



Speech by

# Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

Hansard Thursday, 10 August 2006

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## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Gold Coast Airport Marathon

**Hon. PD BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier) (9.47 am): The Gold Coast Airport Marathon is flying high as a destination for Japanese tourists who want to compete in a marathon. I seek leave to have the details incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

The number of Japanese entrants has doubled since Queensland Events Gold Coast took over management of this iconic event in 2001.

1060 competitors from Japan flew to the Gold Coast this year especially to take part in the marathon.

At a time when tourism numbers from Japan are strengthening after a quiet period, this outcome for the Gold Coast demonstrates the invaluable role events can play in the tourism industry.

This success was due to Queensland Events Gold Coast and Tourism Queensland in Japan, working with Tourism Australia and Gold Coast Tourism.

The Japanese competitors came as teams, as groups, as individuals.

They were led by Olympic dual medallist Yuko Arimori in her role as Japan's sporting goodwill ambassador for the year of exchange.

This is a 30 year anniversary event commemorating the signing of the 1976 basic treaty of friendship between Australia and Japan.

I am told that while Deputy Premier Anna Bligh put in a strong performance to finish the 21km stretch in just over 2 hours, she was no match for Arimori who finished in 1hour 26 minutes.

This was the fourth record-breaking Gold Coast Airport Marathon in a row, with almost 14,000 entrants competing.

Five years ago the number of entrants was less than half that amount, and facing rapid decline.

I have full confidence the Gold Coast Airport Marathon will continue to make strong strides under the leadership of Kerry Watson and his team at Queensland Events Gold Coast for 2007 and beyond.