



Speech By  
**Hon. Leeanne Enoch**


**MEMBER FOR ALGESTER**

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**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

**North Queensland, Small Business Ideas Forum**

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algester—ALP) (Minister for Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy and Minister for Small Business) (2.30 pm): The Palaszczuk government was elected on a promise of being a government for all of Queensland. This government's response to the retrenchment of workers from the Queensland Nickel smelter in Townsville is an example of a whole-of-government approach to standing by regional Queenslanders.

Last week I was delighted to announce that the Palaszczuk government will host a small business ideas forum in Townsville on Friday, 26 February. I want North Queensland to come forward with their bright ideas for starting a new business and find out about the support on offer from the state government. The ideas forum will include presentations from experienced small business experts and introductions to support programs and resources. Participants will also have access to one-on-one mentoring to test the strength of their business ideas. Many of the workers who have recently been made redundant are highly skilled and experienced and, provided with relevant information and mentoring, I have no doubt many of them would make excellent small business owners.

This government is focused on stimulating the North Queensland economy and this includes helping new small business get off the ground and helping existing businesses to grow. This is about helping former employees of Queensland Nickel and supporting anyone who has the next great idea for a new local business, whether that is designing a new app, working as a self-employed tradie or creating your own start-up. I would like to acknowledge the hard work of my parliamentary colleagues the member for Mundingburra, the member for Thuringowa and the member for Townsville in securing this important forum for the region.

Small businesses employ approximately 43 per cent of all private sector workers in Queensland and are a vital part of our state's economy. The Palaszczuk government's Advance Queensland program also provides a range of funding opportunities for small businesses and start-ups.

I want to encourage anyone in the North Queensland community who is considering turning their great idea into a great business to attend the forum to hear about and discuss opportunities for starting a small business. The forum will be held at the Riverway Arts Centre between 12.15 pm and 3 pm on Friday, 26 February. Equally, I would encourage anyone who is considering starting a small business or start-up to visit the Queensland government Business and Industry Portal website and the Advance Queensland website for resources and funding opportunities.