




Speech By  
**Nikki Boyd**

**MEMBER FOR PINE RIVERS**

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## **PAYROLL TAX REBATE, REVENUE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Miss BOYD** (Pine Rivers—ALP) (7.50 pm): I rise today to speak in support of the Payroll Tax Rebate, Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. This bill delivers on a Palaszczuk Labor election promise to provide a payroll tax rebate on the wages of qualifying apprentices and trainees. This is a Labor bill in the finest of traditions. My electorate is one that has had a sharp decline in good blue-collar jobs over the last three years. These are the kinds of jobs that support families; the kinds of jobs that enable people to plan for the future; the kinds of jobs that build lives. When these jobs go, they are hard to replace.

Labor in government has a great track record when it comes to supporting jobs growth. I recall a time when a Labor government under then premier Beattie promised a five per cent unemployment rate, and those opposite laughed at him. In fact, some who still sit opposite today laughed. Labor in government delivered jobs and employment to Queensland, and we can do it again. This bill is one of many measures the Palaszczuk government is taking to set us back on the right path—a path to employment and prosperity.

Education is the key to unlocking employment potential. Education is the key to building the economy of the future. In my electorate that takes the form of apprenticeships. The change to payroll tax set out in this bill adds to the already considerable benefits of operating a business in Queensland. Queensland already has the most generous payroll tax thresholds in mainland Australia. Queensland has the lowest payroll tax rates in the country. That is not to say that it is easy operating a business in Queensland; this is to say that we in this place recognise that it is hard and we are doing what we can to help.

I previously reported in this place about the good work that Biga Training does in my electorate, placing apprentices with employers who can pass on skills to the new generation. The Palaszczuk government is doing its part to ease the heavy lifting that Biga does in this regard by encouraging employers to take on more apprentices in the interests of our broader economy. This was an election commitment and we deliver. East Coast Apprenticeships is one of the largest employers in Pine Rivers. They are singing the praises of this initiative. Located in Strathpine, they are Queensland's largest independent group training organisation and, like so many in our community, they want to see further engagement for small and medium businesses to take on more apprentices. East Coast Apprenticeships sees this as a way to have better a skilled and more productive workforce into the future.

This bill changes our payroll tax system to enable a payroll tax rebate which will provide a boost to both employment and workforce participation in our economy. When an employer hires an apprentice or trainee, they will receive a payroll tax rebate worth 25 per cent. This is a \$45 million

investment in our business capacity over three years. This bill will enable businesses to contribute even more than they currently do to our economy. This is an investment in our state's future capacity. I know this will make a real difference to employers.

For example, Q Tank in my electorate has manufactured rainwater tanks in Brendale for the last eight years. Under this initiative they will be able to take on an apprentice more easily—an extra hand for their business and an investment in their industry's future. Q Tank won new business of the year in 2008 and owner Toby Peacock won young entrepreneur of the year in 2013. Toby is a big fan of any initiatives that help business deal with payroll tax. In their view, without changes like these to payroll tax, it is a disincentive to employ more workers and a disincentive for growth.

Similarly, Springers Solar in Lawnton will be able to grow their business with this rebate and invest in the exciting renewable energy industry that is so vital to our state's future. Currently Springers Solar has 22 employees. They are supporting growth by hosting a work experience student from a local trades college. Apprentices are certainly within the realms of possibility for Springers Solar with a new payroll tax rebate.

Q Tank and Springers Solar are just two examples of the many businesses in my electorate that will benefit from this proposal and be able to take on an apprentice. An initiative like this can mean the difference between an apprentice being a viable option for a business or not. I am proud to be part of a government that is making it easier for businesses to get a fair go and invest in the skills of the future. I am proud to be part of a government which is not focused on just job creation but ensuring that there is something real and meaningful that is invested in skills, trades and lifelong qualifications.

This investment in providing careers—not just jobs—will pay dividends for our state and our state's people. When I think about these measures, I recall a hot afternoon late last year when I was doorknocking in Bray Park. I knocked on a screen door and found on the other side a man in a singlet and footy shorts, and in his hand was a stubby of XXXX with the twist top still on. I could tell just by looking at him that he had finished work and I thought that our conversation would be short-lived, but I was wrong. He opened the door, stepped out, and he, his beer, his little dog and I gathered around a table in his front garden and talked. There was a moment in our conversation that was very memorable to me. While I was deep in conversation he pulled me up for referring to jobs too much. I must have looked at him with a puzzled look because quite quickly he said, 'We don't need jobs, love; we need careers.' This really got me thinking: we do not need jobs; we do need careers.

I am immensely proud to stand in this place and know what Labor in government is delivering is not just jobs; it is careers and a sustainable future for Queensland, and we will be brighter and better for it. We are doing much more to create not only jobs, but careers. The Palaszczuk government's Working Queensland plan is a diverse suite of initiatives that are currently being rolled out. These initiatives highlight the government's commitment to growing the economy, reducing unemployment and creating real, sustainable jobs for Queenslanders—jobs of the future.

Our Working Queensland plan will ensure that 10 per cent of workers on major programs are apprentices or trainees, creating more opportunities for young people. The requirement of 10 per cent will also be extended to government owned corporations. In addition, Jobs Queensland is a roundtable authority that will be industry led and driven. It will advise on current and future skills demands and long-term workforce planning and skills investment. This program is \$40 million over four years.

On top of this, the suite of initiatives for job creation and stimulation also include Skilling Queenslanders for Work, which delivers \$8 back into our economy for every dollar spent, and Labor's Business Development Fund to assist in investment of joint ventures with start-up firms wanting to turn their ideas into products and jobs of the future—a \$40 million investment over four years. Labor will invest \$34 million over four years into our Rescuing TAFE policy. This will undo the devastation caused by cuts and sackings at the hands of those opposite. Queensland's Entrepreneurs of Tomorrow program will see an investment of \$2 million to support business development for home based businesses.

Under our government the benefits for business are great. However, it is clear the benefits for our young people will be even greater. In Queensland our youth unemployment rate is placed at 14 per cent, and this is unacceptably high. This payroll tax change will mean a new opportunity for young people in my electorate—an electorate where, like so many others, unemployment has been growing. It will mean that young people will get their foot in the door of our economy perhaps for the first time. With unemployment up and participation down, only Labor will deliver these kinds of reforms that will make a real difference in people's lives.

During the campaign I met many young people who were finding it impossible to get their foot in the door of the labour market. They had drive and they wanted to make a start in life, but the economy was stacked against them. In times like these our shrinking economy means it is hard for everyone, and it is hardest for those who have few or no skills to get a start. Many would jump at the chance of taking up an apprenticeship or a trainee spot if they could get one. This payroll change means that business can get on with the work of creating those opportunities. It levels the playing field for apprentices. It also levels the playing field of opportunities for our young people. It makes it easier to grow businesses, to take on new staff who can stay in the industries for years to come, and it builds our state's economy into the future.

In closing, I thank the committee for the work they have done on this bill in the short time they have had to consider it. I would also like to finish by saying that this is a Labor reform and it is in the best of Labor traditions. I commend this bill to the House.