



Speech By
Hon. Curtis Pitt

MEMBER FOR MULGRAVE

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

United States, Overseas Visit

 **Hon. CW PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and Minister for Sport) (9.54 am): Last week I was in the US for Queensland Treasury Corporation's post-budget investment trip. The point of the trip was to promote the strong fundamentals of the Queensland economy and our improved economic position delivered over the last two state budgets. We met with institutional investors in both domestic and offshore markets to build on our trusted relationships with existing investors and to diversify Queensland Treasury Corporation's investor base by meeting with new investors. QTC's investors include central banks, sovereign wealth funds, domestic and international banks, fund managers and asset managers.

The engagement in the US was very encouraging and the feedback about Queensland was very positive. Groups we met with included Jane Street, a global proprietary trading firm trading a wide range of financial products; Prudential Financial, which has US\$1.27 trillion in funds under management; and BlackRock, which manages over \$31.5 billion in equity and debt assets and investor commitments.

The key points I raised were our budget and ABS figures that underline the fact that our economy is growing strongly and our economic plan is working to deliver on the government's central commitment to create jobs. They show strong performances in the areas of job creation, residential dwelling approvals, construction activity and consumer spending. State final demand figures show our state's domestic economy growing for the first time since December 2013.

No matter what the evidence, there are some who prefer to stick to a monotonous monologue of doom and gloom, or find or manufacture negativity among all the positive indicators. The reality of our strong and growing state economy and the opportunities it offers are recognised here and abroad by those who deal in the facts. That is what I found on my recent visit to speak with investors, analysts and bankers in the United States.

While I will be providing a full report on the trip, I specifically want to mention one highlight. Our economic plan includes a more aggressive approach to attracting new investment, new businesses and new jobs to Queensland. In the US, I found business operators receptive to the idea of establishing a presence in Queensland given our strong and growing economy, our advantages in lifestyle and living costs, and a supportive government. The incentives we offer include our Industry Attraction Fund, which allocates \$40 million over four years, and our Business Development Fund, which involves the government partnering in new ventures with private sector backers.

In Boston, I visited the premises and laboratories of medical technology developer Cocoon Biotech Inc. and met with Dr Ailis Tweed-Kent, who is the founder and CEO of that company. It was an enlightening meeting and I saw Cocoon's cutting-edge work in exploring new treatments for

osteoarthritis. Cocoon's laboratory work so far has developed a special silk fibre that can be loaded with protein therapeutics and injected into joints to provide long-term pain relief or slow the progress of osteoarthritis. This work offers the potential to improve the treatment of the disease and potentially other degenerative joint disorders.

Arthritis Australia estimates the cost to our health system through various treatments and procedures, such as hip replacements, at around \$5.5 billion a year. This figure is projected to grow to \$7.6 billion by 2030. There are enormous potential benefits to individuals from the sort of work Cocoon is doing and massive potential savings to the wider community. Dr Tweed-Kent said—

Cocoon is excited to explore opportunities to establish a presence in the state of Queensland. A partnership with Australia will enable Cocoon to accelerate our pipeline of products into the clinic, improving the lives of patients living with osteoarthritis both in Australia and around the world.

I will be following up with Dr Tweed-Kent and other investors in the US as part of our government's drive to innovate our industries, further diversify our economy and deliver jobs.