



Speech by

Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

Hansard Thursday, 7 June 2007

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Cape York Peninsula

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.40 am): Later this morning I will introduce the Cape York Peninsula Heritage Bill 2007. This legislation represents one of the most significant land management initiatives in the history of Queensland. After months of negotiation between our government, the Indigenous community, conservation interests, the mining industry and the pastoral industry we have reached agreement on the resolution of outstanding land tenure and management issues on our beautiful Cape York Peninsula.

The agreement reaches common ground between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people and between conservation and development interests. It is a framework for the future to undertake ecologically sustainable development in the region. For Indigenous communities it will: create a new class of protected area that will enable national parks to be created over Aboriginal land without the need for lease-back arrangements and provide a simple, cheaper alternative to land tenure processes; designate Indigenous community use areas within Aboriginal land that are suitable for aquaculture, agriculture or grazing purposes and create, for those areas, a limited capacity for clearing under the Vegetation Management Act 1999; create the ability for land trusts with land in national parks to form subregional aggregations for the purposes of negotiating resources and management; allow the commercial use of crocodile products derived from eggs collected from the wild as part of a scientific study into the viability of this activity on western Cape York Peninsula—this initiative will be subject to review after one year of operation because we understand its sensitivity; identify resources for an Indigenous arts program and assessment of other economic development opportunities; provide for the protection of native title rights in the Wild Rivers Act 2000; and establish an Aboriginal environmental rangers program whose responsibility will include management of wild rivers.

For conservation interests it will: designate areas of international conservation significance to give initial recognition to World Heritage values and development of integrated management plans for national parks and nature refuges in these areas; remove impediments to the declaration of national parks through the establishment of joint management arrangements with Indigenous landowners; and provide a way forward to achieve the declaration of wild rivers in Cape York Peninsula.

For the pastoral industry it will: provide an ability for lessees to access rural lease terms of up to 75 years if they take action to protect World Heritage values and enter into an Indigenous land use agreement concerning use and access rights for traditional owners; require that the Minister for Natural Resources and Water consider the impact on the Cape York grazing industry of any decision to transfer a lease or to convert the lease to another tenure in the interests of ensuring that a viable grazing industry remains part of the Cape York future economy.

In implementing this legislation, the Minister for Natural Resources and Water and Minister for Environment and Multiculturalism will consult with an advisory committee comprising all key stakeholder interests including Aboriginal people, pastoralists, conservation interests, mining interests, tourism and local government.

This agreement helps fulfil our 2006 election commitment. I can also reaffirm our commitment to allocate \$15 million for voluntary land acquisition for the dual purposes of the protection of conservation values and the continued return of homelands to traditional owners as the basis for an economic future.

Many organisations have contributed to this historic agreement and I would like to acknowledge their efforts. I acknowledge the member for Cook, the Cape York Land Council, the Wilderness Society, the Australian Conservation Foundation, AgForce and the Queensland Resources Council, my caucus committee and, of course, my parliamentary colleagues. Through a spirit of endeavour and cooperation I believe that we have put in place a blueprint for a new future in the Cape York Peninsula. Today following question time there will be a major announcement and launch of this legislation and any member who wishes to attend is invited.