



Speech by

**Mr M. HORAN**

**MEMBER FOR TOOWOOMBA SOUTH**

---

Hansard 21 October 1998

### UNEMPLOYMENT

**Mr HORAN** (Toowoomba South—NPA) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (6.13 p.m.): I second the motion. This debate is a very, very important one. At the most, we have only two and a half years left of this Beattie minority Labor Government and already we have seen the unemployment rate go up from about 8.4% to 8.6% to 9.2%. The Government has a target of trying to achieve a 5% unemployment rate within three to five years. It was interesting to note that, during the recent Federal election campaign when Mr Beazley tried the same stunt and said that Labor was going to aim for a 5% unemployment rate, surveys showed that no-one believed him. Only 25% of the population of Australia believed that there would be any chance that he could achieve it. Why was there so much mistrust? Obviously, the people of Australia saw what happened in Queensland. They have seen this empty, hollow promise made and they have seen the unemployment rate go up. They have seen that this target was nothing but a stunt and theatrics.

When the Beattie minority Government came to power, it inherited a State that led the rest of Australia in terms of jobs—a State that created 40% of the new jobs in Australia, even though it had only 18% of the population. In November last year in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, a front-page story showed graphically how, in terms of the provision of new employment, Queensland led the rest of Australia by a country mile.

However, what do we see from the Beattie minority Government? I believe that all of us in this House genuinely would like to see employment increase. We would like to see young people finishing Year 12, or having gone through TAFE or university, get a job. We would like to see middle-aged people—people in their 40s and 50s—who are looking for a job to be given the opportunity of getting some employment.

The Opposition is going to keep up the pressure on the Labor Government to make sure that something happens or to demonstrate to the people of Queensland the failures of the Labor Government. However, at a time when people are crying out desperately for jobs, we have an announcement of a 1800 phone number, some TV ads with Noel Pearson and a number of other dignitaries in them, and forums. That must be the growth industry in this State. Up and down the coast, we have regional forums.

**Mr Santoro:** Task forces.

**Mr HORAN:** I will come to task forces and reviews. Up and down the coast there are forums. There is nothing much at all happening inland. Although the little forums are going to be held up and down the coast in the marginal seats that Labor is trying to win back, we have now forced the Government to consider holding a forum somewhere between Ipswich and Toowoomba.

Then we have, day by day, a whole raft of reviews and task forces coming out of department after department. We all realise that a certain amount of planning needs to be done to try to establish a system and a plan to get job creation under way. However, the Government has come out with a 1800 number, glossy, subtle TV advertising of the Labor Government and more and more forums. I do not think that people in Queensland know which forum to go to because there is such a raft of them. We really want to see some real jobs so that following an ad in the paper people can apply, get a job and, at the end of the week, get a pay packet that they can take home. If we are going to have this raft of forums, training schemes and all the rest of it, but at the end of the day no jobs, it will not take long for the people of Queensland to wake up to what this is all about.

This State really needs decent capital works programs. The former coalition Government provided a Capital Works Program in its Budget. It is good to see that the Labor Government has continued with it. However, that program has to continue year after year after year. Under the former coalition Government, that Capital Works Program was providing an enormous number of jobs.

It is desperately disappointing to see that the engine room of this State—or what should be the engine room—that is, the Department of State Development, does not have a target for jobs. If we have a 5% unemployment target to be achieved after three years, why does not the Department of State Development have a target for this year, the next year and the year after? Surely, the department has some sort of barometer by which to gauge where they want to achieve a certain number of jobs or where they want to make a contribution towards reducing the unemployment rate by X per cent a year. But no, this key, leading agency does not even have a target. If anything displays that this target is all a publicity and theatrical stunt, it is the fact that the Department of State Development does not have a target. We have to be genuine and sincere about getting these jobs and that means having proper targets and real jobs.

Time expired.

---