



Speech by

Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

Hansard Wednesday, 29 November 2006

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Gatton, Correctional Centre Precinct

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.35 am): I would like to announce to the House today that the Gatton shire has been identified as a preferred location for a new south-east Queensland correctional centre precinct. In December last year the government wrote to south-east Queensland councils calling for expressions of interest. We have always been very clear in our position that we would not force a new prison on any community. Queensland Corrective Services gave four presentations to councils that requested further information about the proposed new jail. Those councils included Warwick, Caloundra, Kilcoy and Gatton.

As I said, the Gatton shire has been identified as a preferred location and the government will now begin a community engagement process with local residents. Gatton shire was identified for a range of reasons. It is located within the Lockyer Valley south-west of Brisbane and is within an hour's drive of the Wacol prison precinct west of Brisbane. This was an important requirement in searching for a suitable location to aid the frequent transfer of prisoners between facilities, courts and hospitals. Gatton shire also has the population base to support such a big infrastructure project and, importantly, has a local council that is in full support.

The Gatton Shire Council has expressed in-principle support for the proposal, and it is easy to see why. This new facility can bring significant investment to the region. It will be worth more than \$375 million in trade value to the local area during the construction phase. It will create jobs for 380 staff in the initial stage, which will increase to 1,750 on completion. Past experience suggests at least 22 per cent of the professional staff required at the jail, such as custodial officers, psychologists, nurses, administration and management staff, will move to the local area instead of commuting, injecting a further \$19 million in wages to the Gatton shire's economy each year.

On top of this, Queensland Corrective Services has written to council to offer a variety of improvements to community infrastructure and services around this project. This includes the relocation of the showgrounds and associated equestrian facilities to the council's preferred location, expanding the Gatton State School site and rebuilding the town pool.

In a perfect world there would be no need for more jails, but as south-east Queensland's population continues to grow, inevitably so will our prison numbers. This government makes no apology for being tough on crime and incarcerating those who commit serious crimes and offences so as to protect the community. The Minister for Corrective Services, Judy Spence, will provide more detail to the House shortly, but I would like to put on the record my thanks to the Gatton Shire Council for its in-principle support.

I would like to table for the House copies of a report in today's *Gatton, Lockyer and Brisbane Valley Star* which deals with a number of quotes and also the state's promises to the shire. I also table a news release that will be issued in relation to it.

Tabled paper: Media release dated 29 November 2006 by the Premier titled 'Gatton Shire named as a preferred location for new SEQ jail'.

Tabled paper: Copies of various articles in the Gatton Lockyer Brisbane Valley Star dated 29 November 2006 regarding new jail for Gatton Shire.