



# Brisbane returns to centre court

By ELISA BLACK

QUEENSLAND is poised to claim its place as a premier destination for the international tennis circuit with last week's official start of construction of the \$77 million State Tennis Centre at Tennyson.

Turning the first sod, Premier Peter Beattie said Queensland would soon compete with other states for major tournaments and the economic benefits that flowed from them.

The centre will have 23

international-standard courts, including three Grand Slam surfaces (grass, clay and acrylic).

The centre court will be able to seat up to 5500 people.

The centre will also become the headquarters for Tennis Queensland as well as the Queensland Academy of Sport's tennis program.

He said the centre would be completed by the end of 2008, in time to host the

Australian combined Men's and Women's Hardcourt Championship in January 2009.

"This tournament will be the first major international tennis tournament hosted in Queensland since the demise of the Milton tennis facility in 1999 and will again put Queensland on the international tennis map as a sports tourism destination," he said.

Acting Sports Minister Judy Spence said she hoped the construction would

boost interest in the sport.

Queensland has 21,900 registered players and 243 affiliated clubs.

The development will create transport infrastructure to make the site accessible by public transport and will include an overhead walkway connecting the centre to Yeerongpilly Railway Station, pedestrian and bicycle pathways, and the creation of green space for recreation.



■ A new ball game ... Premier Peter Beattie at the site of the new tennis centre at Tennyson