



Speech by

Hon. D. HAMILL

MEMBER FOR IPSWICH

Hansard 22 July 1999

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT
Economic Management

Hon. D. J. HAMILL (Ipswich—ALP) (Treasurer) (9.54 a.m.), by leave: I am pleased to report that a combination of stable government and sound economic management has steered Queensland through the worst of recent international economic turmoil. A balanced approach to the economy—a record Capital Works Program combined with a focus on regional development and jobs creation—has seen Queensland post economic growth for the 1998-99 financial year of 4.25%. This is 0.75% ahead of the growth figure we forecast in last year's Budget. It is a growth figure that has been achieved despite the turmoil besetting our Asian trading partners and despite depressed prices for our key export commodities.

This Government has led the way in the past year. We have set the example. We have delivered a record Capital Works Program by investing billions in new infrastructure for the State—infrastructure that in itself will stimulate further private sector investment. Most importantly, we have restored confidence in the Queensland economy.

Business investment in Queensland in the March quarter was some 22% higher than a year earlier. Meanwhile, in the rest of Australia there was actually a fall in business investment over the same period. Access Economics recently estimated the total value of investment projects in Queensland at \$40 billion. Investment in new equipment in the March quarter grew by 11.2%, against a rise of 1.2% nationally.

These sorts of investment commitments are not made unless those investing have faith in future direction—faith in leadership and stability. It is not just business that has faith in the strength of the Queensland economy and the direction we are taking; household final consumption expenditure in Queensland has led the nation in the past year, as has public final demand.

All of this translates into jobs. In our first year in office we have created 45,500 new jobs—more than 50% ahead of the target we set ourselves in September last year. Of these, 80% have been full-time positions, bucking a long-term trend towards casual and part-time job creation in Queensland and, indeed, in the rest of Australia. In fact, in the last year Queensland created more than 50% of all the full-time jobs created in Australia. By almost any measurement Queensland is leading the nation in new investment, business confidence, jobs creation, economic growth and fiscal management.

In September I will deliver another pro-growth, pro-jobs Budget—another balanced Budget that delivers security and opportunity for all Queenslanders. It will be a Budget that will further stimulate business investment in this State—the sort of investment that we see in the recent commitment to the \$1.4 billion Millmerran power project. With business investment contributing 0.8% to annual growth in Queensland in the past year, against a contribution of 0.1% nationally, and with projects such as that at Millmerran, I am delighted that the private sector is also playing its part in our ongoing infrastructure development.
