



Speech By  
**Glenn Butcher**


**MEMBER FOR GLADSTONE**

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## **MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST**

### **Gladstone, Jobs**

 **Mr BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (2.56 pm): I rise to speak on a matter of importance across Queensland but particularly regional Queensland and my electorate of Gladstone. The people of Gladstone are crying out for jobs. Everywhere I go across my electorate I am asked, 'What is the government doing to bring jobs back to Gladstone?' The Palaszczuk government's record on job creation is strong in my electorate, with almost \$4 million awarded to local organisations to assist over 700 jobseekers in the electorate through the Skilling Queenslanders for Work program. On top of that, 318 people in my electorate have been supported into employment through the hugely successful Back to Work program. Both of those programs were scrapped under the previous LNP government.

The Palaszczuk government is investing in industries of the future, with biofuels and renewable energy in my electorate. We are securing our biggest employers by investing in the infrastructure upgrades they need, including at the port of Gladstone and the Gladstone Area Water Board. We have delivered record investment in health, with construction soon to begin on the \$42 million accident and emergency department and another \$4 million in step-up step-down mental health facilities across Queensland.

We are delivering record investment in infrastructure upgrades across almost every school in my electorate, including \$7 million at Gladstone State High School for a new commercial kitchen and a new school building with new classrooms; \$6 million for a new building at Calliope State School; \$4 million for my favourite school, Rosella Park School, for a new admin building; and \$5.5 million to Clinton State School, just to name a few.

There is no doubt that the people of my electorate and right across regional Queensland are doing it tough and there is more that can be done. This is why it is great to see that the Palaszczuk Labor government unashamedly puts Queenslanders first. The Buy Queensland policy will mean that the mums and dads who own their own electrical business, the local painters, scaffolding companies or the carpet layers in Gladstone will have a real shot at sharing in some of the \$14 billion spent by government each and every year in Queensland on supplies and services.

With some \$4 billion being invested each year in building and maintaining the state's infrastructure—roads, schools and hospitals—there is no doubt that the small businesses in my electorate will be the winners from the Palaszczuk government's Buy Queensland procurement policy. It is not just about the cheapest price; this policy acknowledges the value of spending money where it is made. This is what the taxpayers of Queensland and my community rightly expect and deserve.

The choice is simple: do we want to see Queensland government contracts go to Queensland businesses, or should our taxes pay for jobs outside our state or even overseas? We are determined to do everything we possibly can to use local suppliers, to support local jobs and to grow Queensland's own economy. The policy gives businesses who employ Queenslanders an improved chance of competing for and winning contracts from the Queensland government.

From 1 September, the government's new procurement policy will define a local supplier as a business that maintains its work within a 125-kilometre radius of where the goods or work is needed. I have firsthand experience of the issues that can arise when 'local' is not appropriately defined. In my office in Gladstone I have had plasterers and painters from as far as away as Townsville, some 800 kilometres away. Given the number of significant infrastructure projects happening in my electorate, I have been working hard to ensure our local tradies are aware of things like Building and Asset Services and prequalification systems that we see in Queensland to ensure they are even in the game when it comes to government contracts. Not only will they now be in the game; they will also be in with a genuine chance of hitting a home run in scoring some of this work.

We are going to reduce the complexity in the current government tender process and provide businesses with the recourse they need. Importantly, we are going to make sure that businesses tendering for government procurement contracts have a permanent workforce that is based in Queensland. They will need to offer fair wages, conditions and superannuation and have a good workplace health and safety record.

The LNP will barrack for anybody except for those in Queensland. We saw that last week when a regional Central Queensland member who knows how tough it is, the federal member for Capricornia, spoke in support of the disgraceful anti-Queensland motion in Canberra. If the LNP wants to spend Queensland taxpayers' money buying services and goods from Georgetown, Glenbrook or Goldsborough in New Zealand, I am going to make sure that we are buying ours from Gladstone—right here in Queensland.