



Speech by

Hon. Robert Swarten

MEMBER FOR ROCKHAMPTON

Hansard Thursday, 12 February 2009

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Nation Building and Jobs Plan, Q-Build

Hon. RE SCHWARTEN (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Public Works, Housing and Information and Communication Technology) (10.01 am): The federal government's \$42 billion Nation Building and Jobs Plan will quickly convert into hundreds of jobs for Queenslanders. The Department of Public Works will be heavily involved in the delivery of the Education and Housing programs through Q-Build and Project Services. These programs will inject an estimated \$3 billion into the Queensland economy, and that is on top of the something like \$7 billion or \$8 billion that we already have underway. Builders and subcontractors, big and small, will be able to get a slice of the action, and we will give them every possible chance to do so.

We want local workers to get work in local areas, and to make this happen the Department of Public Works has organised a roadshow to provide information for contractors who want to register for work, and I intend to lead those roadshows. The roadshow will make stops in Brisbane on 19 February, Cairns and Townsville on 5 March and then Mackay and Rockhampton on 6 March. There are also plans in place to host roadshows in other locations across the state. It is a fantastic initiative to answer any questions contractors might have about registering and, most importantly, a chance for them to get on the books as soon as possible. Contractors wanting to tender for this work can either register with Q-Build for maintenance and smaller construction jobs while for building projects over \$250,000 contractors must first prequalify on the department's PQC system. It is a well-established system and one that helped to successfully deliver the \$290 million prep year program for the Department of Education, Training and the Arts well ahead of schedule.

Right now more than 60 per cent of the work carried out by Q-Build is done by private contractors. There are more than 15,000 contractors and suppliers already registered with Q-Build and 553 contractors and 361 consultants who are prequalified with the Department of Public Works. These contractors will be ready to tender for work as soon as the programs roll out, and I encourage contractors who are not registered to do so quickly, and I again call on the Queensland senators to do the right thing on behalf of the construction industry in Queensland. It is a terrific opportunity and the Bligh government is committed to ensuring the Rudd stimulus package results in jobs for Queenslanders, and the Public Works roadshow will make this happen. Again, I call on the senators to do the right thing and ignore the Nationals in Queensland.