



Speech By  
**Hon. Grace Grace**


**MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL**

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Record of Proceedings, 9 August 2017

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

### Gold Coast, Jobs

 **Hon. G GRACE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (2.37 pm): As the Gold Coast gears up for the 2018 Commonwealth Games there is a real sense of optimism amongst local business owners and employers about the economic opportunities this international major event will provide. While governing from the Gold Coast last week, I met with employers who are excited at the prospect of growing their businesses in the lead-up to the games. They are keen to take advantage of our positive job support policies, in particular the recently expanded \$177.5 million Back to Work jobs package which now includes the Gold Coast area. Employers in regional Queensland are backing this exceptional program, and since it kicked off in July last year they have given 6,257 new jobseekers a job.

The Gold Coast is next, with employers already hiring workers within days of the south-east applications opening. There are now more than 30 jobseekers back at work in the south-east thanks to this program, including pending applications. There have been a further 350 expressions of interest from south-east employers in the program. The additional \$27.5 million for Back to Work SEQ will support up to 1,500 new jobs, and the business owners I met with at Currumbin's Elephant Rock Cafe are ready and raring to go. Some have already considered hiring new workers, putting themselves in line for support payments of up to \$20,000 with Youth Boost. The Gold Coast Chamber of Commerce is also excited about the jobs and economic opportunities that Back to Work is bringing to the Gold Coast. I sat next to the Gold Coast chamber representative Martin Brady at the business breakfast, and I will soon be back on the Gold Coast with the chamber promoting the program to local businesses.

Employers in regional Queensland have already received more than \$33 million in support payments under this scheme with a total of \$92 million committed, which will boost local economies. It is about giving employers the extra boost they need to hire another worker to grow their business and their local economy.

The expanded Back to Work program also includes an extra \$50 million in 2017-18 to support the continuation of the Back to Work regional program. This additional \$50 million will support up to 3,400 new jobs outside the south-east. These extra funds are in addition to the \$100 million already allocated to the Back to Work regional program. I have seen firsthand the exceptional results this great program is producing throughout regional Queensland. I have heard the stories of those whose lives have been transformed. I encourage the Gold Coast and all south-east employers to join their regional counterparts and get on board with this great program.