



Speech by

Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

Hansard Tuesday, 28 February 2006

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Queensland Health, Code of Conduct

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier) (9.44 am): While we are talking about health, and I want to thank, Stephen Robertson, the Minister for Health for the hard work that he has done on this, we are releasing the Queensland Health code of conduct.

My government has given a commitment that it will reform Queensland's health system to ensure that every Queenslander receives the highest possible quality care. Today is another milestone in that reform process—more evidence that the health minister, Stephen Robertson, is getting on with the job of fixing our health system on behalf of the government and all Queenslanders.

Both the Davies and the Forster reports on our health system recommended a major overhaul of Queensland Health's code of conduct to ensure that it does a better job of protecting any future whistleblowers. I table the new code of conduct and I am very pleased to do so. The release of the new code sends a clear signal to the employees of Queensland Health that intimidation, bullying and harassment will not be tolerated. Queensland Health employees who see breaches of the code will now have clear guidelines on how to bring any potential breach to the attention of hospital managers. The new code requires managers to take prompt and transparent action on such complaints. It also expressly prohibits employees from working outside their clinical scope of practice. The new code of conduct requires everyone who works for Queensland Health to be open about reporting mistakes and demands that managers be just when dealing with them.

The Davies and Forster inquiries made it clear that major change was vital. Since the government received their reports, we have set about making that change. Those reforms include a mini-budget to add \$6.4 billion to Queensland's health spending; substantial improvements in the pay and conditions offered to doctors working in Queensland Health worth more than \$1 billion, and negotiations are underway to improve the pay of our nurses; senior doctors being given more say in the running of our public hospitals; a major recruitment campaign to attract more nurses and doctors to Queensland Health; greater transparency in providing vital information on the public hospital system through the Queensland Health system; campaigning to ensure that Queensland gets its fair share of medical student places—we have already received an extra 60 full fee-paying places, and we are continuing to tell the Prime Minister that we need 325 additional HECS university places next year.

There has been a long and detailed consultation process to ensure that we got the new code of conduct right. Consultation on the code included an exposure draft released in this place in October 2005 and the Director-General of Health writing to all employee unions, the Integrity Commissioner, the Public Service Commissioner and the Crime and Misconduct Commission seeking feedback. Redrafts of the code were then sent to employee unions in January and February 2006.

We will continue the hard work required to improve Queensland's health system, and the new code is another milestone along the road to reform.