



Speech by

# Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

Hansard Wednesday, 7 June 2006

---

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Nuclear Energy

**Hon. PD BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier) (9.33 am): Yesterday marked a sad milestone in the evolution of energy supplies in this country. Yesterday the Prime Minister kicked off an unnecessary public debate on the nuclear power industry in Australia. If the Prime Minister pushes ahead with his plan to force Australians to accept nuclear power it will result in an outcome that will leave our children and grandchildren with an intractable waste problem. It is a dangerous option with dubious economic benefits. Anyone with experience with this debate knows that the location of nuclear power stations and waste sites is at the heart of this issue. If it was not, why has it taken the federal government years to try to find a national nuclear waste depository for even the low-level waste we already have? And it has failed to do so. We have not even passed that test.

The Prime Minister has misread the public mood on this issue, and no more so than here in Queensland where the coal industry generates funds that employ our doctors, nurses, police, teachers and so on. The data shows that for the first five months of 2005-06 the value of Queensland's coal exports was 78 per cent higher than in the same period in 2004-05. Our total royalties for the next financial year are expected to be \$1.5 billion, and coal will generate the vast majority of those profits—at least \$1 billion. I want to make it clear that while I am Premier of this state there will not be a nuclear reactor here in Queensland.

The Queensland government has the power to stop the construction of nuclear power stations. More worryingly, the Commonwealth is claiming the right to place a waste dump anywhere in Queensland it wishes. The Prime Minister must come clean. It is inconceivable that a man of his experience would have entered into this debate without a clear plan for the placement of nuclear reactors. If we are going to have this debate, let us have it in its entirety. Let us not have part of it; let us have the lot. We need to know which community in Queensland the Prime Minister is planning to make nuclear. As I said, while I am Premier of this state I will use the full constitutional powers available to me and my government to block any unwanted nuclear move into Queensland by the federal government. In the meantime, I urge the Prime Minister to rethink this issue. Queenslanders do not want it and Queenslanders do not need it.

I notice that the federal member representing Toowoomba, Ian Macfarlane, said the other day that he was quite happy to have a nuclear reactor in his backyard. I think he should go and ask the people of Toowoomba whether they want a nuclear reactor in their backyard.

**Mr Terry Sullivan:** He does not want recycled water.

**Mr BEATTIE:** He does not want recycled water, but he wants people to glow in the dark. The reality is that he has to make up his mind what he wants. At the end of all this we will fight a nuclear reactor in Toowoomba and everywhere else.