



Speech by

Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

Hansard Wednesday, 11 October 2006

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Rugby Union

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.54 am): Queensland has secured at least 10 Wallaby Rugby tests over the next eight years in what is one of the most significant agreements ever entered into by the Australian Rugby Union. I seek leave to have details incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

The 10-match package between 2007 and 2014 is a rugby coup for Queensland, which could pump upwards of \$100 million into the State's economy.

This package includes three Bledisloe Cup Tests against the All Blacks to be played at Suncorp Stadium, which has been described by Captain George Gregan as the Wallabies' favourite stadium.

The first of the three Bledisloe Cup Tests will be played in 2008 with the remaining two expected in 2011 and 2014, subject to the potential extension of the South African, New Zealand and Australian Rugby agreement.

The remaining seven Wallabies Tests will be against leading rugby countries, with the guarantee of two Test matches in both 2008 and 2009.

Also as part of the agreement, I requested the ARU to play international matches in regional cities such as Townsville and the Gold Coast.

If there is support shown for these matches from local patrons, businesses and councils then I will work with the Mayors in both cities to secure these additional games.

I commend the Australian Rugby Union on its foresight to invest heavily in a "heartland" State, ensuring Queensland becomes a premium Rugby market for the next eight years.

July's Bledisloe Cup Test generated about \$17 million in economic impact for the State, while Brisbane Airport reported very heavy traffic—with all inner-city hotels booked out well in advance of the game.

Based on 2006 dollars, the three Bledisloe Cup Tests can be expected to contribute upwards of \$50 million and the seven other Tests a further \$50 million, meaning a \$100 million injection into the Queensland economy as a result of today's announcement.

If we hadn't turned Suncorp Stadium into the state-of-the-art venue it is today, we would not be attracting such high-class Rugby blockbusters, it's as simple as that.

And it should be remembered that the construction of the stadium was funded from a levy placed on poker machine operations—not from taxpayers.

Popular international sporting events such as the Bledisloe Cup and other international rugby fixtures pump big bucks into several sectors of the Queensland economy as well as showing off Queensland to an international market.

The flow-on effects of this investment are obvious. More than 500,000 fans will get to watch the cream of international Rugby in Queensland while our local businesses and economy will benefit as a result of the increased number of visitors.

Many millions more will see everything Queensland has to offer via the international broadcasting of these matches.

I congratulate everyone involved in securing the games for Queensland, including the Major Sports Facilities Authority, the management of Suncorp Stadium, Tourism Queensland, Brisbane City Council and Brisbane Marketing.