




Speech By
Hon. Curtis Pitt

MEMBER FOR MULGRAVE

Record of Proceedings, 21 March 2017

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Jobs

 **Hon. CW PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (9.51 am): Where others talk the Palaszczuk government is about action. We took office from a former government that had no plans and no ideas for a post-mining boom transition. We are putting our money where our mouth is with \$1 billion invested in creating jobs and building infrastructure across regional Queensland. That has been our focus since day one. In fact, since the election a net total of 33,700 jobs have been created in Queensland. Unemployment is now at 6.4 per cent, down from the 6.6 per cent we inherited in 2015 from the former government. I am concerned by the slight rise of 0.1 per cent in the most recent trend figure to 6.4 per cent, which is up from a revised 6.3 per cent in January. Despite this, on average, 1,350 jobs have been created each month since the January 2015 election.

Our economic plan is working: Queensland posted a record \$52.7 billion in exports last year. Last week's NAB business confidence survey ranks Queensland at plus 11, higher than the national average of plus eight and more than double the confidence level of plus five in New South Wales. Annual growth in retail spending in Queensland is higher than in New South Wales, Victoria and the national average. We are on track to be the fastest growing state in 2016-17, with the latest ABS statistics showing trend growth in state final demand for the December quarter of 0.5 per cent. We have seen four quarters of positive growth in state final demand after eight negative quarters.

Restoring Queensland to a position where we are now forecast to have nation-leading growth in 2016-17 has been challenging. However, we have rolled up our sleeves and are doing the heavy lifting to stare down the challenges ahead. What we really need to see right now is the Turnbull government stepping up to match our efforts. We need direct federal government investment in infrastructure investment, not politicking. We need direct federal government support for employment programs to match our efforts. We need the Turnbull government to match the type of programs we are delivering to support employment and growth, particularly in regional Queensland.

Our successful \$20,000 Youth Boost program, which has now been extended to October, is giving businesses incentives to hire unemployed people aged 15 and 24 and has created nearly 800 jobs for young people. The Back to Work and Youth Boost programs have seen over 1,100 employers participate, creating jobs for regional Queenslanders. Our \$200 million Works for Queensland program is allowing councils to undertake job-creating, maintenance and minor infrastructure projects right now. We are investing \$440 million in our Accelerated Works Program to bring forward projects to stimulate economic activity in regional Queensland. The \$375 million Building Our Regions program is supporting more than 600 jobs across 51 projects funded in the second round.

We have doubled the payroll tax rebate from 25 per cent to 50 per cent for employers hiring trainees or apprentices. So far, almost 3,500 businesses have taken advantage of concessions worth \$17.8 million. We reintroduced the Skilling Queenslanders for Work program, which was axed by the Newman-Nicholls government, with \$240 million over four years to help an estimated 32,000

jobseekers train for and secure jobs. Our \$200 million Jobs and Regional Growth Package includes \$130 million specifically to support private sector projects and economic development. That is a job-creation program and we have started to roll out projects, including support for Glencore's operations in Mount Isa and the re-bricking of its copper smelter, to ensure job security and growth. Queenslanders voted for a government willing to do the hard work in the face of tough times and that is exactly what we are delivering.