




Speech By
Hon. Tim Nicholls

MEMBER FOR CLAYFIELD

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Property and Construction Sectors

 **Hon. TJ NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade) (2.10 pm): The Newman government is building confidence in Queensland's economy, and nowhere is confidence more important than in the property and construction sector. The latest Property Council-ANZ industry confidence survey paints a positive picture for the industry in Queensland. The survey of over 3,000 property and construction industry professionals saw Queensland jump 25 points in positive sentiment for the December quarter. Queensland is now tied with New South Wales atop the ladder, and I am sure it will not be long before we surpass the dreaded Blues.

Contrast that with the situation when the Labor Party was in government. In the three years to June 2010, residential building approvals declined by 2.6 per cent and by October 2011 building approvals had reached their lowest level in 10 years. Confidence was vanishing as the former Labor government taxed and regulated the industry into the doldrums. To put the significance of the industry into context, of the four pillars of the Queensland economy, property and construction is the largest employer and second only to the resources sector in terms of output. When property and construction is doing well, it has a major impact on growth in the economy and on jobs.

This can-do government understands how important the property and construction sector is. That is why upon coming to government we immediately reinstated the principal place of residence concession on transfer duty at a cost of over \$910 million. This means that for ordinary Queenslanders the cost of buying their own family home has dropped by up to \$7,175. We also introduced the Great Start Grant, the \$15,000 grant for first home buyers to stimulate activity by getting people into their new homes. I can announce that as at the end of September more than 3,000 grants had been taken up. Just as importantly, we have embarked on long-term reforms aimed at simplifying and streamlining the development process. We are delivering on our promises to cut red and green tape that stifles development while retaining the integrity of our planning and approvals system.

As the CEO of the Local Government Association of Queensland, Greg Hallam, said on ABC Radio yesterday, this is sensible, practical stuff—and it is showing real results. We have had 16 months of consecutive monthly increases in trend dwelling approvals. ABS figures show that employment in the property and construction industry increased by 12,000 jobs to the end of September compared to the same period a year ago. Lending data also showed that in August the value of finance commitments—a key indicator of investor confidence—was 6.1 per cent higher than a year earlier and non-residential construction in the year to the end of August was 28 per cent higher than the prior 12 months.

These are solid signs of improvement and are translating into the improvement in confidence being felt in the industry. The Property Council-ANZ survey shows optimism across a range of

property types including residential, retail and, importantly, tourism here in Queensland. Respondents also gave the most positive government rating to this can-do Queensland government, and that is because the property and construction industry understands the can-do approach of this government is delivering real results for Queenslanders.