



Media release

Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations, Minister
for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs
The Honourable Grace Grace

Tabled by: Mr Steyie MP
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\$100 million "Back to Work" Regional Jobs Package targets 8,000 jobs

The Palaszczuk Government's second State Budget includes \$100 million for a Regional Jobs Package to support up to 8,000 Queensland jobs.

"Our *Back to Work* initiative is all about bringing more jobs to regional Queensland," Employment Minister Grace Grace said.

"It's a \$100 million package that will give businesses the confidence to employ regional jobseekers, while providing an economic boost to the regions in challenging times.

"We're specifically targeting regional Queensland communities because of the particular employment challenges they're facing."

Ms Grace said the *Back to Work* Regional Jobs Package would be available only in areas outside South East Queensland and included:

- \$80 million for support payments for employers to take on regional jobseekers, including those disadvantaged in the labour market, such as the long-term unemployed, young people, mature aged jobseekers, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders;
- \$10 million for the Certificate 3 Guarantee Boost Program that will see more Queenslanders able to access subsidised courses to obtain jobs; and
- \$10 million for *Back to Work* officers who know the local economy and local employers, and can connect employers and jobseekers to opportunities and support, including through Regional Employment Networks.

"Regional employers who hire an eligible unemployed person will get a \$10,000 payment under this initiative," Ms Grace said.

"This will rise to \$15,000 for the long-term unemployed who have been out of work for 12 months or more.

"Apprentices and trainees are also counted as eligible employees under the scheme, provided their employer is not eligible for the Government's payroll tax rebate.

"Eligible employees will also have access to job readiness payments to help them start a new job."

Ms Grace said the Palaszczuk Government had a strong record on job creation, with 52,500 jobs created since the state election.

"While we've brought Queensland's trend unemployment rate down half-a-percentage point from its recent peak under the LNP, regional unemployment is still too high," she said.

"That's why this package is specifically targeted at the regions.

"Our regional jobs package has been designed with input from business, employer and industry groups along with local government representatives.

"I've held a series of regional employment forums throughout Queensland, and the Working Queensland Cabinet Committee has been travelling the state, and feedback we received has been incorporated into this package.

"The Palaszczuk Government will continue to work with regions through our officers and Regional Employment Networks supporting communities to generate new employment opportunities.

"The Newman-Nicholls LNP government put regional unemployment in the too-hard basket, but we have a plan to bring jobs to the regions."

The *Back To Work* initiative is worth \$100 million over the 2016-17 and 2017-18 financial years. *Back to Work* officers will work across the following regions: Outback, Far North, Townsville, Wide Bay, Fitzroy, Mackay, and South West Queensland.

The South East Queensland region is not eligible for funding under the scheme in recognition of the unique employment challenges facing regional Queensland.

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