



Speech by

Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

Hansard Tuesday, 28 November 2006

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Palm Island

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (10.05 am): In 2005 my government gave a commitment to improve services and opportunities on Palm Island and we are honouring that commitment. Since then significant improvements have been made, and these are detailed in the progress report on the implementation of the government response to the Palm Island Select Committee, which I am tabling this morning.

Mr Speaker, I know that as the local member you have a strong personal interest in the report, which shows that an alcohol management plan commenced in June this year and a Community Justice Group has been established. Funding has been provided for initiatives that give local people alternatives to alcohol and assistance in dealing with its impacts. A land use plan is in place that will assist the Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council plan for future development.

The preparatory year commenced in 2006 on Palm Island and planning is underway to enhance early childhood education services by focusing more on early literacy skills. The youth centre continues to be well used.

We are also working to improve transport options for the people of Palm Island. An extra daily ferry service will be running from 13 December 2006. Cheaper fares will also be available and construction on the upgrade to the airport is about to start. Just yesterday, as a further indication of our ongoing commitment to improve infrastructure and services for Palm Island, on the initiative of the minister for transport, state cabinet approved additional funding to repair and upgrade the jetty and barge ramp. Therefore, \$4.5 million is now available to do this work over the next two years. However, we have not achieved everything we set out to do and I will not pretend that we have. In particular, land and leases for a number of government facilities and infrastructure need to be resolved, including the Palm Island Community and Youth Centre. Today I urge the council to move quickly and work with us to fast-track those matters so that we do not lose our momentum. Those land use issues are crucial to the future of Palm Island and delays are unhelpful to the people of that island.

The responsibility for securing a brighter future for the people of Palm Island has to be shared by individuals, families, community leaders and all levels of government. I have asked the newly appointed Government Coordinator for Indigenous Service Delivery to drive implementation of the government's commitments to Palm Island. I now table a copy of the report.

Tabled paper: Queensland Government Progress Report on Implementation of the Government Response to the Palm Island Select Committee, dated November 2006

I have also arranged for individual members to receive copies, bearing in mind that a select committee of this parliament examined the issues on Palm Island.