



Speech by

Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

Hansard Thursday, 10 August 2006

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Yeppoon Hospital

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier) (9.42 am): My government is determined to ensure that construction of a new hospital at Yeppoon starts as soon as possible. I want to make this clear because if the local member, Paul Hoolihan, continues to ring my office about it I intend to report him to the police. It got to the stage where he was ringing three times a day, and I think that is enough. I want to make the point that the member has impressed upon me the need for this hospital. Let me tell the member what we are doing as a result of all the nagging he has done.

Despite an appropriate site being identified last year, ongoing negotiations with the owner for the purchase of the land and a formal notice of intention to resume being issued in November last year, the site has yet to be acquired. This is simply not good enough for the people of Yeppoon, and I agree with the member's representations.

The site—nearly three hectares of land on the corner of the Rockhampton-Yeppoon Road and Hoskyn Drive at Yeppoon—remains the best available site for the new hospital and is ideally located just a few kilometres from the heart of Yeppoon. We made an offer to the owner based on what we believe is fair market value for the land. Unfortunately, the owner has chosen not to accept the government's offer. That is why we had to issue a notice which allows for a formal response from the owner and objections under the provisions of the Acquisition of Land Act 1967. But still the saga drags on.

Today I am announcing in parliament so that it is on the public record and everyone can see the transparency here—there is nothing hidden—that my government will immediately draft legislation authorising acquisition of this site. We have had enough. I want this saga ended. I want to see construction of the new Yeppoon hospital as soon as possible.

The legislation will provide certainty that the government will acquire this parcel of land for hospital purposes but will not prevent further negotiations proceeding on the price to be paid for the land. If the owner wants to come up with a sensible price as soon as possible that is fine. Let us get the negotiations finished. If it is not resolved, we will legislate. That is it. Some people will think this is heavy handed but let me make it clear that the people of Yeppoon are going to get a hospital.

If, however, agreement cannot be reached on the value of the land then this will be determined in the normal way through the land court. This process will ensure certainty and will allow us to start building a new hospital for the people of Yeppoon without any further unnecessary delay. I concede that this is an unusual step, but it is fair and it is in the public interest and I am happy to defend it. The people of Yeppoon deserve no less.