



Speech By
Hon. Grace Grace

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

Record of Proceedings, 15 February 2017

MOTION

Jobs

 **Hon. G GRACE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (6.36 pm): We can always rely on the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to not let the truth stand in the way of a speech. It takes a lot of front and some audacity for those opposite to come into this place and talk about regional unemployment. Who left us with a job crisis when we came into government? It was those opposite! On the opposition front bench we have someone whom I could not even remember was an employment minister and that is the member for Surfers Paradise. It is interesting that, having left us with a job crisis, today they come into this place and condemn the work of the Labor government in turning around the figures that we inherited. The Treasurer went through the true figures for the unemployment rate in this state.

I rise to oppose the motion moved by those opposite. This opposition formed a government with the biggest majority that this state had seen and they did nothing but destroy jobs. Having sacked 14,000 public servants, it takes a lot of front to come in here and talk about the unemployment rate. It takes a lot of front to do that in this House tonight. It takes a lot of front to talk about jobs in this state when they guaranteed front-line services had nothing to fear, but what did they do? They sacked nurses, midwives and doctors. Here they are today, crying crocodile tears because they are worried about the unemployment rate. They are not fooling anyone. They are not fooling us on this side of the House and they are not fooling those in the gallery, about whom the Deputy Leader of the Opposition was so worried.

We bought in the Back to Work program in the last budget. It is a fantastic program and I will go through some figures in terms of what is being delivered. The member for Kawana asked me a question in estimates. Do you know what his question was? He was so concerned about regional unemployment that he asked me about a fictitious person who lives in my electorate and their concern about maybe not being able to get a job. That is how concerned they were about regional unemployment.

I answered the question. I said at the time that the unemployment rate in inner Brisbane is 3.5 per cent. It is a little bit higher in the regions because this government understands that the regions are doing it tough. This government understands that there has been a resources downturn that no government would be able to stem. No-one is to blame for that. It is just happening. The Treasurer and this government are turning the economy around. We are changing the situation. We are bringing in new industries with the Minister for Innovation. We are changing the situation through tourism and infrastructure and by building better cities.

Do members know what we are doing? The member for Mackay went through what we are doing in her area. She has fought for programs that are creating jobs in Mackay. That is what this government is all about. Our Back to Work program—a regionally based program—has been ridiculed by the member for Kawana. That is how concerned he is about regional jobs in this state. It takes a lot of front to get up and talk in that manner when deep down they have no interest in creating one job in this state. The only legacy they left us was the destruction of jobs.

Ms Fentiman: And 1 William Street.

Ms GRACE: And 1 William Street. I will take that interjection. We have the member for Kawana who wants to be the alternative employment minister—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! If I am having difficulty hearing you, Hansard will certainly not be able to.

Ms GRACE: The member for Kawana—the alternative, possible, never-to-be-seen employment minister—believes that giving an apprentice a \$500 voucher gets them a job. It is absolutely ridiculous. It makes no sense whatsoever. With the Back to Work program there are 1,557 real jobs, real employers, real opportunities and real workers. That is what we are delivering.

There are another 422 applications in the job pipeline. There are 200 youth employed with another 200 applications being processed. Nearly 2,000 real jobs, direct jobs are being created in the regions. That is what we deliver and we will continue to do so.

(Time expired)