




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR KEPPEL

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MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Back to Work Program Youth Boost

 **Mrs LAUGA** (Keppel—ALP) (11.52 am): I really do not care what the member for Clayfield drinks; I am here to talk about jobs. The Palaszczuk government is working to get Queenslanders back to work. Already the \$100 million Back to Work program has supported 1,090 businesses to employ 2,323 workers in regional Queensland. There are another 807 applications pending approval. Of the 2,323 approved jobs, the majority of approved applications have come from small business. This includes 755 jobseekers aged between 15 and 24 who have been hired under the \$20,000 Back to Work Youth Boost.

Significantly, 636 of the Queenslanders assisted through Back to Work were long-term unemployed. These are people who had been out of the workforce for at least 12 months. Now they have work. There is dignity in work. The total amount paid out to regional employers so far is \$10,782,000—money that is being put to work in regional communities. The majority of applications to the program are for employees in small to medium sized businesses—502 applications belong to businesses that have one to four employees and 816 are in businesses that employ between five and 19 people.

The Back to Work regional jobs program has helped 356 Central Queenslanders back into employment. To date, the program has supported 193 Central Queensland employers to hire 356 local jobseekers and 90 of those were long-term unemployed Central Queenslanders. That is a lot of Central Queenslanders now back in work, being able to look after themselves and their families, and learning new skills which will stand them in good stead in the future. The \$20,000 Back to Work Youth Boost is also a great success, with 138 Central Queenslanders aged between 15 and 24 now in jobs. Under the program, an employer support payment of \$10,000 is payable for employers filling a new job in regional Queensland. For those long-term unemployed, our program offers an employer support payment of \$15,000. The Back to Work Youth Boost offers \$20,000 to employers to hire a young person aged between 15 and 24.

When the Premier addressed the Capricornia Chamber of Commerce at Yeppoon in January, the Premier was asked by iAssist General Manager Jason Spence about the Youth Boost program. Mr Spence has engaged three new staff under the Back to Work program for his business in North Rockhampton. Indeed, the approval for one of the staff came through to him whilst he was at the lunch. iAssist offers bookkeeping and payroll services, technical support and business networks. Mr Spence asked the Premier if the government would continue the Youth Boost beyond 28 February. The Premier took the question on notice as at the time the government was assessing the success of the program. I advocated to the Premier and to the Treasurer for the extension of the Youth Boost program. I am pleased that the Palaszczuk government has announced an extension to the Youth Boost for another eight months to 31 October 2017.

We have also restored Skilling Queenslanders for Work to get people job ready. The LNP cut this program, despite independent analysis finding that, of 57,000 people to gain employment through the program, 8,500 would not have otherwise gained employment. Our \$405 million Advance Queensland program, which is focused on diversifying our economy after the resources boom, is supporting innovation and creating new jobs by backing Queensland's best and brightest and attracting new companies here to Queensland.

The Palaszczuk Labor government stopped the Newman-Nicholls government from selling our assets. Two years ago Queenslanders told us that they wanted front-line services restored, and we are doing just that. Between March 2015 and September 2016 we have appointed more than 2,390 new nurses, 770 new doctors, 1,990 new teachers, 990 new teacher aides and more than 250 new police officers. We have announced 129 new child safety officers, in addition to the 166 employed over the last two years, to help rebuild our Child Safety Services workforce. This contrasts to the 225 positions cut by the LNP. Nine out of every 10 public servants are now employed in front-line services and front-line support roles.

We have allocated more than \$1 billion to attract investment and create jobs in regional Queensland. Programs including the Jobs and Regional Growth Fund, Building our Regions, Works for Queensland, Back to Work, Youth Boost, the Accelerated Works Program and the Significant Regional Infrastructure Projects Program are all focused on creating regional jobs. Moreover, the Deputy Premier announced the \$200 million Works for Queensland program—700 local council projects across regional Queensland, generating some 6,000 jobs. In Central Queensland alone, the Palaszczuk government is putting \$12.9 million on the table to support 430 jobs. We hire Queenslanders; those opposite fired Queenslanders.