



Speech by

Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

Hansard 20 April 2004

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Child Protection

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.39 a.m.): Reforming state child protection, as members know, is a key priority of the Queensland government. The Child Protection Implementation Unit, initially led by Peter Forster, has delivered the first two phases of the reform process including, in phase 1, the development of a project plan to deliver recommendations and, in phase 2, the development of a blueprint for implementing the recommendations of the January 2004 Crime and Misconduct Commission inquiry into the abuse of children in foster care.

During phase 3 Peter Forster will work collaboratively with the Child Safety Implementation Unit, the Department of Child Safety, the Department of Communities and Disability Services Queensland. He will assist with the development and implementation of the transition arrangements for area office staff, the development of child safety, and finalise advice on the central and regional office structure and resource requirements of both the Department of Child Safety and the Department of Communities. I thank both ministers involved for their cooperation and support in this reform program because that is an important part.

Peter Forster is the right person for this job. He has more than 30 years experience in both the public and private sectors as a manager and consultant and has a reputation for achieving results in complex and difficult assignments. He was the expert chosen by the then National Party to oversee the massive police reforms in 1989 after the Fitzgerald inquiry, together with setting up the Criminal Justice Commission and the Electoral and Administrative Reform Commission.

There is nobody with better credentials for pushing through major reforms to government areas in Queensland. Peter Forster's services have been secured from January 2004 to 30 June 2004 through a contract with the Consultancy Bureau of which he is the director. The Consultancy Bureau has received \$391,560 for the completion of phases 1 and 2. The estimated fee for phase 3 is \$158,400.

On 22 March 2004, I released in full the 260 page blueprint for implementation. The blueprint is a detailed and comprehensive instruction manual for the government to implement all 110 recommendations of the Crime and Misconduct Commission. It shows how to deliver a radically better deal for children through more staff, better training and resources, more accountability, more money and support for foster carers and more options for finding new homes for abused and troubled young people. It would be clear to anyone who has read the blueprint produced by Peter Forster and the implementation unit that the government appointed the right person to initially spearhead the reforms to Queensland's child protection system and that Peter Forster's fees and money are well spent. I have released that information so everyone knows exactly where we stand and what the cost is.