



Speech by

Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

Hansard Thursday, 10 August 2006

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Socceroos

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier) (11.31 am), by leave: I am happy to inform this House, together with my ministerial colleague Tom Barton, that Queensland has scored a sporting coup with the World Cup Qantas Socceroos to play an international friendly match in Brisbane at Suncorp on Saturday, 7 October 2006. This is a match that will pit our national team, the Socceroos, against South American powerhouse Paraguay.

After many sleepless nights during the recent World Cup we all know how good the Socceroos are. We now have the chance to see for ourselves. Following talks with soccer authorities the Queensland government has secured the match against Paraguay which is ranked 19th in the world. Australia is ranked 33rd. I will come back to that.

This game against another 2006 World Cup finalist will be a vital match in Australia's Asian Cup preparations. This match comes hot on the heels of the state government's recently announced \$500,000 development package for junior football throughout Queensland. I understand a large contingent of our World Cup Socceroos are expected to play in this encounter.

We were thrilled by their progress in the World Cup in Germany. We all remember that the eventual champions were only able to beat our Socceroos after a diving exhibition which resulted in a penalty goal against us in injury time. Pity they did not have a CMC internationally. They will play one of South America's top teams, Paraguay, which is ranked 19th. I am a little surprised that we are still ranked only 33rd.

The Football Federation of Australia's football family initiative will apply for the match, with grassroots players and supporters in Brisbane having the opportunity to preregister for priority access to tickets at myfootball.com.au until 25 August. Tickets are expected to go on sale generally in the first week of September.

I wish to acknowledge the role of the minister for sport, Tom Barton, in negotiating this outcome. I also want to thank John O'Neill for the role that he has played. As we all know, he played a significant role in the Rugby Union World Cup. He now does the same for soccer. He seems to be a champion in whatever he turns his hand to. This is great news for soccer fans.