



Speech by

# Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

Hansard Thursday, 30 November 2006

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## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### WorkChoices

**Hon. PD BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.39 am): This morning I joined thousands of working Queenslanders to protest against the Howard government's unfair workplace laws at the Australian Council of Trade Unions' day of action at South Bank. Similar rallies were held around the nation and in more than 40 locations throughout regional and rural Queensland. The strong turnout sent a clear message directly to John Howard—scrap the laws or his government will be scrapped at the next election.

We all know the WorkChoices changes are not needed in Queensland. We are a state with a fair and balanced industrial system underpinning rock-bottom industrial disputation levels and massive employment and economic growth. Queensland also has the best performing workers compensation scheme in Australia, with good benefits for injured workers and the lowest premiums for employers. The Howard government is trying to take this away and crush the rights of Queensland workers and we are committed to fighting it all the way. I seek leave to incorporate more details in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

We led the charge in the courts with a legal challenge.

We lost that battle but we are confident that we will win the war.

We will consider a range of measures, including toughening child labour laws and helping workers hold on to their rights under common law contract provisions.

We will be working to ensure the industrial rights of those Queensland Government workers that are now under the Work Choices legislation are maintained.

Where we can we will act to amend legislation at the state level to return those employees to the state jurisdiction.

We will also continue to monitor the laws and advise employees of their rights and responsibilities.

And most importantly we will continue to provide a voice of protest for the hundreds of thousands of Queenslanders affected by these laws.

We will fight to ensure existing entitlements and conditions such as overtime, penalty rates and public holiday pay are protected.

Today's Day of Action was a reminder that Queenslanders will not forget the human impact of these ridiculous laws.

They will also remember this when the Federal election is held next year.