



Speech by

Stirling Hinchliffe

MEMBER FOR STAFFORD

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BEATTIE, MR PD

Mr HINCHLIFFE (Stafford—ALP) (11.55 am): I am very keen to place on the record my congratulations to the Premier on her new government and I extend to her my support in her new role. However, at this point I rise to acknowledge the outstanding contribution to the state of Queensland by Peter Beattie. This morning, the Premier paid tribute to Peter Beattie's time in this House and his nine years as the head of an historic government. However, I wish foremost to express my gratitude to the former member for Brisbane Central for his contribution to the reform of the Queensland branch of the Australian Labor Party.

After an earlier experience with Young Labor in 1971, Peter Beattie joined the Labor Party in 1974 in the shadow of the party's worst-ever electoral defeat. With the state party's ranks reduced to 11 members and dubbed a cricket team, Peter Beattie joined a party that desperately needed new blood, vision and ideas. Queensland Labor was hamstrung by an organisation that was out of touch and incapable of even envisaging a Labor government.

After another poor election result for Labor in 1977, Beattie joined a number of others within the ALP who committed themselves to the reform of this state's oldest political party. Reform was needed to break the power of the small clique that jealously guarded the spoils of defeat. Thankfully, Peter Beattie and others were able to encourage Dr Denis Murphy, the pre-eminent historian and University of Queensland academic, to join the reform movement. As a result of the campaign within the Labor Party, the party in Queensland was reformed, overturning the winner-takes-all system and bringing down barriers to a wider range of Queenslanders, allowing them to feel at home within the party.

As president and secretary of the ALP, Denis Murphy and Peter Beattie re-enlivened the party, renewed policy and recruited fresh candidates. Those changes ultimately provided for the election to this parliament of Dr Murphy as one of my predecessors as the member for Stafford. While the tragedy of his death denied the state Dr Murphy's intelligence and talent, others were preselected and elected who provided the parliamentary party with the renewal and diversity needed to respond to the needs of the state and, ultimately, challenge the Bjelke-Petersen regime. At the 1989 election, Wayne Goss, Keith De Lacy and a number of other members—including Peter Beattie as the member for Brisbane Central—were elected and formed the Goss Labor government.

After his 18 years service to the constituents of Brisbane Central, Peter Beattie leaves public life with a parting gift—a result of his commitment to the reform of the ALP—which is an excellent candidate for this Saturday's by-election. Grace Grace almost perfectly embodies the post-reform candidates for Queensland Labor. As the Premier mentioned this morning, Ms Grace is a lifelong local who has provided outstanding service in a white-collar union and invaluable experience in board rooms, and is also a woman from a non-English-speaking background. I know firsthand how well regarded Grace Grace is in Brisbane's inner suburbs. I am sure that her hard work and local commitment will be acknowledged this Saturday.

In contrast, let us consider the conservatives' position not only in relation to this Saturday's by-election, but in relation to reform and renewal of their parliamentary ranks. Conservative voters in the electorate of Brisbane Central are rightly angry at the Liberal and National parties. The Leader of the

Liberal Party wanted to contest this Saturday's by-election but it would appear that the desire of the Liberal Party executive to keep the member for Moggill off the nightly news in the lead-up to an overdue federal election was greater. This is a vote of no-confidence in the Leader of the Liberal Party by his party organisation. But I have some bad news for conservative voters in Brisbane Central and throughout the rest of Queensland: I am not aware of a reform movement within the Liberal Party. There is no Denis Murphy or Peter Beattie committed to the renewal of conservative politics.

Peter Beattie's contribution to the polity of Queensland is unparalleled. As a rank and file party member, as a union official, as a state secretary, as a member of this House, as a minister, as a leader of the opposition and as Premier for nine years, as Premier Bligh said this morning, his wide-ranging contribution has changed Queensland for the better. On behalf of my constituents in the electorate of Stafford and on behalf of Queenslanders throughout the length and breadth of this great state, I thank Peter Beattie for his service and wish him and Heather well for the future.