




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR GLADSTONE

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MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Regional Queensland, Jobs

 **Mr BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (12.43 pm): I rise today to talk about the thing that gets me up every morning right here in Queensland, and that is delivering jobs in regional Queensland. That is what the Palaszczuk government is all about. One of the great, innovative programs that is delivering jobs—thousands of jobs, in fact—for the regions is our \$200 million Works for Queensland program. I am excited about this program because it lives up to its name. It works for Queensland and it is getting Queenslanders working. As I travel around the state in my role as the Assistant Minister for Infrastructure, I see how this program is already making a huge difference to local communities. This was clear on a recent road trip to Emerald and the Central Highlands with the Deputy Premier when we visited one of these projects at the Emerald Botanic Gardens. The botanic gardens are the jewel in Emerald's crown and it was great to join Mayor Kerry Hayes and Councillor Megan Daniels to see how Works for Queensland will deliver new walk and cycling paths, solar lighting and landscaping to make it even better.

These are stories that we are hearing all over the state—from sealing roads and delivering playgrounds in my community of Gladstone to getting the mighty Mary Valley Rattler running again in Gympie to critical water infrastructure in remote Indigenous communities in Far North Queensland. These programs are transforming our state. While they may seem small, the difference they make is enormous. It is community infrastructure like pools, parks and libraries that make our regional communities such great places to live. Communities across the state are benefiting with a total of a massive 723 projects funded through this program.

The brilliant thing about Works for Queensland is that it serves a double duty—generating jobs and upgrading important community infrastructure. The full \$200 million was allocated across 65 regional councils on the basis of population and local unemployment, providing a boost to every regional community, town and city. That is the really smart thing about this program: it was specifically designed to deliver jobs where they are needed most, and that is in regional Queensland.

It is also a program that recognises the incredibly important role that local councils play, especially in regional Queensland. We know that when the state government and local councils collaborate we can deliver projects that are really going to benefit our own communities. That is why we worked closely with the LGAQ to establish and design this program so that councils could get the most benefit out of it. Together we know that we can stimulate local economies and we can build and upgrade great infrastructure for the benefit of all Queenslanders. Do not just take my word for it. Councils across Queensland are singing its praises. Banana Shire Council Mayor Nev Ferrier said—

This is the best funding program I have seen in 13 years in Local Government—council can deliver projects that we always seem never to have enough money to do.

Western Downs Regional Council Mayor Paul McVeigh said—

The real beauty of the Works for Queensland package is about creating jobs. This funding is to be used on projects that immediately create jobs. It is really very exciting, not only do we have the opportunity to boost jobs across our region but also deliver key projects for our communities.

These are just two of dozens of endorsements that we are hearing across the state because our councils know it is working. By working together with councils, we were able to fast-track the rollout of this program. In just four short weeks we were able to assess and fund all of these projects, meaning more jobs sooner right across Queensland. We know that Queenslanders want jobs, not red tape, and that is what this program delivers. This program is what our government is all about—great infrastructure and real jobs for our regions. I am proud to be part of a government that is delivering that right here in Queensland.