Speech by

Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

Hansard Thursday, 6 September 2007

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Great Artesian Basin, Water Allocation

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.41 am): The Queensland government is set to release up to 17,200 megalitres of water as water licences from parts of the Great Artesian Basin. I table the relevant map of the area and the full details.

Tabled paper: Map, undated, by Queensland Natural Resources and Water titled 'Surat Basin management Areas of the Great Artesian Basin Water Resource Plan'.

The decision to release the additional water follows an exhaustive water planning process and extensive consultation with all stakeholders to ensure the sustainability of the Great Artesian Basin is protected.

The opportunity to obtain an additional water licence is likely to be of greatest interest to towns, feedlots, power stations and mines.

So far most of the interest in this water is coming from the western Darling Downs and the Surat Basin.

In the Surat Basin 7,200 megalitres will be available in the areas around Inglewood, St George, Miles and Roma.

A further 10,000 megalitres is available across most of the wider Great Artesian Basin to supplement town water supplies and for significant projects including power stations and some large coal mines.

The area that could benefit from this 10,000 megalitre release extends from Cape York in the north, south through Richmond and Longreach, to Birdsville and Goondiwindi and Miles in the south.

This release of water is about ensuring Queensland's prosperity while protecting the natural heritage and biodiversity of the Great Artesian Basin—and as always there are strong rules and conditions for its use.

The first licences granted as a result of this water release are likely to be issued in the middle of next year.

A detailed map of the Surat Basin release area and application forms are available from the Toowoomba office of the Department of Natural Resources and Water.