



Speech by

## Hon. Stirling Hinchliffe


MEMBER FOR STAFFORD

Hansard Tuesday, 22 March 2011

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### MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

#### Jobs

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for Employment, Skills and Mining) (10.18 am): The Bligh government is investing in Queensland to help Queenslanders into jobs. We know that the Far North region was hit hard by the GFC and more recently by Cyclone Yasi. It takes strong leadership and a strong government to rebuild this state. Every day since the natural disasters hit Queensland, the Bligh government has been working to rebuild the damage and help people rebuild their lives.

We are investing \$4.8 million in the Cairns and the Far North Queensland region to help more than 700 people with job opportunities. This includes \$1.1 million to deliver 12 industry recovery officers to assist the agricultural industry and small businesses; half a million dollars to assist 85 people into earning or learning through the Get Set for Work program; \$486,700 to assist 110 long-term unemployed people through the Participate in Prosperity program; \$315,850 to assist 98 people to gain qualifications in areas where there are skills shortages; and \$2 million to help 367 people through the Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative. This comes on top of other investment in significant infrastructure such as the Cairns Base Hospital which is supporting almost 2,650 jobs over the life of the project.

Our commitment right around the state includes areas with a large contingent of seasonal workers such as on the Gold Coast. Despite media reports to the contrary, the number of women employed on the Gold Coast actually grew by 4,000 during February. This is balanced against 500 women—not 1,500, as reported in local media—who became unemployed. All in all, the unemployment rate on the Gold Coast fell from 6.9 per cent in January to 6.7 per cent in February. But this is still way above the state average of 5.7 per cent. That is why we are doing what we can to help.

Latest grants in the Gold Coast area include \$540,000 to SCISCO Career Pathways to help 90 people; \$186,000 to Hope College to help 85 people; \$67,500 to Career Employment Australia to give 30 local participants a certificate II in retail; and \$35,360 to Kwa Deo Ministries to help 30 people. The latest grants bring the total funding for the Gold Coast under Skilling Queenslanders for Work to \$5.54 million for the current financial year. That is 29 projects funded by the Bligh government to help around 1,260 job seekers with opportunities to move into jobs or further training.

Jobs and job creation are priorities for the Bligh Labor government. Rebuilding Queensland is not an easy job, but that is what this government is focused on doing.