



Speech by

# Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

Hansard Wednesday, 7 June 2006

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## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### National Rugby League Grand Final

**Hon. PD BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier) (9.52 am): I want to table a letter I have written to David Gallop, the NRL Chief Executive, outlining my dismay and disappointment at his decision to snub Queenslanders by handing Sydney the grand final until 2012. I might just alert him to the fact that there are two Rugby League states in Australia—New South Wales and Queensland. If he forgets this, then frankly the NRL will lose support. I urge it to wake up, and I seek leave to incorporate the remainder of my ministerial statement in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

I believe the decision hatched with the NSW Government to lock-up the season decider in Sydney for the next six years is a disgrace. As the name suggests—this competition is supposed to be a national rugby league competition and not a Sydney competition.

After all seven of the 16 teams next year will not reside in Sydney.

A suggestion that Sydney is the game's true heartland leaves me and other Queensland supporters totally cold.

In 2005 the Queensland Rugby League had more than 35,000 registered junior participants—an increase of 12.5%—and 14,000 registered senior participants. These figures do not include coaches, administrators and referees—estimated at more than 4000.

Of course we are also home to two of the most successful teams in the competition—the Broncos and the Cowboys.

Since the establishment of the NRL in 1998, they have participated in three Grand finals.

The Broncos won the competition in 1998 and 2000 and the North Queensland Cowboys went down valiantly to the West Tigers last year.

Of course the Broncos also won the Super League Grand Final in 1997.

And where was that game successfully hosted before a sell out crowd?

Our own ANZ Stadium.

Mr Speaker,

There's a good chance this year that one or both of our Queensland teams will get to the Grand final this year.

When the Gold Coast Titans kick off next year there will be three top Queensland teams in the competition.

We at least deserve the chance to bid for the Grand Final and if we had known that the rights were up for bidding we would have gone in boots and all for Queensland sports fans.

*Tabled paper:* Copy of letter, undated, from the Premier to Mr David Gallop, Chief Executive Officer, National Rugby League regarding grand final venue.