



Speech By  
**Hon. Curtis Pitt**


**MEMBER FOR MULGRAVE**

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Record of Proceedings, 4 June 2015

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Jobs

 **Hon. CW PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer, Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (9.51 am): This government is committed to job creation to lead Queensland to a more prosperous and inclusive future.

**Mr Cripps** interjected.

**Mr PITT:** He is off to a flyer, the dark horse over there.

**A government member** interjected.

**Mr PITT:** We thought it was just him, but it is obviously the member for Hinchinbrook as well. This government is committed to job creation to lead Queensland to a more prosperous and inclusive future. Our Working Queensland jobs plan will help boost the confidence of Queensland businesses to create jobs, increase the productivity of our labour force, foster emerging innovative industries and support investment in productive infrastructure. In line with our commitment to more consultative and inclusive government, we will seek the views of stakeholders at every opportunity to identify policies and programs to help get Queenslanders back into the workforce.

During the recent community cabinet in Rockhampton and Yeppoon, I was delighted to host an employment forum with local community and business leaders. This was a great opportunity to hear firsthand the issues that impact on employment in the Central Queensland region. Hearing their views and ideas helped me gain a greater appreciation and understanding of where the government's efforts can be best focused. I am well aware that our policy approach for employment cannot be one size fits all, because every region in Queensland has its own unique economic drivers and its own unique set of challenges. As the most decentralised state in Australia and the only state where more people live outside the capital than within it, we know that what works in George Street does not always work in Georgetown. That is why I am happy to be a Treasurer from regional Queensland.

So it was good to be in Rockhampton for our most recent community cabinet and to hear directly from locals about what issues were affecting them. Currently, the unemployment rate in Rockhampton is 5.9 per cent, down 0.2 percentage points from a year earlier. This compares to the unemployment rate of the rest of the state which, on average, rose from six per cent to 6.5 per cent over the same time period. However, that does not mean that we cannot do better.

In terms of the big picture, the government is already making good on its election promises by delivering the key elements of its Working Queensland plan. Skilling Queenslanders for Work, worth \$240 million over four years, will assist up to 32,000 jobseekers to get back into the workforce. The first round of Skilling Queenslanders for Work is open until 19 June and I would encourage local community based organisations, which know best what their communities need, to get involved in helping Queenslanders into new employment.

Earlier this week the parliament passed a 25 per cent payroll tax rebate for employers engaging an apprentice or trainee. This rebate will commence from 1 July. Other key elements of our Working Queensland jobs plan will be funded in the budget that I will deliver on 14 July, including the Business Development Fund and Advance Queensland fellowships. I have mentioned the payroll tax rebate itself. This initiative alone can be worth more than \$600 per month to the employer who hires an apprentice, not \$600 per year, as the opposition members got so wrong claiming earlier this week. If fully subscribed, that rebate will provide \$45 million in savings to businesses over the next three years.

To grow the jobs of the future, the government is reinvigorating science and innovation through its \$50 million Advance Queensland program. It is also creating Jobs Queensland—an agency that is dedicated to engaging with industry and stakeholders on skills shortages and job opportunities across every region of our state. However, we also are very aware that there is more work to be done. I look forward to continuing to consult and listen to what business, industry and the community have to say and finding more ways to deliver on our commitments to create jobs for Queenslanders.

Although these initiatives represent a sizeable body of work for the government, we will be actively looking for further initiatives that can assist particular groups within the community finding meaningful and productive employment. That includes programs at a dedicated regional level or programs targeting a particular cohort of people such as the long-term unemployed, the young and unemployed, or mature-age workers. I look forward to continuing to consult and listen to what business and industry have to say, because we on this side of the House are about creating jobs.