



Speech by

Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

Hansard Wednesday, 7 June 2006

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Healthy Hearing Program

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier) (9.51 am): In line with Queensland Health's Healthy Hearing Program, which aims to screen all newborn children for hearing loss by July 2006, I am pleased to announce that my government will support the Hear and Say Centre of Queensland with a \$30,000 grant for an impedance machine to test for flexibility in the eardrum. I seek leave to incorporate the remainder of my ministerial statement in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

This grant will help the Hear and Say Centre update its equipment to cater for newborns and see more Queensland babies screened for hearing deficits before the age of six months.

I must thank Dr Joanna Tait of the WANTZ Committee for bringing this opportunity to my attention. As a Government, we have already identified the need to screen Queensland babies for hearing loss before the current average age of two and a half. Diagnosis and intervention before the age of six months means an affected child can develop essentially normal language by the age of three years.

Babies diagnosed too late or that don't receive the appropriate treatment for hearing loss can experience psychological, social, and economic disadvantage and disability, including impaired speech and language development, so early detection and intervention is good news for Queensland families, Mr Speaker.

The Hear and Say Centre is a Brisbane-based charity that offers invaluable free testing and educational facilities for hearing-impaired children and our contribution will help ensure hundreds of young Queenslanders are properly diagnosed and treated for their hearing loss, enabling them the best chance at overcoming their difficulties.