



Speech by

Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

Hansard Thursday, 2 March 2006

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Nurses, Pay and Conditions

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier) (9.32 am): The 22,000 nurses employed by Queensland Health will today begin their consideration of a new enterprise agreement which offers them a 25.3 per cent pay rise, including a four per cent interim agreement. The offer, worth almost \$1 billion, is designed to ensure our hardworking, highly skilled nurses and those employed by the Mater public hospital are justly rewarded. Almost half of Queensland's nurses are level 1 registered nurses. If they accept the proposed agreement, their annual pay will increase from \$53,525 per year as at October 2005 to \$64,497 as at March 2009. Importantly, the agreement will also bring the pay rates of Queensland nurses into line with their colleagues around the rest of the nation. Currently only nurses in Tasmania and Victoria are paid less than Queensland nurses—that is, level 1 registered nurses. We need to fix that and we are. The new agreement will ensure that our nurses are better paid than their colleagues in every state and territory bar New South Wales. The difference in the cost of living between New South Wales and Queensland means that our nurses will have spending power on a par with their New South Wales colleagues.

An interim agreement of four per cent was supported by nurses in December 2005 while negotiations continued for the agreement now before nurses for their consideration. The interim agreement allowed the government to take account of the important recommendations from the Forster review and the Davies inquiry as well as addressing key areas such as attraction and retention of nurses, enhancing the roles of our nurses and their workloads.

Some key areas of the enterprise agreement proposal include competitive wage rates for nurses, including four per cent pay increases in October this year, July 2007 and July 2008; two additional 3.5 per cent nursing attraction and advancement incentive payments in March 2006 and March 2009—including the four per cent wage increase provided in the interim agreement, this represents a total wage increase of 25.3 per cent for our nurses; professional development for all permanent and permanent part-time nurses—something nurses have been pursuing for some time; enhanced career paths for registered and enrolled nurses including advanced practice roles such as nurse practitioners; an advanced career path for assistants in nursing; additional support for nursing graduate transition into the workplace; extending rural area incentives to enrolled nurses—something they specifically wanted; and improvements to night shift and on-call arrangements.

As part of the agreement, Queensland Health will work with the Queensland Nurses Union to implement workplace initiatives that ensure the nursing workforce is being utilised across the full scope of nursing practice including enhanced roles for nurses. The proposal now before our nurses is the result of a commitment from all parties to ensure long-term solutions are found for our nursing workforce. In other words, we listen to our nurses.

Our nurses play a critical and valuable role in looking after Queenslanders. I believe the proposal delivers a significant improvement to the working conditions of nurses in Queensland Health and nurses employed by the Mater public hospital. In addition to the enterprise agreement proposal, Queensland Health is continuing to work with nurses to ensure we do better on important issues like recruitment, work/

life balance, education and training, and workload management. I am proud that my government is able to offer Queensland nurses a better deal through this agreement, and I commend it to them for their consideration.

To assist members, I seek leave to have incorporated in *Hansard* the fortnightly and annual rates payable for registered nurses level 1 from 26 October 2005 through to 1 March 2009. It provides a comparison with Queensland, ACT, New South Wales, Northern Territory, South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria and Western Australia.

Leave granted.

Fortnightly (and annual) rates payable for Registered Nurse Level 1 Top Paypoint (NO1-8)

Date	QLD	ACT	NSW	NT	SA	TAS	VIC	WA
26/10/2005	4% \$2,051.61 (\$53,525)	\$2,069.71 (\$53,997)	\$2,279.07 (\$59,459)	\$2,059.21 (\$53,723)	\$2,082.12 (\$54,321)	\$1,951.19 (\$50,905)	\$2,032.60 (\$53,029)	\$2,069.71 (\$53,997)
27/03/2006	3.50% \$2,123.41 (\$55,398)	\$2,212.98 (\$57,735)	\$2,279.07 (\$59,459)	\$2,169.17 (\$56,592)	\$2,082.12 (\$54,321)	\$2,058.51 (\$53,705)	\$2,032.60 (\$53,029)	\$2,069.71 (\$53,997)
27/10/2006	4% \$2,208.35 (\$57,614)	\$2,370.57 (\$61,846)	\$2,370.23 (\$61,838)	\$2,255.94 (\$58,856)	\$2,082.12 (\$54,321)	\$2,058.51 (\$53,705)	\$2,032.60 (\$53,029)	\$2,162.84 (\$56,427)
27/07/2007	4% \$2,296.68 (\$59,919)	\$2,370.57 (\$61,846)	\$2,465.04 (\$64,311)	\$2,255.94 (\$58,856)	\$2,273.67 (\$59,318)	\$2,258.59 (\$58,925)	\$2,093.60 (\$54,621)	\$2,249.35 (\$58,684)
27/07/2008	4% \$2,388.55 (\$62,315)	\$2,465.39 (\$64,320)	\$2,563.64 (\$66,884)	\$2,346.18 (\$61,210)	\$2,364.62 (\$61,691)	\$2,348.93 (\$61,282)	\$2,177.34 (\$56,805)	\$2,339.32 (\$61,031)
1/03/2009	3.5% \$2,472.15 (\$64,497)	\$2,465.39 (\$64,320)	\$2,563.64 (\$66,884)	\$2,346.18 (\$61,210)	\$2,364.62 (\$61,691)	\$2,348.93 (\$61,282)	\$2,264.43 (\$59,077)	\$2,339.32 (\$61,031)

Assumptions:

ACT: assumes a 4% increase each April for forecasts beyond the current agreement that expires 23 March 2007

NSW: assumes a 4% increase each July for forecasts beyond the current agreement that expires 30 June 2008

NT: assumes a 4% increase each September for forecasts beyond the current agreement that expires 9 August 2006

SA: assumes a 4% increase each July for forecasts beyond the current agreement that expires 30 June 2007

TAS: assumes a 4% increase each July for forecasts beyond the current agreement that expires 30 June 2007

VIC: assumes a 4% increase each October for forecasts beyond the current agreement that expires 30 September 2007

WA: assumes a 4% increase each May for forecasts beyond the current agreement that expires 30 April 2007

Mr BEATTIE: I thank the Deputy Premier and Treasurer in particular for her support. I thank the health minister, Stephen Robertson, and the industrial relations minister, Tom Barton, for these negotiations. I also publicly acknowledge the constructive and positive role taken by the Queensland Nurses Union. I emphasise—and I do this in the strongest possible terms—that we value our nurses. We value them because they are the lifeblood of our health system. We value them because every day they save lives. In addition, we hope this will not only retain nurses in our system but also attract nurses back into our system. That, in the long term, will provide better care to Queenslanders.