




Speech By
Hon. Curtis Pitt

MEMBER FOR MULGRAVE

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Youth Boost; First Home Owners' Grant

 **Hon. CW PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (9.40 am): The Palaszczuk Labor government believes in taking an active role in building our state's future. It was great to hear the announcement by the Premier that we will see the extension of the Back to Work Youth Boost until 31 October 2017. I am very pleased to continue working with the Minister for Employment in making sure that this program is rolled out throughout Queensland. I know how welcome this policy has been throughout the state, but particularly in Cairns in my region of Far North Queensland.

We on this side of the House remain committed to helping Queenslanders, particularly when it comes to them getting into their new home. We know the important role that the government must play in creating jobs and delivering the services that Queenslanders expect and deserve and providing the right incentives to live and work in Queensland. That is why in last year's budget I announced that the government would boost the Queensland's First Home Owners' Grant to \$20,000 for 12 months, ending 30 June 2017. This boost applies to the purchase or construction of a new house, new unit, or new townhouse with a value up to \$750,000. This boost means that Queensland currently has the most generous First Home Owners' Grant of all the Australian mainland states. Up to the end of January, almost 3,500 applications have been received, worth \$69.9 million. Out of these applications, a total of 2,340 grants worth \$46.8 million have been approved, with more to be approved as house purchases by applicants proceed. The First Home Owners' Grant not only helps people get into their home sooner but also generates activity and jobs in the construction sector and related sectors. It encourages investment in new housing stock—investment that flows through to many local contractors, subcontractors and suppliers who rely on the building industry.

Yesterday we also saw the fourth positive quarter in a row for state final demand figures, after eight consecutive quarters of negative growth. That growth included a rise in the construction of new dwellings of 1.1 per cent and total dwelling investment 3.2 per cent higher over the year, reflecting the strong growth in construction work done on medium- to high-density dwellings. A strong pipeline of housing work yet to be done suggests ongoing strength in Queensland dwelling investment in 2016-17 and a strengthening domestic economy in our state.

To ensure as many Queenslanders as possible can take advantage of the First Home Owners' Grant, I have written to a number of banks and financial institutions seeking their support in ensuring that the grant is considered as part of the deposit for the mortgage applications of first home buyers. I thank those institutions that are already undertaking that practice. In many areas of regional Queensland, \$20,000 goes a long way towards Queenslanders meeting their deposit and getting into their first home. In some cases, that grant is the deposit. Our approach has been commended by the HIA, Australia's peak residential construction industry association, and also Master Builders, underscoring that the grant benefits not only those people getting into their first home but also the residential construction sector. This initiative provides tangible benefits to those who need it the most and it also boosts jobs in those areas that need it the most.