



Speech by

Dr DAVID WATSON

MEMBER FOR MOGGILL

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UNEMPLOYMENT

Dr WATSON (Moggill—LP) (Leader of the Liberal Party) (10 a.m.): Two years ago the Premier promised the people of Queensland that he and his Ministers would go to bed every night and wake up every morning thinking of jobs, jobs, jobs. What a crock! What a fraud! Unemployment has been bouncing around 8% since January 1999. Last week the Premier admitted that it would average 8% for another 12 months. Honourable members should think about this. The Premier's admission means that Queensland's unemployment rate will have remained virtually unchanged from January 1999 to June 2001. He will not have achieved any material improvement in two and a half years.

Australia's unemployment rate will have fallen from 7.5% to 6.25%, but Queensland's will be stuck at 8%. That is not flat-lining; that is cardiac arrest. Queensland is being run by a can't do Premier who can't do jobs. He is now predicting that the situation will get worse. Queensland's jobless rate has been tracking at 7.7% over the past couple of months. An average of 8% over the next 12 months can only mean that unemployment will rise. The Premier's target is not 5%; it is closer to 8.5%.

We have to question the Premier's mind-set. Last week and again yesterday he claimed that the job figures for June were the best in 10 years. What a superficial and dishonest answer. The only reason Queensland's unemployment rate did not rise in June was that so many people gave up looking for work. Employment fell by 6,400 and the labour force contracted by 12,700. So much for the Premier's promise of jobs, jobs, jobs.
