

Beattie makes merry at last

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FORMER premier Peter Beattie has enjoyed his first "long lunch" since becoming a politician 20 years ago.

Mr Beattie (*pictured*), who returned to Brisbane last week after a month in NSW, says he over-indulged at a private send-off on Wednesday. The Paddo Tavern session for 35 business leaders and ALP colleagues included Premier Anna Bligh, her deputy Paul Lucas, former federal Labor leader Simon Crean, union bigwig Bill Ludwig and close pal Sarina Russo.



"Yes, I enjoyed a long lunch. I don't think I ever had a long lunch (as premier)," Mr Beattie told *The Sunday Mail*, as he took the keys to a small taxpayer-funded office in the CBD on Friday.

"I am not a big drinker ... but I did have a couple that day ... I really enjoyed it. We talked about all the good things about Queensland."

Witnesses said Mr Beattie, more than a little merry at day's end, summoned a son to drive him home.

He has taken an office at Central Plaza II for two months to personally answer hundreds of letters and cards from well-wishers.