



Speech by

**Hon. P. BRADDY**

**MEMBER FOR KEDRON**

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Hansard 11 March 1999

### **MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

#### **Job Creation**

**Hon. P. J. BRADDY** (Kedron—ALP) (Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations) (9.42 a.m.), by leave: I am delighted to be able to inform the House that, as at the end of February, the Beattie Government's strong commitment to job creation has achieved a 46% increase in the number of new apprentice approvals compared to the same time last year. In the year to 28 February, there were 10,272 new apprentice approvals—an increase of 3,256 on February last year. The significance of this increase is demonstrated by comparison with a drop of 6.7% from 1997 to 1998, and a fall of 5.5% from 1996 to 1997.

Importantly, in industries with skills shortages, the results are very promising. In the building and construction industry, for example, new approvals are up by 42%. In engineering, there has been a 39% increase. There is also good news in regional Queensland. In north Queensland, apprenticeship approvals are up 65%, in central Queensland and Wide Bay they are up 45%, and in south-west Queensland they are up 29%.

There is further evidence of the successful partnership between Government and industry in the latest figures on our private sector employment incentive payments. The Government introduced the employment incentive as part of its Breaking the Unemployment Cycle Initiative to create more jobs throughout this State. The incentive program has only been available since 1 October 1998, and to date the response has been more than impressive.

No less than 984 employers throughout Queensland already have received payments of up to \$2,000 for employing 1,544 additional apprentices and trainees in areas of skills shortages. Those appointments have benefited employers across the State. For example: 202 employers in Brisbane north have received payments for appointing a total of 261 additional trainees and apprentices; 282 employers in the south coast area have received payments for employing 400 additional trainees and apprentices; 170 employers in the Wide Bay/Sunshine Coast area have appointed a total of 237 additional apprentices and trainees; 124 employers in central Queensland have received payments for employing an additional 338 trainees and apprentices; 137 employers in north and far-north Queensland have received payments for employing an additional 211 trainees and apprentices; and 69 employers in south-west Queensland have received payments for employing an additional 97 apprentices and trainees—that is an impressive figure, considering this area has a smaller industry sector and population than some of the other regions in Queensland. Under the incentive, eligible employers receive up to \$2,000 for each additional apprentice or trainee employed, once the employer has confirmed the completion of the probation period and ongoing employment.

The Beattie Government's \$283m Breaking the Unemployment Cycle Initiative is designed to create 24,500 jobs, apprenticeships and traineeships over four years. The private sector incentive will create 7,500 of these jobs within industries needing more skilled workers, which are crucial to the Queensland economy. This incentive will help address skills shortages while encouraging young people to seek careers in traditional trades and employers to create more jobs.

The positive results so far can be attributed in part to the Breaking the Unemployment Cycle promotion campaign that was run in late 1998 and again in January/February of this year. More than 3,800 people responded to the campaign by calling an information number or visiting the department's web site for information on Government incentives for employment. It is heartening to see job

opportunities growing, particularly for young people. I urge other employers thinking of taking on additional apprentices or trainees to take advantage of the incentive.

I take this opportunity also to congratulate Queensland communities for their innovative ideas and proposed projects, designed in cooperation with my department, to give long-term unemployed people the skills they need to secure and maintain employment. As at the end of February 1999, 19 projects throughout the State have been approved for a total of \$1.02m in grants under the Community Employment Assistance Program. We estimate that those projects together will create jobs for around 385 project participants. In addition, by the end of February 1999, 10 projects were approved to receive a total of \$1.67m in grants under the Community Jobs Plan, which funds projects that provide work for long-term unemployed people for up to six months. Those 10 projects will provide jobs for 153 participants.

These statistics show that the Beattie Government has successfully forged links with Queensland communities to reduce unemployment. The Beattie Government has achieved real milestones in this area and will continue to work toward further jobs growth. I congratulate Queensland communities and look forward to seeing these positive trends continue.

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