



Speech by

Mr S. SANTORO

MEMBER FOR CLAYFIELD

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UNEMPLOYMENT

Mr SANTORO (Clayfield—LP) (6.38 p.m.): Tonight we have heard again a very clear outline of the Government's Jobs Plan. It is worth reiterating what its component are. Firstly, we have the target, which as we have just heard from the Leader of the Opposition was very scientifically arrived at—a very considered exercise of policy development based on sound logic and reason! We then have the task forces, or as they call them the councils, that are travelling around the State talking to people and encouraging businesses to take on people because it is a good thing to do and the Government is doing its bit.

Related to the task force and the councils, we also have the forums. Of course, the forums are meant to be warm and fuzzy. They get about 50 people. A good number of them are trade unionists, a few public servants and a few other citizens, and the forums are so very, very important! Of course, today we saw the unveiling of a fourth component of the Jobs Plan by the Labor Party: the advertisements, the public relations exercise, the politics of imagery, the politics of perception—in this case, the politics of deception. That is the fourth plank.

The part of the Jobs Plan of the Labor Party that is really having impact is its policies; it is the fear of the small business community of the policies which the Labor Party is about to implement if this Parliament allows it. That is the reason why already, before the first Labor Party Budget begins to bite, the unemployment figures and the employment creation figures within this State are trending against the national trend. The reason they are doing that is obvious: the people of Queensland do not like, for example, the plans by the Labor Government to amend the workers compensation system, to redefine the definition of "worker", to redefine the definition of "injury", to redefine and reintroduce unrestricted recess and

journey claims and to throw out the workers compensation reforms which will again force up premiums for every worker who is put on and in itself create a disincentive for small businesses to take on people. Small business does not like the industrial relations policy of the Minister and the Government opposite.

They do not like the dismantling of the coalition's equitable unfair dismissal laws, the reintroduction of compulsory unionism and union preference clauses. They do not like the Labor Party's intention to reintroduce closed shops. They do not like the idea of union officials being able to have unrestricted access to small business, to be able to view the books of employees, irrespective of whether they are union members or not. It is those types of policies which have been announced by the Government, on which the Government will be looking to the Independents and to the One Nation members for support, that small businesses do not like. That is the point that the Minister, the Premier and the members opposite are missing. The fear is not of the task force, the forums and all the other public relation exercises that this Government is going about; the fear is of their policies.

As I have said in this place before, and we will continue to say as long as the Government is implementing those policies—not the target, but the dream—that 5% target will remain a dream and will never be achieved. Just in case anybody is fooled about training, the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the Liberal Party are right; we need real jobs to accompany training. There is no Government that is more successful in providing training and apprenticeships than the coalition Government. In fact, in 1997 approvals for traineeships and apprenticeships more than doubled under the coalition. In 1997 under the coalition, new

approvals totalled 30,864, compared with only 13,239 in 1995 under Labor. Our record is a proud one. With only 18% of the population in Australia, we produced 23.9% of all trainees and apprentices.

The community and, in particular, small business want the capacity and the incentive to generate real, long-term, sustainable private enterprise jobs, and this Government with its policies will not be able to generate that incentive; it will not be able to generate that willingness and ability in small business to generate jobs. Because of that, the dream of a 5% unemployment rate will fade rapidly. The 5% target will not be achieved, and we will remind the public of Queensland of the cynical way that the Premier and Labor in Opposition and even now are manipulating the public perception that they are economically responsible and have an ability, a capacity and a willingness to generate jobs. It is not going to happen because their policy platform is flawed.

Time expired.
