



Speech By
Hon. Grace Grace

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Back to Work Youth Boost

 **Hon. G GRACE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (9.49 am): I welcome the Premier's announcement and the comments of the Treasurer regarding the Back to Work Youth Boost. This is great news for young jobseekers and employers in regional Queensland and it is great news for regional economies. It means that until the end of February 2017, employers who hire 15- to 24-year-old jobseekers in regional Queensland will be eligible for support payments of \$20,000.

Mr Cripps interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: One moment, Minister. Member for Hinchinbrook, if you continue with that line of interjections, I will rule that you are disorderly. I give you notice.

Ms GRACE: That is \$20,000 for every new young worker directly hired under this program. Doubling the support currently available to regional employers is a great addition to our Back to Work program, which is already such a great success in regional Queensland. Back to Work is already supporting 908 jobs, which is up 32 from just yesterday and is 678 paid and 230 in the system. There are 176 jobs in North Queensland, 166 in the Far North, 115 in Wide Bay, 83 in Central Queensland, 80 in Mackay and Whitsunday, and 58 in North-West and South-West Queensland. As I said, there are a further 230 draft applications in the system, with more and more regional employers getting behind this fantastic program which is helping to get more regional Queenslanders back to work.

This government believes in hiring, not firing. The Premier has made jobs her No. 1 priority and I am proud to be her employment minister overseeing the great Back to Work initiative. I am pleased to inform the House that the existing features of Back to Work will be retained. Regional employers can still access \$10,000 support payments for hiring an unemployed person, rising to \$15,000 for a long-term unemployed person who has been out of work for 12 months or more. Our Back to Work regional package is clearly a hit with regional small and medium sized employers. The number of success stories is growing every day and so far they have shared in over \$3 million in payments within the program.

As the Premier said, the Youth Boost could not come at a better time as many school leavers start looking for work around Christmas. I will continue to champion this outstanding program with all of my colleagues on this side of the House, who are supporting jobs for Queensland, jobs now and jobs for the future.