



Speech by

Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

Hansard Wednesday, 15 February 2006

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Community Cabinets

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier) (9.49 am): I want to advise the House that this weekend cabinet will be in Bundaberg for the first community cabinet of 2006. Next month the 91st community cabinet since my government was elected will be held in Mackay. We are getting out and listening to the community. I seek leave to incorporate details in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

My Government established Community Cabinet when it came to office in 1998 as a new initiative giving Queenslanders an opportunity to raise issues face-to-face with their Ministers.

It is an invaluable forum where Ministers get to listen to Queenslanders in their own communities about the issues that directly concern them.

This initiative demonstrates how accessible Government is today, and it recognises the important role our regional communities play, as they are indeed the heart of this great State.

This weekend will be the third Community Cabinet to be held in the Wide Bay-Burnett region which is home to 257,200 Queenslanders and a wide range of industries.

Wide Bay-Burnett is Queensland's largest vegetable and citrus producer, with tourism also contributing to the region's economy, as it stands at the southern gateway to the Great Barrier Reef.

Next month, the 91st Community Cabinet since my Government was elected, will be held in Mackay—another dynamic and growing region.

Because growth brings many challenges, we need to continue to plan services and infrastructure to help meet the needs of our growing population.

To do this, we need to meet and to listen to Queenslanders about their needs, their industries and their visions for the future of their State.

Because my Government is focused on getting on with the job and making sure we get the basics right, both the Bundaberg and Mackay Community Cabinets form essential parts of this listening and planning process.

The Mackay-Whitsunday region is itself one of the strongest in Queensland and it is opportune for Ministers to see first hand the diversity in this region when Community Cabinet is held there on March 19 and 20.

Community Cabinet is an opportunity for dialogue, and I look forward to meeting and listening to the people of Bundaberg and Mackay in the weeks ahead.