



Speech by

Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

Hansard Friday, 26 May 2006

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Barcaldine, Tree of Knowledge

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier) (8.39 am): The Tree of Knowledge will always be a part of Australia's history, marking the meeting place, as it did, during the shearers' strikes of 1890-91—a struggle that proved significant for Labor and for politics in this country. The tree is a symbol of strength. Therefore, the nation listened in some disbelief a fortnight ago to the news that the tree had been poisoned. Its prognosis remains dire.

I can inform the House that the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries is working with the Barcaldine Shire and the Australian Workers' Heritage Centre to develop a propagating program to ensure the survival of seedlings from this historic tree, should it not survive.

Due to the public interest in this rotten act of vandalism or wilful damage, police are, quite rightly, investigating the matter. To assist in these investigations, the Australian Labor Party—not the government—has offered a reward of up to \$10,000 for information that leads to the conviction of those responsible. Any information, including an anonymous tip, should be provided to Crime Stoppers.