



Speech By  
**Brittany Lauga**


**MEMBER FOR KEPPEL**

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Record of Proceedings, 19 April 2016

**MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST**

**Keppel Electorate**

 **Mrs LAUGA** (Keppel—ALP) (2.39 pm): The Palaszczuk government is focused on growing jobs now and jobs for the future. The Working Queensland Cabinet Committee is charged with doing just that by coordinating and overseeing employment related policy and programs. Job creation in Keppel is one of my top priorities. Therefore, it was wonderful to welcome the Palaszczuk government's Working Queensland Cabinet Committee to Keppel in March. The meeting was also an opportunity for the mayors of Rockhampton and Livingstone shires and the member for Rockhampton and I to provide direct input on the regional priorities in preparation for the next budget.

The Central Queensland region is a social and economic powerhouse of Queensland. On almost every measure, whether it be population and growth, economic scale, expansion and diversity, the key industries of agriculture, mining and tourism or education, training and research, Central Queensland is a stand-out performer. We host a density, diversity and scale of social and economic enterprise almost unmatched elsewhere in Australia. Central Queensland's gross domestic product of \$44.4 billion is larger than that of the combined gross domestic product of the Townsville region, the Cairns region and the Darwin region and is almost twice the size of Tasmania's GDP.

We know that over recent years the Central Queensland economy has become more diversified with the labour market undergoing a transition to meet job requirements. Construction, health and education, and professional services are forecast to continue as strong industries in Central Queensland. I want to build upon those industries, whilst also encouraging new industries to establish in our region. The mining boom is not ending, but it is changing in ways that will reshape the industrial landscape. We must diversify beyond mining's boom and bust. How effectively we catch and ride the future waves will determine our prosperity for generations to come.

The Palaszczuk government is injecting \$40 million into the Yeppoon foreshore and the Rockhampton riverbank projects, which will create up to 400 jobs in construction and attract visitors and grow tourism for decades to come. The Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative is injecting nearly \$2 million into Rockhampton and the Capricorn Coast to support 451 jobseekers improve their skills and employment prospects. The state government's \$892 million infrastructure spend in the Central Queensland region this financial year is also supporting an estimated 2,500 local jobs, which is great news for the local economy and local employment. There has been a strong response to the Palaszczuk government's payroll tax rebate for apprentices and trainees, with 87 local businesses already claiming around \$100,000 in rebates to date.

Rockhampton is the beef capital of Australia and Central Queensland is the unrivalled agricultural giant of Northern Australia. The region produces over \$2 billion per annum, which is greater than the Townsville and Cairns regions and the entire Northern Territory combined. There would be great

economic benefits for local produce such as beef, pineapples, mangoes, lettuce, citrus and nuts to be exported through the Rockhampton airport direct to Asia. Central Queensland is also perfectly positioned to grow international education, which is a sector that contributes \$2.5 billion annually to the Queensland economy. It is predicted to become the largest service export by 2020 and to create 20,000 jobs. The world-class CQ University and a safe and laid-back lifestyle make a powerful combination to attract more international students to Central Queensland.

In terms of tourism, it is all good news for the southern Great Barrier Reef, which in 2015 ranked fifth in the state for domestic and international visitors. Not only are visitor numbers increasing; tourists are staying longer and they are spending more. Now that we are growing the largest wild barramundi fishery in the world in Central Queensland opportunities are set to grow in recreational fishing tourism. There are also offshoot opportunities for the Commonwealth Games and Indigenous tourism opportunities to grow employment and training, and give traditional owners an opportunity to share their stories. We are in a prime position to take advantage of the environmental outcomes and economic benefits of renewable energy. We have the space, flat land, sunshine and world-class technological and research facilities that can help position us as a world leader in large-scale renewables.

We are now starting to see the fruits of the Palaszczuk government's economic agenda. The Palaszczuk government will continue to work hard to boost business confidence, attract investment and partner with business and industry to deliver new job-creating projects and infrastructure. The mighty Central Queensland region has the people, we have the ideas, we have the infrastructure and we are ready.