Speech By

Hon. Leeanne Enoch

MEMBER FOR ALGESTER

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Science and Innovation

Hon. LM ENOCH (Algester—ALP) (Minister for Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy and Minister for Small Business) (9.44 am): The Palaszczuk government is committed to providing all Queenslanders with opportunities to develop the skills needed to fully participate in the knowledge economy. As we move towards a future where technology is playing an increasingly important role, developing skills in areas such as coding and robotics will become even more significant. This is what the Palaszczuk government's $180 million Advance Queensland innovation and jobs plan is all about: preparing Queenslanders for the future economy.

Public libraries have a core role in supporting coding and robotics across Queensland by providing an inclusive and non-academic learning environment that complements the new digital technology curriculum. To support the critical role of libraries, I can today announce that the Palaszczuk government will deliver more than $300,000 in grant funding to public libraries across Queensland to deliver additional coding and robotics activities. This funding will enable people of all ages and digital literacy levels to participate in free robotics and coding activities in their local communities through libraries in 33 council areas. Programs will range from introducing new robots such as the NAO humanoid robot through to holding community coding days to learn how coding works.

I cannot mention all of the exciting activities on the horizon, but I would like to highlight two that demonstrate the tailored approach to delivering programs. For instance, the Balonne Shire Council is purchasing a range of robotics platforms and delivering a digital literacy roadshow throughout its region to reach as many community members as possible. The Central Highlands and Fraser Coast regional councils, through their libraries, are fostering digital inclusion by developing programs unique to their communities' needs, including competitions in robotics between local communities and programs for people with disabilities.

The environment provided by libraries enables generations that did not grow up with digital technology to learn alongside young people and delivers opportunities for everyone to fully participate in the digital economy. Public libraries across Queensland have consistently been at the forefront of the robotics and coding wave and have conducted hands-on programs using a wide range of robotics and coding platforms. The programs also involve partnering with local community services or schools to provide outreach programs with coding and robotics equipment. The funding announced today once again underlines the Palaszczuk government's commitment to ensuring that all Queenslanders have the opportunity to participate in the digital economy.