




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR IPSWICH

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PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Skilling Queenslanders for Work

 **Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (2.50 pm): I rise to speak about the Palaszczuk government's Skilling Queenslanders for Work program. Last week, I was proud to represent the Premier at an event of great public interest to my electorate, the Ipswich Skilling Queenslanders for Work Information Forum. I represent an electorate where currently the general unemployment rate is 10 per cent. In the City of Ipswich, as a whole youth unemployment sits at a staggering 17.2 per cent. That means currently in Ipswich almost one in six young people live without the economic security of employment; almost one in six young people live without the social benefits of a job. We know that unemployment causes a whole host of problems. Being unemployed can lead to poverty, deskilling, social exclusion, loss of motivation and issues with mental health. Youth unemployment impacts not only on the future employability of young people but also on their self-esteem and place in society.

Before the Newman government came to power in March of 2012, Queensland had a plan to deal with unemployment. Under Labor, the Skilling Queenslanders for Work program had a proven track record of delivering real employment opportunities to Queenslanders. An evaluation of the Skilling Queenslanders for Work program by Deloitte Access Economics found that every dollar invested in the program generated nearly \$8 in return. Access Economics said that the program was generating billions of dollars in revenue and paying for itself within 12 months. It is difficult to imagine a government that could commit an act of public vandalism as outrageous as the axing of a program such as Skilling Queenslanders for Work. It is difficult to imagine a government with priorities so short term, twisted and out of touch.

Unfortunately, in my electorate for one in 10 people without a job one of the first acts of the Newman government in 2012 was to cut Labor's successful Skilling Queenslanders for Work program. Unfortunately, in the City of Ipswich for one in six young people without a job the Newman government was more concerned with a program of slashing and burning than a proven plan to get unemployed Queenslanders into work. Queensland's unemployment rate hit 6.6 per cent under the Newman government, up from 5.5 per cent under the previous Labor government. In the Ipswich region as a whole, yearly average youth unemployment went up from 12.2 per cent in the first year of the Newman government in 2012 to 18.5 per cent in its final full year in 2014.

To ensure Queensland has a plan to deal with unemployment, the Palaszczuk government is committing \$240 million over the next four years to its new Skilling Queenslanders for Work program to help up to 32,000 Queensland jobseekers find employment.