

City Beat: A lot of hot air obviously

James McCullough | The Courier-Mail | March 22, 2011 12:01AM

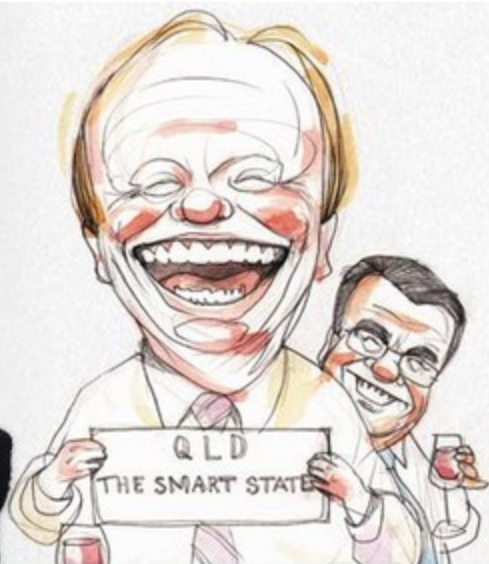
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CITY BEAT



WITH JAMES McCULLOUGH

Source: The Courier-Mail

IT was a bit of a competition for oxygen at lunch at Rydges at South Bank yesterday when Santo Santoro and former Premier Peter Beattie both took to the podium.

The event was the monthly Italian Chamber of Commerce lunch, the organisation chaired by former state and Federal member Santo with Beattie as the guest speaker.

The banter between the two made question time seem somewhat lame with Beattie adamant that his Smart State initiative was more relevant today than when it was created.

Curiously, Santo had his Roman-themed Archibald portrait by artist Peter Martin on display in the room as guests approached. After close inspection, Beattie quipped "the only thing missing is the Ides of March".

Santo then read an apology list for absent guests, including local Minister Grace Grace who he praised and said she "should be in higher places (within the ALP)".

A quick mention followed of Opposition Treasurer Tim Nicholls to which Beattie replied "so should he (be in higher places)".

As both men were at the podium the fire alarm went off, leading former Treasurer David Hamill, who was in the audience, to remark: "Too much hot air obviously".

Bligh looks good THE most interesting line from the lunch came when Beattie was asked how replacement Anna Bligh would fare at the next state election.

The perennial politician replied that he thought she had a far better chance after her great performance during Queensland's devastating floods. But he did not think she would walk in.

"They have 11 months to the next election and I do not think the government re-election is guaranteed but I think it means they are now more competitive," Beattie said.