



Speech by

**Hon. D. HAMILL**

**MEMBER FOR IPSWICH**

---

Hansard 20 July 2000

### UNEMPLOYMENT

**Hon. D. J. HAMILL** (Ipswich—ALP) (Treasurer) (6.20 p.m.): I rise to second the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition—sorry, by the Premier—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr HAMILL:** No, I was actually thinking ahead. I thought that I might give members a little blast from the past. When the honourable member for Brisbane Central was the Leader of the Opposition, we were presented with this Budget I have here—the last Borbidge/Sheldon Budget. It makes interesting reading, because for the 1998-99 financial year it predicted an average unemployment rate of 8.75%, a population growth increase to 2% and a decline in employment growth from 3% to 2.5%. In fact, the Borbidge/Sheldon Government was actually predicting slower employment growth, a slower economy and increased population, and yet it was daring to defy gravity and also claim that, under those circumstances, unemployment was going to fall. What a sham! What a dreadful deception to try to pull on the people of Queensland before they went to the polls back in 1998!

The record should speak for itself. When this Government came to office the unemployment rate in the State was 8.7%. On the basis of this Budget document of theirs, that rate was trending up. Yet here we are, 82,000 extra jobs later, and unemployment under this Beattie Labor Government is now at the lowest rate that it has been in Queensland for a decade—since May 1990.

I refer now to the previous coalition Government's promises. In 1998-99, it was promising 3.75% growth in the Queensland economy. What did we deliver? We delivered 4.8% growth. What was the previous Government promising for last year? It was promising 3.5% growth for the Queensland economy. What did we deliver? We delivered 4.25% growth for the Queensland economy. Those are the figures that are on the record and can be verified clearly.

Of course, the other interesting point to make is that if one looks at the participation rate in the labour force in Queensland one sees that over the period that the coalition was in office the participation rate in Queensland actually averaged 64.8%. In fact, it actually fell as low as 64.5%. That was at a time when the participation rate across the whole of Australia was at an average of 63.33%. What has happened under Labor? As a direct response to the commitment that this Government made to job generation and job opportunities, as members would expect, under a higher growth scenario, which has been delivered by this Government, the participation rate under us has actually increased. Over the period that this Government has been in office it has averaged 65%, and on the last set of monthly figures it is actually 65.1%. Interestingly enough, while the participation rate in the labour force has actually gone up under Labor in Queensland, over the same period across the rest of the country the participation rate has actually gone down marginally. In fact, over the past two years, across the rest of Australia the participation rate has actually fallen under 63.3%.

So what does that mean? It means quite reasonably that people have a greater expectation of getting employment in Queensland. More people in Queensland are prepared to put themselves out and available for a job. Why would they not, because in Queensland we have a Government that is delivering \$15 billion worth of capital works in important infrastructure and a Government that has delivered a \$283m Jobs Plan that is committed to building training and employment opportunities, particularly for young people and particularly for disadvantaged groups in the community. It is little

wonder that we are seeing the participation rate rising under Labor and that there is greater optimism out there because of a growing economy and because of better employment and training opportunities.

That is the difference between a do-nothing coalition Government and this Government. If the Leader of the Opposition took the rhetoric out of the speech that he gave tonight, he would be struck mute. In Government he had no idea. In Opposition he has less idea. That is why the record of the Government stands as a very proud record indeed. We are delivering jobs and we are delivering jobs for Queensland.

Time expired.

---