



Speech by

Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

Hansard 18 March 2004

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Daniel Morcombe, Red Ribbon Day

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (10.24 a.m.): I have a very sad matter to raise with the House. The unsolved mystery of Daniel Morcombe's disappearance has sparked an unprecedented public response. It is more than four months now since the teenager went missing while waiting for a bus at the Kiel Mountain Road overpass at Palmwoods, and his Sunshine Coast community has refused to forget him. Red ribbons have become a potent symbol of the community's resolve to continue the search for Daniel and to continue supporting his family. Wearing a red ribbon means that people have not forgotten Daniel. He wore a red T-shirt the day he went missing and his father, Bruce Morcombe, has said that red ribbons signal support for his family. They now feature prominently on letterboxes, fences, trees and car aerals throughout the Sunshine Coast.

The member for Kawana, Chris Cummins, my ministerial colleague, has approached me about holding a Red Ribbon Day in parliament to coincide with an event on the Sunshine Coast. So the next sitting day, Tuesday, 20 April, will be Red Ribbon Day and all members will be urged to wear a red ribbon. I hope all members support me on this. Yesterday I phoned Daniel's mother, Denise Morcombe, and talked to her about this proposal and she supports this approach, as I understand her husband does as well. Red Ribbon Day will show solidarity with Daniel's family and support the police who continue to assiduously investigate his disappearance.

I thank the many Queenslanders and people throughout Australia who have already made an effort to assist police. There have been more than 3,000 calls to Crimestoppers—more than for any other case since Crimestoppers began in Queensland in 1989. The community has pitched in with donations to support the printing of posters, bumper stickers, banners, flyers and billboards. Police and the Rotary Club are distributing more than 20,000 posters, appealing for information, to police stations and correctional centres, shopping centres, service stations, businesses, hotels and clubs in Queensland as well as some other government buildings here and in northern New South Wales, Sydney and Melbourne. Energex has asked for 1,500 bumper stickers which carry a photo of Daniel and the Crimestoppers phone number for its fleet vehicles, as have some shire councils and transport companies. Offers of help are continuing to roll in.

It is an inspiring response to a family's anguish and confirmation that our community abhors crimes against children. I am confident that every member will show that they share these sentiments by wearing a red ribbon on 20 April. I urge anyone anywhere who has information that might assist this investigation to call Crimestoppers on 1800 333 000.