



Speech by

Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

Hansard Wednesday, 11 October 2006

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Ekka Hospital Hostel

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.53 am): Land on the site of the Ekka will be leased to the private sector to develop accommodation for patients and their families visiting the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital. I seek leave to have details incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

The redevelopment is part of a broader multi-million dollar strategy between the State Government and the Royal National Association to help revitalise the Ekka Showgrounds.

Often people have to travel long distances to visit the hospital but they don't necessarily have to be treated as inpatients.

Queensland Health estimates that on a daily basis, at least 30 patients at the Royal Brisbane Hospital could use this kind of accommodation.

They require on-going treatment but don't require intensive nursing care overnight or are recovering from treatment.

This is an innovative way of creating yet more hospital beds for inpatients.

We are already opening at least 1,359 additional public hospital beds over a six year period through projects and redevelopments at existing hospitals. This does not include the three major new hospitals I committed to building during the election campaign.

Current figures show there were 9,679 beds in Queensland public hospitals at June 30 this year, an increase of 339 over the June 2005 figure of 9,340 beds.

If family need to visit a loved one in hospital the last thing they need to be worried about is somewhere to stay that is too expensive or too far away from the hospital.

The Ekka site is right across the road from the hospital and will offer visitors greater convenience and security.

Of course, special times of year the accommodation has the potential to be used by Ekka exhibitors and show goers—helping boost patronage of one of Australia's most popular family shows.

The land, on the northern side of the Ekka ground, would be offered by the RNA on long term lease for the development of a multi-storey building.

In August, approval was given to the Coordinator-General to work with the RNA to help identify a private sector developer and operator of the 'medi-hotel'.

Expressions of interest are due to be called/have been called and construction is due to start in 2008.