




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MULGRAVE

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PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENTS

Unemployment

 **Mr PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (2.46 pm): In January the Premier said that Queensland is 'the engine room of the nation on job creation'. The Premier made similar comments again in the parliament this morning, as did the Treasurer to the business community yesterday. Queenslanders may rightly ask where the Premier and the Treasurer get their figures from. Today the ABS detailed that Queensland lost 11,700 jobs seasonally adjusted in January—the largest fall in employment of any state or territory in the nation. This fall in employment included the loss of 1,700 full-time jobs. Queensland's unemployment rate increased from 5.9 per cent in December to 6.1 per cent in January seasonally adjusted. There is no way the Treasurer can spin these figures. On both a trend and seasonally adjusted basis, employment in Queensland fell in January.

These are the facts. The Deputy Premier said that repeating these facts is apparently being negative. Let me enlighten the Deputy Premier on what it means to be negative. In January 2012 when unemployment was 5.4 per cent seasonally adjusted in Queensland, the now Treasurer from opposition declared that Queensland had 'become an economic basket case'. With a 5.4 per cent unemployment rate, Queensland was apparently 'an economic basket case' according to the LNP. And with the unemployment rate now at 6.1 per cent Queensland is apparently the 'engine room of the nation'. For the benefit of those opposite, I will tell them that higher unemployment is not a good thing. It is B-A-D bad. To deny the facts as this Newman government does is to live in a fantasy land disconnected from reality. It is little wonder that Queenslanders are turning off this government in droves when they consistently tell them porkies about the economy and jobs.

According to the ABS figures, there were 12,000 fewer full-time jobs in Queensland in January than there were in March 2012. That is despite the population increasing by more than 120,000. So that is 12,000 fewer full-time jobs to go around another 120,000-plus people living here in Queensland. For the Treasurer's benefit—and he likes to cherry-pick between the seasonally adjusted figures and trend result—I point out that there are also 5,000 fewer full-time jobs since the election on a trend basis. The situation is even worse when you consider the dramatic fall in the percentage of Queenslanders looking for work or the participation rate. In March 2012, the participation rate was 66.9 per cent seasonally adjusted. In January 2014, the participation rate was 65.2 per cent, a fall of 1.7 per cent since the election. This means the labour force participation rate is now at a nine-year low. People are giving up looking for work in droves.

This Newman government simply cannot handle the truth when it comes to their failure to foster economic growth and employment—just as the Treasurer cannot handle the truth on his financial incompetence in relation to 1 William Street and the sale of seven CBD office buildings. The Treasurer yesterday continued to insist that this deal saved taxpayers money and that we would be paying rent on the buildings anyway. For the Treasurer's benefit, if he had not sold the seven CBD

office buildings without an election mandate, there would be no rent bill to the private sector and QIC. The Auditor-General clearly outlined that the rent cost for 1 William Street and the rent cost on the seven buildings are 'risks to operating sustainability' of the state's finances. It is not a saving to taxpayers but a risk to operating sustainability. I know who is telling the truth, and it is not the Treasurer.