



Speech by

Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Queensland Herbarium

Hon. P.D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.38 a.m.): Queensland is setting an example for the rest of the country in monitoring and protecting the environment. Last week, Environment Minister John Mickel and I released the Queensland greenhouse strategy, our blueprint for responding to greenhouse gas emissions and climate change. We will not sit back and wait for the federal government to show leadership on this issue because if we do it may be too late.

Part of smart planning is having an accurate picture of what is happening on the ground across Queensland. That is why we use data such as the Queensland Herbarium remnant vegetation report, which I table for the information of the House. This analyses the status and extent of 1,260 regional ecosystems covering 60 per cent of Queensland's land mass. The ecosystems include remnant and preclearing vegetation, grasslands, heathlands and enclosed forests. This data is broader than the Statewide Landcover and Trees Study, which covers only wooded vegetation.

The Herbarium report is from 1997 to 2001 and highlights the vulnerability of some of our ecosystems. For example, between 1999 and 2001 the Brigalow Belt was subject to more clearing than any other area in the survey. The Brigalow Belt is home to vulnerable plants and animals. The Brigalow Belt accounted for 43.5 per cent of the cleared land. Clearing in the mulga lands bioregion accounted for 28 per cent and 16 per cent of the cleared area in the desert uplands. The Herbarium report reinforces the imperative of protecting these areas.

The next major update in regional ecosystem information will be in 2005. This report plus the update will help us monitor our vegetation management laws and give us information to feed into policy areas such as the greenhouse strategy. It will be used by local governments, catchment coordinating and regional nature resource management groups for planning and management purposes. The Queensland government will also use it to develop sustainable, responsible policies and investment programs for natural resource management, biodiversity conservation and greenhouse abatement. I congratulate the Herbarium for this comprehensive information on regional ecosystems. As the greenhouse strategy shows, land clearing contributed 28 per cent of Queensland's greenhouse gas production, and in the Smart State we respect quality science such as that of the Herbarium.

In contrast, the federal government is scorning science by gutting two valuable Queensland based cooperative research centres—the Great Barrier Reef CRC and tropical rainforest CRC. These centres do vital research into issues such as climate change, reef run-off and coral bleaching. Their research can help us manage these areas to improve resilience to pressures from people and the environment. The federal government is ripping more than \$32 million from these centres. The Queensland government has provided an estimated \$14 million to the CRCs, including the CRC Torres Strait, since 1999. We will continue to base our land and resource decisions on sound research and science. I also want to thank the Liberal Party for its support for our tree clearing legislation. I say again, Bob: well done; stick with us.