



Speech by

Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

Hansard Tuesday, 22 May 2007

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Fitzgerald Inquiry, 20th Anniversary

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.50 am): Queensland has one of the most accountable governments in the world but there is no room for complacency. We need to continually review our systems, processes and accountability measures.

Tonight there will be a symposium which I will address and the police minister will address. There will be other distinguished guests there including a number of academics and the police commissioner. Mike Ahern will be there as will Quentin Dempster, the former *ABC 7.30 Report* presenter in Queensland and now in New South Wales. Dr Solomon will be there. I table that address and supporting media release for the information of the House.

Tabled paper: Copy of program for ANZOG/Griffith University Centre for Governance and Public Policy symposium titled 'The Fitzgerald Inquiry—20 years on' to be held on 22 May 2007.

Tabled paper: Copy of speech to be presented by the Premier to ANZOG/Griffith University Centre for Governance and Public Policy symposium titled 'The Fitzgerald Inquiry—20 years on' on 22 May 2007.

Tabled paper: Media release, dated 22 May 2007, by the Premier titled 'Queensland Toughens Position on Share Ownership and Directorships for Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries'.

In line with this approach about accountability, cabinet has reconsidered the code of ethics governing the ownership of shares and directorships held by ministers and parliamentary secretaries. Under the current code of conduct ministers are required to divest themselves of shareholdings in any company in respect of which a conflict of interest exists or could reasonably be suspected to exist. The government intends to make changes to the code of ethics this year to ensure that Queensland ministers and parliamentary secretaries meet an even higher standard of accountability and integrity.

The government will change the code to require all ministers and parliamentary secretaries to divest themselves and otherwise relinquish control of all shares and similar interests in any company that operates to make a profit. They will not be able to transfer their interests to their spouse. However, they will be permitted to transfer control to an outside professional nominee or blind trust or other trust, such as managed funds, providing they or their immediate family exercise no control on the operation of the nominee or trust.

Upon taking office ministers and parliamentary secretaries will also be required to immediately resign from or decline all directorships in public and/or private companies as well as any other positions that may present real or perceived conflicts of interest. Those who have existing directorships in a private company that operates a family farm, family business or family investments will be allowed to continue, provided that the directorship does not conflict with their official duties.

Once the new code is implemented later this year, newly appointed ministers and parliamentary secretaries will also be required to comply with the requirements within one month of their appointment to office. These changes will ensure that Queensland has the most stringent procedures concerning the ownership of shares and directorships held by ministers and parliamentary secretaries of any Australian jurisdiction.

This week marks the 20th anniversary of the Fitzgerald inquiry. Twenty years on my government reaffirms our commitment to honesty, openness and integrity in government and policing. Tonight, the Griffith University and the Australian and New Zealand School of Government are hosting an event here at parliament titled 'Fitzgerald Inquiry—20 years on'. I have the pleasure of presenting the keynote address at this event to be hosted by Professor Pat Weller. Other speakers are the police minister, Judy Spence, police commissioner, Bob Atkinson, former Premier Mike Ahern, Dr David Solomon and Quentin Dempster.

I conclude my remarks by saying this: my challenge to the Leader of the Opposition today is to ensure that shadow ministers comply with the same rules that I have brought in for my ministers and parliamentary secretaries. If the opposition is serious about standards and honesty, let the opposition comply with the same requirements.