




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR KAWANA

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**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL:
FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE**

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (3.17 pm): Some time ago the employment minister for this Labor government said that there is not much that you can do about youth unemployment. Through the estimates committee hearing process she lived up to all of her own expectations. That little quote that I keep referring to, which she keeps saying was taken out of context—she has never really explained in which context she was talking—I tabled again. There is only one context we can take when the minister says that there is not much you can do about youth unemployment and she can show that there is not much you can do about youth employment. That is exactly what this employment minister and the Labor government has done. I think the Minister for Employment should be now affectionately dubbed the ‘Minister for Unemployment’, because that is that she has been able to achieve.

Mr Pitt interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: I hear the Treasurer squawking. I refer to the figures released by the Queensland Government Statistician’s Office on youth unemployment on the Treasurer’s own department’s website. It shows the following youth unemployment rate for June 2017: Brisbane east, up from 14.4 per cent to 20.5 per cent under Labor’s watch; Brisbane south, up from 12 per cent to 14.4 per cent under Labor’s watch; Brisbane west, up from 9.8 per cent to 15.2 per cent under Labor’s watch; the Sunshine Coast, up from 9.4 per cent to 10.2 per cent under Labor’s watch; Townsville, up from 16.5 per cent to 21.8 per cent under Labor’s watch; and Wide Bay, up from 21 per cent to 23.5 per cent under Labor’s watch. Only in the past few days I was in the Wide Bay and Burnett region talking to people who could not get jobs and hearing that electricity prices for businesses have tripled. I have to say that the people in the Burnett-Bundaberg area did not speak very highly of the member for Bundaberg.

Under this minister for unemployment, unemployment in outback Queensland has gone from 36.5 per cent to 56.2 per cent. Nearly 60 per cent of young Queenslanders are unemployed in outback Queensland. When asked how the minister for unemployment rated the success of the program she said she does not rate the measure of its success by the unemployment numbers. I asked the Under Treasurer, when the minister announced that they were going to apply this program throughout all of Queensland and not just regional Queensland, ‘How do you choose now to apply it to South-East Queensland?’ and he said, ‘We apply the program based on the unemployment rate.’ To instigate the program in Queensland they base it on the unemployment rate, but they do not judge the success of the program with the unemployment rate. If they did it would show it is a complete failure. They cannot judge the success of this program because the unemployment rate for youth unemployment is skyrocketing.

How do they judge the success of the program? The Under Treasurer is saying we need the program in South-East Queensland because of the high unemployment rate or, in the minister’s own words, ‘the unique challenges facing regional Queensland that are now facing South-East Queensland’. They will apply it because of the huge unemployment rate but they do not judge the success by the

unemployment rate. If it were a success one would think that the unemployment rate would be going down, but it is not going down. Under the minister for unemployment the unemployment rate continues to skyrocket. Unemployment all throughout Queensland is on the rise.

I have talked about the Back to Work program. A year ago the minister for unemployment came in here and said 'It does not apply to South-East Queensland because it does not have a very high unemployment rate.' In her own electorate over 20 per cent of young people are unemployed. Now, of course, the Back to Work program applies in South-East Queensland. Why? Because the unemployment rate not only in outback Queensland and regional Queensland is skyrocketing, it is skyrocketing everywhere and yet they are investing all this money and talking about jobs being created. If the jobs were being created the unemployment rate would be going down, but it is not because young people have given up looking for work. Young people have given up on this minister. She said there is nothing you can do about youth unemployment. She has lived up to all her own expectations and, boy, I tell members, they were low expectations, even for the Labor Party. She has lived up to all those expectations.

In relation to this program she did not even consult with the CCIQ. Plenty of unions were in her diary, I assure members of that, but there was no consultation with the peak industry body, the CCIQ. The fact is that the Labor government has failed young Queenslanders. It has failed all Queenslanders. Unemployment continues to rise and the only way we can change it is to elect a LNP government.