

**Premier & Trade  
The Hon. Peter Beattie MP**

**1 July 2005**

**Funding To Train More Doctors To Address Shortage**

In a further move aimed at addressing Queensland's doctor shortage, Premier Peter Beattie today announced his Government would fund 235 doctor training places at Griffith University.

The Commonwealth is already funding 80 training places and five other places at Griffith are currently held by full fee paying students.

Mr Beattie said Griffith University and Queensland Health were working in partnership to provide more medical staff for Queensland.

Earlier this week, Mr Beattie and Health Minister Gordon Nuttall released submissions to the Bundaberg Hospital Commission of Inquiry and the Review of Queensland Health Systems showing the severity of the doctor shortage and identifying a range of workforce initiatives to help address the problem.

Tonight, Mr Beattie will officially open Griffith University's Centre for Medicine and Oral Health.

"The new medical school is a very welcome addition and this is the first new dental school anywhere in Australia in almost 60 years," Mr Beattie said.

"This marks the start of a new era in medical training.

"The Queensland Government will fund our own training places at Griffith, primarily aimed at recruiting doctors into rural and remote areas, Indigenous health services, and community run health services.

"Over the next 5 years, at a cost of \$41.6 million, we will pay for a complete training package for 35 students next year and 50 more students in each of the next four years. We will pay their fees, scholarships and assistance to obtain postgraduate qualifications in their respective medical specialties including the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine.

"This means that over the eight-year period necessary to enable them all to graduate the total cost will be \$61 million, which involves support worth about \$65,000 each year for each of the 235 students over their four-year courses.

That totals more than a quarter of a million dollars in assistance to each student.

"In 2006 the first of these extra students - 35 - are due to start at a cost to the Queensland Government of \$2.275 million in that year.

"There will be a further 50 students under this scheme each year in 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010, bringing the total to 235, with the first 35 graduating in 2009.

"As part of the training agreement, these graduates would be bonded for 10 years to the Queensland public system so we can get doctors to the places in the greatest need, and so that taxpayers can be assured of a return on their investment."

"This is what 'Smart State' is all about - an employer funding university training places will be an Australian-first."

The Queensland Government and Griffith University will seek approval from the Commonwealth to accredit the additional 50 training places.

In 2003/04, there were 5000 Australians - mostly young people - who applied to study medicine at university in Australia - there were places for only 1,500.

In the same 12-month period, 1,200 overseas trained doctors were approved to fill much needed services around the state - particularly in remote and rural Queensland.

Health Minister Gordon Nuttall said the dental school would benefit the local community as well as providing additional training opportunities for the benefit of the State

"I understand that there will be a community dental clinic operated by Griffith University that people can visit," Mr Nuttall said.

"We have done more than any other State Government in the provision of public dental services, but the demand is huge and I welcome Griffith's community-spirited plans."

Mr Nuttall said the Beattie Government was spending an additional \$10 million on a three-year program to provide extra dental services to areas in the greatest need.

Queensland offers the largest and most comprehensive public dental service in Australia for both adults and schoolchildren.

In welcoming the announcement, Griffith University Vice Chancellor Professor Ian O'Connor said the new places represented a significant investment and he looked forward to working with the Queensland Government in training more medical health professionals to meet growing community need.

"The university looks forward to working in partnership with the Queensland Government, and we are especially enthusiastic about the new dental clinic, which will provide much needed dental and oral health services to children and adults in the region," he said.

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