



Speech by

Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

PanBio

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.36 a.m.): I want to record another Smart State success story and congratulate the PanBio company on its recent success in establishing a partnership with the Program for Appropriate Technologies and Health, or PATH. The partnership with PATH means that PanBio will gain funds from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to develop and manufacture an enzyme immuno-assay, which is a kit to detect Japanese encephalitis.

Like dengue fever, West Nile and Ross River viruses, JE is a mosquito-borne virus affecting the central nervous system. It can kill and cause symptoms including coma and neurological problems. It is a problem for a massive three billion people or 60 per cent of the world's population who live in endemic regions. About 50,000 cases of JE are recorded in Asia each year, leading to 10,000 deaths. The number of unrecorded cases is thought to be much higher. However, through PanBio, Queenslanders are using tropical health expertise in an endeavour to save lives and ease suffering.

The partnership between PATH and PanBio announced yesterday signals an important milestone in the growing list of Smart State success stories. Last year PanBio was the first company world wide to get United States Food and Drug Administration approval for its diagnostic kit for West Nile virus, giving the company a market for its kits which included 500,000 tests in 2002. Its new partner, PATH, is a giant in sustainable and culturally relevant health solutions, being a major player in the disbursement of aid funding to health programs for developing nations.

PATH is funded to deliver this project through the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. So where has PanBio come from? The Windsor based company—which happens to be in my electorate, I should add—was a 2002 finalist in the Queensland Premier's Export Awards. In 1999 it was recognised with a Queensland Export Achievement Award for Small-Medium Innovative Manufacturers. In 1998 PanBio was awarded the Queensland Export Award for Small-Medium Innovative Manufacturers, and it has won several national awards to complement those successes. It is a textbook case of the Smart State biotechnology sector growing, supporting and encouraging companies with the potential to save and improve lives the world over and create jobs as well. The Smart State strategy is working.