



Speech by

# Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

Hansard Thursday, 25 May 2006

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## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Bird Flu

**Hon. PD BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier) (9.34 am): My government has taken a proactive approach to planning in preparation for the spread of avian influenza and a possible influenza pandemic in humans. We have been working closely with the Commonwealth government, other states and territories and local governments to progress our planning. The World Health Organisation has confirmed a family cluster of human cases of avian influenza in North Sumatra in Indonesia. This is the largest reported cluster of cases since the beginning of the avian influenza outbreak in December 2003. There is still no evidence of the efficient spread of bird flu from person to person and so no evidence that a new human influenza pandemic has started.

The Australian government is closely monitoring the situation in countries affected by H5N1 bird flu and we are maintaining close contact with international organisations such as the WHO and the World Organisation for Animal Health OIE. The Australian Animal Health Laboratory at Geelong is ready and available to receive and test any samples should the need arise.

COAG agreed to develop an Australian influenza pandemic prevention and preparedness action plan by mid-2006. The plan will bring together nationally consistent measures which aim to prevent bird flu coming to Australia. It will also identify a coordinated rapid response in the event of a pandemic developing. COAG also agreed to test the national action plan in a national domestic exercise later in 2006.

The federal and state governments have been taking active steps to ensure we are as prepared as possible to respond. At the federal level funding has been provided for the domestic health response to help our regional neighbours and to strengthen Australia's front-line defences against highly pathogenic avian influenza. I will continue to keep the parliament and the people of Queensland informed of developments. As members would understand this is a matter of great concern to any community.