



Speech by

Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

Hansard Tuesday, 28 November 2006

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Ministerial Gift Register

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (10.13 am): Earlier this month the Deputy Premier tabled the Ministerial Gift Register. Under Queensland government rules, premiers, ministers, parliamentary secretaries and their staff, and the Leader of the Opposition must notify the Ministerial Services Branch of the Department of Premier and Cabinet of any gift that could have a wholesale value of \$300 or more in its country of origin. The branch ascertains the value of the gift through research, by checking with the manufacturer or sending it to an antique dealer, the Queensland Art Gallery or another specialist dealer. If ministers want to keep gifts worth \$300 or more they must pay the value of the gift above \$300 personally.

Obviously, gifts of significant or cultural value are not available to ministers to be kept personally, and are retained by the Queensland Art Gallery or the Queensland Museum. Otherwise they must display them in their ministerial offices or in their departments, but those displayed gifts remain public property. They also may be donated to some charity or some organisation and there is a process by which those donations could be made.

My government has never hidden material on the Ministerial Gift Register, and I table it in this House.

Tabled paper: Report, dated 14 November 2006, by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet titled 'Gifts Received by Specified Dates (start date 26/09/98 end date 14/11/06)'.

Open access to ministerial gift data has been provided in the past and I have even taken the media through the gift storage room. It is part of an open and transparent government. Some members will recall that recently I held an auction to sell off some of the gifts. The money that was raised through that auction was then donated to charity. We did not retain that property. It was auctioned and the money raised through that auction was used for the public benefit. I note that the opposition supported our initiative to table the document, and I thank it for its support. In line with this support I know that the opposition will welcome my decision to extend the gift register to all shadow ministers, because I believe that it should apply equally to both sides of the House.

Extending the register will bring shadow ministers into line with their government colleagues and afford them the same opportunity to have openness and accountability, which is the hallmark of my government.

Mr Horan interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: Next the member will say to me that shadow ministers do not get any gifts. The members opposite should give us a list of their gifts; otherwise they will say that they do not get any gifts. I am happy to encourage accountability for those opposite.

Mr Seeney interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: I see that the Leader of the Opposition wants to have spot checks on various things. I have spelt out our strategy. We would like to apply this standard to his shadow ministers.

Mr Seeney: Absolutely.

Mr BEATTIE: Has the Leader of the Opposition asked all of his colleagues? Has he conducted spot checks? The first thing that the Leader of the Opposition can do is come forward today and disclose every one of the gifts the shadow ministers have received. I have tabled the list of gifts my ministers have received. Where is the gift list for the shadow ministers?

Mr Johnson: We haven't got any.

Mr BEATTIE: The opposition does not receive gifts? Is the opposition so unpopular that no-one gives it gifts? If the opposition members think that Queenslanders do not believe that they receive gifts, then they are kidding themselves. My challenge to the Leader of the Opposition is to table in the parliament this week details of all the gifts that every one of his shadow ministers has received. If the Leader of the Opposition cannot do that, then he has been caught out. The Leader of the Opposition should follow my lead. I am not asking him to do anything that I am not prepared to do. A list of every one of the gifts that all of my ministers have received have been tabled. The Leader of the Opposition should also table a list of the gifts that his shadow ministers have received.

Mr Seeney interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: The Leader of the Opposition is so unpopular that he is given only lollies. I do not know why people bother to even do that.