




Speech By
Hon. Curtis Pitt

MEMBER FOR MULGRAVE

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Achievements

 **Hon. CW PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer, Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (9.48 am): The Palaszczuk government has spent much of its first three months restoring confidence, creating jobs and growing the Queensland economy. We have moved quickly to implement a number of key elements of our Working Queensland Jobs Plan. I am proud that the first bill I introduced as Treasurer and Minister for Employment was to reinstate a 25 per cent payroll tax rebate for businesses hiring apprentices and trainees. The government is determined to give more Queenslanders the opportunity to join the workforce as apprentices and trainees. This particularly helps our young people. The Palaszczuk government is supporting small businesses through this high threshold and, of course, through the establishment of the Red Tape Reduction Advisory Council.

Mr Nicholls: You scrapped the payroll tax threshold.

Mr PITT: Clearly, this morning the member for Clayfield has woken up on the wrong side of the bed. I welcome the bipartisan commitment that we have seen at the Commonwealth level in relation to small business and I hope that the LNP will show the same level of maturity at the state level when it comes to our job creation programs. The Palaszczuk government has also launched the first round of Skilling Queenslanders for Work, with up to 8,000 Queensland jobseekers set to benefit from the \$60 million allocated to the program in the first year. We have also moved to restore fairness to IR. Those opposite may not like it, but the LNP's approach to workers rights was a constraint on growth in this state and its sacking of 24,000 public servants was deeply damaging to confidence in our economy.

Thankfully, Labor has recognised the value of our human capital and over the first three months we have put forward a better way for Queensland. Recent economic data shows that our approach is working. Queensland topped NAB's monthly business confidence survey of Australian states for April, for the second month in a row. We are leading all Australian states. In the March quarter, Queensland recorded the strongest real retail growth of any mainland state at 1.9 per cent, after poor results for much of 2014. In March, dwelling approvals rose three per cent, which is up 26 per cent on the same time last year. In the March quarter, merchandise exports were up 10.8 per cent to \$11.4 billion, which is twice the two-decade average.

Mr Nicholls: You used to tell me you couldn't rely on merchandise exports. What a hypocrite! You used to say you couldn't rely on merchandise exports.

Mr PITT: The member for Clayfield does not like it. In April, 5,300 full-time jobs were added, which is our sixth successive month of full-time employment growth. In the March quarter, investment commitments for the construction of new dwellings increased to the highest level since February

2008, up \$625 million. In the March quarter 2015, investor housing finance for the purchase of existing dwellings for rent or resale totalled \$4 billion.

Queenslanders have much to feel confident about. As the Premier has said, the state budget, to be released in July, will be a budget for jobs, for science and for innovation. It will be a budget that shows there is an alternative to the mantra of sack, sell, cut and tax that was all that the LNP put forward to the Queensland people. It will be a budget that demonstrates to Queenslanders that we can actually grow our economy and have prosperity.