




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

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MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Queensland Economy

 **Ms GRACE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (12.12 pm): Following the first quarter of the Palaszczuk government, it is important to note that the majority of people in Queensland, business and workers, believe that our vision to return Queensland to strong economic growth is heading in the right direction. The last Queensland election was fought in a relatively weak economic environment brought about by the actions of the previous LNP Newman government. During the election campaign, many businesspeople I spoke to in the electorate of Brisbane Central complained how tough business conditions were—people were not spending, businesses were closing, and empty retail and office spaces were at their highest levels. Unemployment in Queensland had climbed to a rate from six per cent to around seven per cent, giving Queensland the highest unemployment rate on mainland Australia. Also, the Newman government's betrayal of public servants' jobs saw the slashing of thousands of positions with cuts that went too deep, too fast and were bereft of any strategic intention.

Business knows only too well that a lazy, easy management plan is to cut jobs, sell assets, cut investment in your people such as training and development and have no vision for sources of growth to replace a weaker sector such as mining investment. Unfortunately, this is exactly what we got from the previous government—a government going nowhere and doing nothing. The Newman government was full of spin and great at talking Queensland down—I remember the Greece comments—and blaming anyone but themselves.

For example, I have recently had business and residents in Spring Hill incensed over a blatant misleading newsletter by the local BCC LNP councillor, which I table, blaming the closure and sale of the Main Roads department in Boundary Street—wait for it—on the Bligh government.

Tabled paper: Document titled 'Spring Hill Community News', by Cr Vicki Howard, Councillor for Central Ward [\[496\]](#).

The truth is that the public servants were relocated and the building sold in 2013 under the Newman LNP government, but the spin and misinformation is being continued by their mates in the BCC.

Those opposite's only vision was to sell income-producing assets, to build a BaT tunnel that we now learn was nothing more than an impossible dream—but, of course, ditched Australia's best rated infrastructure project, the Cross River Rail—and to arrogantly govern in a combative style of fear and loathing that even affected interstate migration to Queensland. Queensland's low rate of interstate migration was because people had nothing to come here for, and it is pleasing to note that Queensland is now slowly recovering in this area from the lows of the previous government. As a result, housing and building approvals were at dismal levels, particularly in the regions, and when people are fearful of their jobs, incomes and futures, they clearly do not spend. Tourism was slow—our Great Barrier Reef, the jewel in the crown of Queensland, was under pressure—and, other than projects previously started under the Labor government such as the export of LNG, there was little investment in mining and infrastructure. Is it any wonder that after one term of the arrogant LNP

Newman government the Palaszczuk government was elected on the back of a positive economic and political agenda.

Despite what those opposite say, Queensland's economy has strong fundamentals and this government is ready to partner with investors, to be commercially focused and to strive to capture sustainable growth and jobs. This is the message I want to send to the electorate of Brisbane Central and to the community in every corner of our state. To achieve this vision, we need the Commonwealth government to also become a serious partner—one that is willing to invest in job-creating infrastructure and economic development in Queensland without the need to sell our assets.

It is vitally important that the federal government comes on board now that Queensland's economy is starting to show some very positive signs after three years of stagnation under the previous LNP Newman government. Here are a few examples of what Queensland has been doing. We topped the business confidence of any Australian states in April. We recorded the strongest real retail growth of any mainland state in the March quarter at nearly two per cent. Dwelling approvals in Queensland rose three per cent in March—up 27 per cent on the same time last year—to \$1.59 billion. Queensland merchandise exports were up 10.9 per cent to \$11.4 billion in March. We added 5,300 full-time jobs and, as reported last year, business and community confidence is at its highest level—up almost 20 per cent from the low one per cent positive reading posted in the previous January quarter just prior to the election. This is what Queenslanders want. This is where we are heading. We are doing everything to ensure this great state—

(Time expired)