



Speech by

## Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

Hansard Wednesday, 5 September 2007

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### MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

#### Russia Week

**Hon. PD BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.38 am): A few weeks ago I declared 1 to 7 September Russia Week in Queensland to show the growing importance this country has to the Smart State and to commemorate a visit by senior Russian government and business leaders. Our Russian visitors are participating in the inaugural Russia Australia Business Forum at Parliament House today. It is themed around innovation in building the economies of the future. With a full program, it is an important platform giving government and business delegates an opportunity to meet face to face to exchange ideas and approaches to developing trade opportunities. My ministers and I will be engaged with this during the day.

I table for the information of the House a copy of the forum program and other associated material which includes sessions on the global economy and what it means for Russia and Australia.

*Tabled paper:* Russia Week Business Forum program for 5 September 2007, list of presenters and companies doing business in Russia.

*Tabled paper:* Media release, undated, by the Premier titled Smart State Launches Lucrative Russia Plan Ahead of APEC.

The forum, together with cultural activities tied into the inaugural Russia Week in Australia, is indicative of how strongly my government wishes to drive greater engagement with Russia.

Members will be aware from previous reports that both the Deputy Premier and I visited Russia in the initial stages to develop this relationship. Later this week—in fact, on Friday—I will be attending events in Sydney, including the official lunch with the Russian delegation. I will be meeting Yuri Luzhkov, the Mayor of Moscow, who I met in Moscow when I visited. We will be looking at advancing the relationship with the Moscow City government under the protocol of cooperation that I signed last year.

One practical way we are already advancing this agreement is by hosting the first 10-week study and work placement program for a procurement specialist, Mr Nikolay Akimov, who is visiting from the Moscow City Government University of Management. Mr Akimov arrived in Brisbane on Friday, 31 August and his scholarship is at Griffith University, with a series of work placements with Queensland agencies.

Hosting 130 Russian visitors, including a strong media delegation, will have a large impact with this influential group. They will take back with them impressions about Queensland and a greater insight into our modern and prosperous Smart State. The delegation is being led by His Excellency, Alexei Gordeyev, the Minister of Agriculture of the Russian Federation. I will also be joining the minister shortly to receive a special gift for the people of Queensland, a huge bronze statue of an important Russian scientific pioneer—a fitting gift for the Smart State and another example of just how far our Smart State reputation has spread.

I would like to incorporate a statement I will be releasing that spells out the detail of the relationship and what that plan includes.

Leave granted.

Queensland Government

Premier of Queensland and Minister for Trade

#### SMART STATE LAUNCHES LUCRATIVE RUSSIA PLAN AHEAD OF APEC

Premier Peter Beattie today announced a strategy to spearhead investment and trade opportunities and strengthen ties between the Smart State and the Russian Federation.

"In just three years Russia has moved from being our 41st largest merchandise export destination to our 21st—and rising," Mr Beattie said.

"That's a phenomenal rate of growth, from AUS\$35.2 million in 2003-04 to AUS\$344.2 million in 2006-07," he said.

"Through a new, targeted Queensland Russia: Towards 2010 strategy we will be showing how serious we are about building stronger global relationships and returning dividends to our partners, the Smart State and its people."

The three key elements of the new plan will include:

**Partnerships In Innovation:** Building links between Smart State universities, researchers and companies. This will include satellite and related technologies, agriculture, mining and energy.

**Regional Russia:** Linking flourishing regions of Russia with Smart State industries and services. This will include signing protocols of cooperation, business partnering and staff and student exchanges.

**Trade and Investment Growth Plan:** This will include a Trade Mission to Russia in 2008, increasing Queensland's visibility within Russia, attracting Russian delegations and media to visit and take part in events in Queensland, and provide targeted training and mentoring for Queensland companies. It will also include providing targeted training and mentoring to Queensland companies entering the Russian market.

Mr Beattie unveiled the plan at the Russia Australia Business Forum—a lead-in event to APEC, and the only one to be held outside of Sydney.

It has been co-hosted in Brisbane by the Queensland Government, the Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs, the Russian Academy of Business and newspaper Vedemosti.

Russian Minister for Agriculture and Co-Chairman of the Russian-Australian Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation, His Excellency Mr Alexei Gordeyev, is attending the forum and heading the largest senior delegation from Russia to visit Queensland to date.

Mr Beattie said the long-term value of developing trade partnerships and engaging with regional Russia cannot be underestimated.

"Since 2003, Russia has been recording growth rates of 6-8%—more than double the European Union," said the Premier.

He commended Queensland showing the way for others to follow, including Mincom, which provides specialist software to the Russian mining industry, and Red Oxygen—a leading developer of enterprise SMS/text messaging software which recently signed an agreement with Russian company The Vimpel Group.

"Queensland primary industries are cracking into the Russian market with Australian Rural Exports (Austrex) Pty Ltd successfully delivering one of the first ever consignments of beef breeding cattle to the Russian Market," Mr Beattie said.

In the knowledge sector, a Protocol of Cooperation with the Moscow City Government signed by the Premier last year has welcomed its first work placement in the Smart State, with Mr Nikolay Akimov, of Moscow's City University's Procurement Department, starting a 10-week program with Griffith University and other agencies on August 31.

Last year in Moscow Mr Beattie announced a Russian language scholarship, funded for three years by the Queensland Government and The University of Queensland.

Mr Alistair Tweed began his scholarship at UQ earlier this year, with the university reporting a 50% increase in the number of students studying Russian, up to 53 students since the scholarship was launched.

"Not only will greater engagement with Russia provide business and trade opportunities, but it will give students and workers a chance to gain experience overseas and become valuable members of the global economy," said the Premier.

In a significant gesture, Minister Alexei Gordeyev presented Queensland with a sculpture by Sergei Bychkov—a two metre tall, bronze statue of Konstantin Tsiolkovski, founder of theoretical astronautics who is regarded the father of space flight.

"On behalf of the people of Queensland I am humbled to receive such a significant gift, recognising Queensland's international reputation as the Smart State and our future role in the knowledge industries," Mr Beattie said.

"I am pleased to announce it will have a permanent home at the Planetarium, Mt Coot-tha, for the enjoyment of all Queenslanders and reminder of our strong ties with Russia."

Among senior officials joining Minister Gordeyev in Brisbane are:

- Mr Alexander Shokhin, President of the Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs;
- His Excellency Mr Viktor Kress, Governor of the Tomsk Region;
- Ms Irina Gorbulina, President of the Russian Academy of Business;

- Mr Sergey Chernyshev, Director of the Department of International Economic Relations, Russian Ministry for Economic Development and Trade;
- Mr Yuri Trushin, Chairman of the Board of the Russian Agricultural Bank.