



Speech By  
**Hon. Grace Grace**


**MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL**

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Record of Proceedings, 23 August 2017

## **MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

### **Back to Work Program**

 **Hon. G GRACE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (2.26 pm): The Palaszczuk government's \$177.5 million Back to Work jobs program just keeps going from strength to strength. It is one of our principal jobs policies and it is delivering in spades. Already there are 6,577 Queenslanders in jobs thanks to this hugely successful program, with an additional 573 pending applications being processed. If these applications are successful, it will mean that Back to Work is already supporting more than 7,100 Queenslanders in new jobs—within striking distance of the 8,000 new jobs targeted, and that is just over halfway into the two-year program which has gained further impetus since it has been expanded into the south-east as part of this year's state budget.

I am pleased to report that employers in the south-east are getting on board. There are almost 80 jobseekers now back to work in the south-east thanks to this program, including pending applications, and our Back to Work teams have received almost 400 inquiries from south-east employers who are considering hiring. Employers throughout Queensland just cannot get enough of Back to Work, and the figures speak for themselves. Across every single region in Queensland it is supporting jobs: Far North Queensland leads with 1,503 new jobs; North Queensland with 1,306; 949 in Mackay-Whitsunday; 987 in Central Queensland; 233 in north-west Queensland; 284 in south-west Queensland; and, coming in second, 1,309 in the Wide Bay area, from where we will be governing very soon.

Our historic trading hours reforms have given Queensland employers another incentive to hire. Roz White from Master Grocers has congratulated the government on these reforms, highlighting the positive effects they will have on local jobs and the stability they will provide for small business. She wrote—

This provides our sector with some certainty at last and will provide Queenslanders with the best outcomes for jobs, will ensure diversity and will preserve the vibrancy of our regional and rural communities.

I also note that, according to data released today by the Commonwealth Department of Employment via its Internet Vacancy Index, Queensland has recorded the strongest annual growth in job advertisements, up 12 per cent over the last year—the strongest in Australia and another sign that our employment policies are delivering the goods for jobseekers which have resulted in 94,500 new jobs since the election of the Palaszczuk government.