



Speech by

Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

Hansard 11 May 2004

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Smithsonian Institution Fellowships

Hon. P.D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.38 a.m.): Four years ago on 23 March 2000, my government signed a memorandum of understanding with one of the world's most prestigious research and educational institutions. It was the first such agreement signed by the Smithsonian Institution with any government outside America. Part of that agreement provided for Smithsonian fellowships.

The 2004 fellows, who will be presented with their fellowship awards at a special ceremony in the Parliamentary Annexe tonight, are as follows, and I want to congratulate them on behalf of all members: the Director of Conservation, Biodiversity and World Heritage at the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, Jon Day; the Director of the Woodford Folk Festival, Bill Hauritz; and the Chair of Ecology at Griffith University, Professor Roger Kitching. They will benefit from this agreement. I seek leave to incorporate the rest of my ministerial statement in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Our MOU with this world class institution has set the scene for the internationalisation of Smart State capabilities—with a range of collaborative projects already undertaken, including: Research on the sustainable management of coral reef fisheries, the co-hosting in 2002 of an international conference on one of science's last frontiers, the rainforest canopy; and, Eco-Online, launched last year, which gives junior secondary students access to online information about caring for the environment.

The MOU also created a Fellowship of the Mind and has paved the way for an exchange of our best and brightest, taking 12 emissaries from the Smart State to the United States on a mission with something very precious—the gift of intelligence, vision and a thirst for knowledge and desire to expand our collective wisdom in a range of disciplines.

Smithsonian Fellows undertake a journey of discovery with a commitment to search for new and innovative ways to further scientific and social understanding.

Jon Day will draw on his work with GBRMPA and in particular the lessons learnt from the recent rezoning of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park to work with the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute to assist marine managers to protect and manage marine biodiversity.

Bill Hauritz will use his Fellowship to undertake research at the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage as well as undertaking case studies of the Smithsonian Folklife Festival and other USA folk and community festivals.

Professor Roger Kitching will participate in a major collaborative international project with the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute in Panama to survey insect biodiversity.

The Smithsonian, the world's largest museum and research complex, features 16 museums and art galleries as well as the National Zoo, with research also undertaken in centres in eight states and the Republic of Panama.

The Institution's primary mission, "the increase and diffusion of knowledge" is reflected in the mutual expertise of both parties to our agreement, in natural and social history, Indigenous culture and environmental science.

The MOU and the Fellowship program have also given birth to a Queensland-Smithsonian Alumni, with co-patrons, Professor Glyn Davis, the Vice-Chancellor of Griffith University and Dr Cristian Samper, the Director of the Natural History Museum at the Smithsonian.

The Alumni strengthens existing networks established by former Fellows and provides further opportunities for collaboration and research.

The Alumni will hold their second meeting tonight, following our presentation ceremony and will be hosted by Professor Davis and with speakers including my colleague Minister Bligh, as well as two former fellows, Professors John McGrath and Roger Kitching.

Our former fellows have undertaken research in areas as diverse as: Climate studies over the past 400,000 years; the development of megadata tools for managing mixed media museum collections; the portrayal of Queensland at international expositions; Great Barrier Reef ecosystem management; innovations in museums practice; the adaptation of the Smithsonian Magnet School model to a Queensland secondary school in a cross-curriculum setting; links between Vitamin D deficiencies in pregnant women and the development of schizophrenia in their teenage children; marine reptile fossil comparisons between western Queensland and the US south west; and, the impact of global climate change on Pacific Islands.

The Queensland-Smithsonian Fellowship Program and the MOU will continue to take the Smart State to an international stage and reap benefits on a global scale.