



Speech by

Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

Hansard Thursday, 10 August 2006

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Smart State Academies; Reading Challenge

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier) (9.45 am): I would like to take this opportunity to update the House on the two major education initiatives that support our young scholars that I have been working on with the Minister for Education, Rod Welford. Firstly, I am delighted that the first-round offers have been made for entry into the Academy for Science, Maths and Technology at Toowong, and the Academy for Creative Industries at Kelvin Grove. I understand that there have been more than 1,000 expressions of interest in the academies from across the state. This is a terrific response.

On another initiative, I am delighted to report that the Reading Challenge, which I launched with Rod Welford, the Minister for Education, on 25 May, is also going strong. I am advised 705 schools have registered and, from estimates that have come from teachers, that is around 102,000 students. That is an outstanding commitment in the first year of the Reading Challenge. I seek leave to have the details incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Mr Speaker, literacy is a critical life skill and a focus of activity for Governments and schools alike.

My Reading Challenge supports the efforts being made to improve literacy outcomes for young Queenslanders.

Reading is an enriching experience. It allows you to explore new worlds and think of things in new ways.

I encourage all students in the Reading Challenge to have fun and enjoy the world of words.