



Speech By

**Bruce Saunders**


**MEMBER FOR MARYBOROUGH**

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## MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

### Maryborough, Downer

 **Mr SAUNDERS** (Maryborough—ALP) (11.48 am): I rise in the House today to welcome the Premier's announcement in Maryborough last Friday of \$400 million in rail contracts for Maryborough and Townsville, with Maryborough getting the lion's share. This was a significant announcement for the city of Maryborough, and the Palaszczuk Labor government should be congratulated for revitalising and saving Maryborough. The difference between this side of the House and that side is that the last time those opposite awarded the contract overseas and the local LNP member said that Ipswich needed jobs, whereas the Premier, the transport minister and the Treasurer said that Maryborough needs the jobs. With that announcement, 206 jobs were saved at Downer.

Downer has a great history. In 1865, when it was known as John Walker and Co., it built the first steam train for the Queensland government—No. 299, which is on display in Maryborough. That is the history of this facility in the great city of Maryborough. Now it has been saved by the Palaszczuk Labor government. With the issuing of these contracts, 206 jobs on the floor at the Downer facility have been saved.

It goes deeper than that in Maryborough city. It is great to walk through the city now and see the smiles on people's faces. The businesspeople and the punters on the street are very happy as other jobs in the community have also been saved—for example, those who subcontract to carry out the machine work Downer cannot do. All up, more than 500 jobs have been saved in Maryborough city. We did not export these jobs; we saved them. That is what the Palaszczuk government is doing. It is all about jobs, jobs, jobs.

I will give members opposite an example of the quality of work done at the Downer facility in Maryborough. The last tilt train built there, under a Labor government, did five million kilometres without one spanner being put on that tilt train, without a breakdown. That indicates the quality of workmanship that comes out of that facility. Queensland Rail and the people of Queensland can be guaranteed that the work coming out of the Downer facility is the best in the world.

We hear from those on the other side of the House about those 'bad union blokes and women', that they are thugs and so on. I will tell the House about a collective between AMWU state secretary Rohan Webb, Downer, the people of Maryborough and me. We all worked together to save this facility. There was none of this union thuggery or carry-on like that. Everyone sat at a round table. We worked together to make sure this facility stayed alive and we kept a skill base in Maryborough city for the future. These are skills and jobs we cannot afford to lose in Queensland.

Downer is the heartbeat of the city. As I said earlier, now when you walk down the main street people are smiling and kids have a spring in their step. The other day I spoke to a friend of mine who sells cars. He has already had two inquiries about new cars. Another friend who is a real estate agent has had three or four phone calls from young people working at Downer who are interested in buying a

house. This is what the Palaszczuk Labor government does. It is all about jobs for regional Queensland. We did not export the jobs. We did not let that factory close. I am proud to stand here as part of this government. Those on the other side of the House can laugh, but 206 jobs have been saved. We will not let the LNP forget that at the next election. We will tell people that when we were talking about saving jobs in Queensland those opposite were laughing. I am very disappointed that—

**Mr Crandon** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Farmer): Order! Member for Coomera, the member for Maryborough has the call.

**Mr SAUNDERS:** In terms of the skill base we are keeping in the city, Downer is now going to take on apprentices. We are actually improving the workforce in Maryborough city. Those skills from the older generation who are working at the facility will be passed on to the younger generation coming through, so those skills will not be lost. I thank the Premier, the Deputy Premier, the transport minister and the Treasurer on behalf of the citizens of Maryborough city. They cannot thank the Palaszczuk Labor government enough. We save jobs and we look after regional Queensland. I am proud to stand here today and say that the Labor government has saved Downer in Maryborough.