



Speech by

Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Peace Scholarship Trust

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.40 a.m.): Today, world peace and security are tenuous. Governments and communities are increasingly faced with the prospect of global and local threats to acceptance of cultural diversity. Ignorance and suspicion breed in a climate of fear and uncertainty and the proliferation of fascism throughout history has a worrying reflection in the prejudice that prospers as a result of terrorism. My government and the people of Queensland will, however, continue to celebrate the fact that the Smart State has a world of difference that enriches and enlivens us.

Indigenous culture is now enmeshed with more than 150 different world cultures and this year I will be calling on all sectors of the Queensland community to support the government in a major promotion of the value of our shared humanity. We cannot succumb to the vagaries of racism.

I am delighted, therefore, to announce my government's commitment to tolerance, through our support for a new Peace Scholarship Trust designed to build global peace and understanding through international education. Through Queensland Education and Training International, a dedicated unit within my department, the government will bring deserving international students from developing countries to study at universities across the state.

Students from Colombia and Mexico will come to Queensland in July this year and they will be followed by students from Thailand, Brazil and other selected countries. That is only the beginning. At least 15 students will be funded each year over the next three years, with \$150,000 provided by my government and the remainder provided by overseas governments, business and industry and individuals in a partnership arrangement. The money will pay for students to study for one or two semesters in Queensland and that will be credited towards their academic degrees in their own countries.

Four of the Peace Scholarships will be awarded to students to pursue a Graduate Diploma at the Australian Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Queensland. All of the state's public universities have pledged their support for the program by offering to waive tuition fees, while Bond University was one of the founding donors to the Peace Scholarship Trust.

The trust is a multimillion-dollar initiative of IDP Education Australia and has been supported by 30 universities across the country. IDP Education Australia is one of this country's largest international education and development organisations and I congratulate them for their vision and leadership in developing this trust.

Queensland is currently home to more than 35,000 international students from more than 70 countries and it is this mix, reflected in our broader community, that we should value and promote. We must celebrate and support our diversity because education and empathy are the keys to overcoming racism and terrorism. Many of the senior business people that I regularly run into on my visits as Minister for Trade to the Asia-Pacific area, particularly Asia, remind me that many of them were educated in Australia as part of the Colombo Plan. This is not just doing the right thing to encourage diversity and tolerance. It has long-term investment opportunities for Queensland and Australia because those trade links will ensure that business is done with Queensland.