



Speech by

Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

Hansard Thursday, 13 May 2004

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Paniyiri Festival, Greek Community

Hon. P.D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.46 a.m.): As I mentioned yesterday, cabinet will be meeting at the Greek Club and Convention Centre on Monday, where we will be launching the Paniyiri Festival 2004. It has attracted \$35,000 in funding from the Queensland government. Tomorrow week we will also have the honour of farewelling Queensland's Olympic athletes at a special sports dinner titled 'Roads To Athens: return to the birthplace' at the Greek Club. It is going to be a great year for the Greek community. As Henry Maine said in his publication *Village Communities*, third edition 1876, 'Except the blind forces of nature, nothing moves in this world which is not Greek in its origin.' I know the member for Ashgrove would agree with that. I seek leave to have my ministerial statement incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

On Monday—Greek origins and culture will be honoured by my government, with a cabinet meeting at the Greek Club and Convention Centre.

We will also help launch the 26th Paniyiri Festival and take part in a combined blessing of the festival and the Cabinet at a special ceremony at the Greek Orthodox Church of St. George in South Brisbane.

Brisbane will "Go Greek" at the famous festival—a signature celebration of all things Greek.

It will for the first time last a full week and feature: fantastic food from all regions of Greece; dancing lessons and demonstrations; cooking classes; church tours; pre-Olympic celebrations; a film festival; public lectures; exhibitions; recitals; a dance party; and, a backgammon tournament.

Paniyiri 2004 has attracted \$35,000 funding from my government.

This is to ensure its continuing success in a year of the Olympic Games in Athens and following on the 75th anniversary of the Greek Orthodox Church of St George in Brisbane and Greek National Independence Day on March 25.

The original Greek Community Centre, known as Hellenic House in Charlotte Street and now a government office building provided the social and administrative hub for the Greek community from 1921 until 1974.

It was a venue where traditional Greek hospitality was undoubtedly extended to business and government leaders and boasted a restaurant, billiard tables, a Greek barber and living quarters, with gambling, games and political discussion a major preoccupation.

The first Greek Day in Queensland was held in Warwick on 11 March in 1941 and the first in Brisbane was held on 19th March in that same year.

These were motivated by the conflict with Italian fascist forces in the second world war and the declaration of war on Greece by Mussolini.

Raising funds to support the brave Greek forces was an over-riding impetus.

On Monday night, following the cabinet meeting, the Greek Orthodox Church will host a memorial service honouring Australians who came to fight with the Greeks against the Germans at the Battle of Crete.

The Greek Australian war memorial is located just outside and in the grounds of the Church and at least 10 Brisbane veterans of the Battle of Crete will participate in a wreath laying ceremony on what will be the 63rd anniversary of that famous Battle.

Next week will be a momentous week for the Greek community in Queensland and my government is proud to join the Greek community in celebrating and remembering our shared cultural heritage.

