



Speech by

# Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

Hansard Wednesday, 9 August 2006

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## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Fire Safety

**Hon. PD BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier) (9.34 am): I want to begin this morning by issuing a plea to everyone living in Queensland to please take care to protect yourself from the risk of house fire. For the second morning in a row we have awoken to the news of a tragic death in a house fire. Overnight an 81-year-old woman died in her home apparently as she tried to make her way to telephone for help. Yesterday a 34-year-old man died and his housemate was seriously injured in a house fire at Virginia. In the last financial year 14 Queenslanders died and nearly 200 were injured in 1,700 house fires. In the past seven weeks alone seven people have died in house fires.

From July next year smoke alarms will be mandatory in all Queensland homes but I appeal to everyone—and that is renters and owners alike—to please not wait and install a smoke alarm now. There are more than 236,000 homes without effective smoke alarms installed throughout Queensland. The risk of death from fire in a home is up to three times higher in homes without smoke alarms when compared to homes with smoke alarms.

The Queensland Fire and Rescue Service research statistics show that each year about 50 people escape fires in their homes after being warned by a smoke alarm. People can take advantage of the expertise of our firefighters through our Safehome program. I urge people to make the call and their local firefighters will visit their home to conduct a fire awareness inspection. They can tell people about the best place to put their smoke alarms and help them with an evacuation plan. This is especially important if people have small children. For information, including how to book a Safehome visit, phone 1300369003 or visit [www.fire.qld.gov.au](http://www.fire.qld.gov.au). I seek leave to have additional information incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Fire deaths take a terrible toll on the family and friends of those killed and on our hard working fire fighters.

We've supported the emergency services with an 11% increase in their budget to give them the resources they need—but it is up to all of us to take some simple steps now to protect our families and our homes.

Key safety messages:

- Ensure you have at least one working smoke alarm installed in the home
- Conduct a fire safety audit around the home to review all electrical equipment cords and any other potential fire safety hazards such as clothes too close to heaters etc
- Ensure you and your family have a well practised home evacuation plan that identifies exits from each room. If you have an elderly family member ensure that any limitations (such as physical mobility) are factored into the plan
- Ensure all family members including children are familiar with the 000 process
- If you are using any form of heating appliance from a heater to an electric blanket to cooking something on the stove, never leave any device unattended.

**Mr BEATTIE:** I plead with the community to take advantage of that service.