



Speech By
Hon. Curtis Pitt

MEMBER FOR MULGRAVE

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Jobs, Indigenous Queenslanders

 **Hon. CW PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and Minister for Sport) (2.13 pm): I am pleased to inform the House of successes achieved through the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships in assisting Indigenous people into jobs. In March 2015, I announced the Youth Employment Program, otherwise known as YEP, as part of the government's election commitment to focus on job creation and youth unemployment. The program, delivered through the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, is helping Indigenous students to define their career goals and encouraging more people to complete their year 12 studies.

I am glad to report that in the first seven months of this financial year to the end of January we have placed over 550 people into jobs. The jobs have been secured in 18 industry sectors across Queensland, including almost 280 in construction, more than 80 in health care, 35 in resources, 36 in retail and 36 in accommodation and food. More than 370 of these jobs are in Northern Queensland, over 50 in Central Queensland and over 130 in southern parts of our state. This is not only about young people getting jobs; it is also about contributing to a stronger economy in Queensland.

We all know it is important for students after year 12 to transition to further study, training or work. We also know that young people are disadvantaged in the labour market because they lack experience, skills or knowledge about opportunities. The Palaszczuk Labor government is overcoming this challenge and is helping young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to find jobs and help them maintain their jobs.

The success of the department's approach is explained by its focus on engaging with young people while they are still in secondary school, helping them define their goals, helping them make informed decisions about job opportunities and linking them to opportunities that will build rewarding and sustainable careers. This focus is part of our broader economic plan that has resulted in more than 71,000 new jobs created in Queensland since the election. Our latest trend unemployment rate of 6.1 per cent for January is still far below the 6.6 per cent we inherited from the LNP. Despite these successes, we still see their ongoing campaign to talk down our state in the hope of implementing its one-point economic plan, otherwise known as asset sales.

Lifting the rate of year 12 attainment is also a key target of Closing the Gap initiatives. The annual *Closing the Gap* report which was recently released by the Prime Minister shows where progress is being made and where a more concerted effort is needed. The report highlights that, nationally, two targets are on track: to halve the gap in mortality rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, and to halve the gap for Indigenous Australians in year 12 attainment. The report shows that Queensland Indigenous students have shown the largest improvements, with significant improvement

in seven of the eight national minimum standards tests from 2008 to 2015. There is much more work to be done and we will work with the federal government to make further progress towards closing the gap in education, health and employment.