier

Thank you for your letter of 1 March 2004 and enclosures regarding the intended security upgrade to your residence. I understand the concern which has led you to take the emergent action that is outlined in your letter to ensure that you and your family have adequate security in your home.

Based on the supporting information you have provided to me from the relevant agencies, the general concept of a security upgrade is clearly allowable and supportable from my perspective in terms of the requirements.

In regard to the site inspection and report provided by the Department of Public Works, the documentation supports an interim solution (costed at approximately \$4,000). Final security upgrading would, however, also need to demonstrate that value-for-money can be achieved, particularly where the upgrade involves a significant financial component such as fencing.

The Public Report on Ministerial Expenses provides a suitable mechanism for disclosure of expenses of this nature. While the guidelines indicate that you are able to approve security upgrades for Ministers, you may wish to formally table details of further expenditure proposals for significant expenditure on your own behalf, at Cabinet or Executive Council.

My officers will be reviewing the expenditure made on the security upgrade as part of the audit of the Ministerial Services Branch.

Should you wish to discuss this matter further please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

(sgd)

L J SCANLAN

Auditor-General of Queensland

CRIME AND MISCONDUCT COMMISSION

GPO Box 3123

Brisbane Qld 4001

4 March 2004

The Honourable P D Beattie MP

Premier and Minister for Trade

15th Floor

Executive Building

100 George Street

BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Premier

RE: SECURITY UPGRADE TO RESIDENCE

I refer to your letter and attachments of 1 March 2004 advising of a proposed security upgrade of your home following an incident in which a woman was convicted of unlawful entry to your residence.

I acknowledge the risks highlighted by this incident which have led to your determination that a security upgrade of your home is required.

You invited me to notify you of any concerns which I might have in relation to the way you propose to handle the matter. Thank you for the opportunity to provide general guidance on what probity issues should be considered in making such a decision.

In circumstances where valuable enhancements are to be made to the personal property of a public official, it is important to ensure that the process does not give rise to a perception of conflict of interest. This can be best achieved by the official who may receive a personal benefit ensuring that they remove themselves from active participation in the decision making process.

From the point of view of maintaining probity, it is important that any expenditure be based on independent assessments which establish the existence and extent of the need and which confirm the level of response is justified, proportionate and represents value for money. In this regard, independent advice could be taken on what is the minimum level of enhancement necessary to mitigate the risk as opposed to what enhancements are possible.

Greater care needs to be taken to ensure the probity of the process in the case of significant and costly enhancements than in the case of moderate interim measures to deal with an emergent situation.

In regard to significant and more expensive upgrading, you may choose to remove yourself from the decision making process by ensuring that decisions on the extent of the installation is made by persons independent of yourself and perhaps, by having authorisation of the expenditure considered by the Cabinet or Executive Council.

General transparency would be enhanced by public disclosure of the cost of any work performed.

If I can be of further assistance please feel free to contact me.

Yours sincerely

(sgd)

BRENDAN BUTLER SC

Chairperson