



Speech by

Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

Hansard Thursday, 30 March 2006

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Griffith University, Doctor Training

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier) (9.44 am): The Gold Coast is playing a crucial role in my government's efforts to help tackle the national doctor shortage with 35 additional students this year starting their medical training at Griffith University's Southport campus. I visited the Gold Coast recently with the Minister for Health to meet the first intake of new state government funded medical students.

The students are part of a ground breaking \$60 Million State Government training and support package to get 235 new doctors ready to work in Queensland public hospitals.

The State Government is paying for a complete training package for the 35 trainees, and for 50 more each year for the next four years.

These students will train in Queensland and work in Queensland—they are our doctors of tomorrow.

We will pay the students' fees, scholarships and assistance to obtain postgraduate qualifications, and when the first intake graduates in 2009, they are bonded to work for Queensland Health for six years.

That will allow us to send doctors to places in the greatest need, particularly in rural and remote Queensland and Indigenous communities.

This innovative doctor training program is part of the State Government's massive \$6.4 Billion Health Action Plan to build a better public health system in Queensland.

Doctor training is not a State Government responsibility, however there is a shortage of doctors around the nation and if we don't step in and do whatever we can to fix the situation it will only get worse.

We want to get on with the job and build a better public health system in Queensland and the simple fact is we need more doctors to help us do that.

The Queensland Government is working on a number of fronts to help tackle the national doctor shortage.

For example we have provided a record \$1 Billion improved pay and conditions package for doctors, including visiting medical officers, working in Queensland public hospitals.

In addition we have undertaken an extensive recruitment program both interstate and overseas, and our 325 Campaign resulted in a Commonwealth commitment to provide more medical student places at universities to boost locally-trained doctor numbers.

These initiatives are starting to pay dividends. In the past eight months Queensland Health has employed an additional 190 doctors.

The Health Action Plan is the most significant reform of the Queensland health system ever undertaken.

Queenslanders have made it clear they want a better health system, and we are doing everything we can to make that happen through initiatives such as the ground breaking doctor training program at Griffith University.