



Speech by

Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Overseas Visit; Sugar Industry

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.39 a.m.): I do want to announce today, because it relates specifically to sugar, that I will visit Brazil and the United States between 26 May and 8 June 2004 and also very briefly visit Chile. The purpose of my visit will be to promote Queensland's biotechnology capabilities, lend high-level government support to the efforts of Australian exporters in those markets and attract new investments to Queensland. In the United States with my colleague the Minister for State Development and Innovation, Tony McGrady, I will lead a Queensland delegation to the largest and most prestigious biotechnology event in the world, BIO 2004 in San Francisco. Queensland's delegation to BIO has grown substantially over the years to now number approximately 100. The event is a unique opportunity to demonstrate Queensland's scientific achievements and capabilities in developing new biotech and pharmaceutical products for world markets.

Also attending BIO this year will be the Commonwealth Industry, Tourism and Resources Minister, Ian MacFarlane, New South Wales Premier, Bob Carr, and Victorian Premier, Steve Bracks. The Queensland government is committed to ensuring that this state is a major biotechnology centre in the Asia-Pacific region. In Chile I will be following up on Queensland's current participation in Expomin, one of the mining industry's most important trade exhibitions. Queenslanders represent almost half of the entire Australian contingent at Expomin. My government's South American mining strategy, implemented in partnership with the Ai Group over the past three years, has already helped secure \$29 million in exports of mining services and equipment. My visit to Chile will further raise the profile of Queensland with senior decision makers. I will be encouraging them to look to Queensland for more of their specialist equipment and expertise needs.

My visit to Brazil, the largest economy in South America, will be the first by a Queensland Premier. Queensland's 2002-03 exports of \$275 million, dominated by coal, already represent two-thirds of Australia's exports to Brazil. There is scope to increase coal technology sales, and I will be promoting this during my visit. My visit will mark the posting of an officer from the Environmental Protection Agency to Acominas to advise the company on a number of environmental management issues. I will also be supporting Queensland's education and agribusiness exports to Brazil.

But more important than any of that, I will be using this trip to Brazil to follow up on a trip that Tom Barton undertook last year to see what we can do to continue to value add to the sugar industry. I will be meeting with the Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Supply, Mr Roberto Rodrigues. He is the minister for agricultural development and is responsible for defining and implementing policies in relation to sugar and the sugar industry in Brazil. I will also be meeting with Unica, the Sao Paulo Sugar Cane Agroindustry Union. Unica represents the sugar cane, sugar and alcohol business areas in the state of Sao Paulo. It is the agency responsible for more than 60 per cent of Brazilian production. It has a leadership position in the country and gives us an opportunity to see what partnerships possibly exist. There will also be a reception for the agribusiness mission, including the mining sector, and there will also be meetings with major ethanol producers Dedeni and Copper Sugar.

The reason for that is that we need to develop the ethanol industry. Japan, for example, is keen to start importing ethanol, but it will not do it through one market. That means that we have the potential to develop an ethanol industry where we can be one of the suppliers to Japan. We need an

outlet, and that is a possibility for us to pursue. So the visit to Brazil is timed specifically to do what we can to enhance the sugar industry with value adding in this state, and today I invite any representatives from the sugar industry who want to accompany me to come with me. They have already been informally invited. I formally invite them today. I would be grateful if representatives of the sugar industry would accompany me to ensure that we value add and give a significant future to this important industry.