




Speech By
Leanne Linard

MEMBER FOR NUDGEES

Record of Proceedings, 26 October 2017

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENT

Nudgee Electorate, Back to Work Program

 **Ms LINARD** (Nudgee—ALP) (2.33 pm): Last week it was a pleasure to host my good friend and colleague the Minister for Employment, Grace Grace, for a visit to local manufacturer Continental Biscuits in Virginia. This family owned business has been a staple locally, under the stewardship first of Ron Bower and now his son Rod, since 1976. A leading producer of baked goods for the infant and toddler market, it has produced high-quality product for most of the leading brands filling supermarket shelves. It certainly kept my two young boys in their favourite organic teething rusks during those difficult teething years.

Our visit to the factory was to see firsthand the benefits of our government's Back to Work program for Queensland businesses and those seeking work. Continental Biscuits has hired a number of young jobseekers under the program including Jordan, whom we had the pleasure to meet on the factory floor during our visit. The \$20,000 Back to Work Youth Boost has meant that Jordan and many others like him have been given the opportunity to find meaningful work—something that everyone deserves—and it has given Queensland businesses the confidence to take on new employees and the opportunity to grow their businesses.

Our two-year, \$177.5 million Back to Work program has already supported over 7,500 employees since 2016. The program puts eligible employers in line for thousands of dollars in support payments—money they can reinvest in their business. It is a great incentive to get employers hiring while injecting valuable money into the local economy. It is truly wonderful to see local employers getting behind this program and, in the case of Continental Biscuits, it was fantastic to see how much demand for its product from overseas markets had grown since I last visited and the additional confidence and employment this was generating. We want to see Queensland businesses grow and thrive and we are passionate about Queenslanders experiencing the benefit of that growth through employment opportunities.

The Deloitte Access Economics quarterly review released this week confirms that our economic plan is delivering strong growth and creating jobs across Queensland. The report says that 'good news is building in Queensland' and cites a 'truly impressive recovery' in jobs growth. That was also reflected in ABS data showing trend unemployment down to 5.9 per cent from 6.6 per cent at the last election and 122,500 net new jobs. Deloitte's Business Outlook noted rising small business confidence, higher net interstate and international migration in the past year, a stronger domestic economy and an upturn in business investment. It forecasts 3.4 per cent growth in 2017-18 and 3.5 per cent in 2018-19. Our economy is strong and growing. These results continue to show that our economic plan has Queensland on the right path: a plan that is focused on jobs, growth and opportunity for Queenslanders—employers and employees alike; a plan far removed from the former LNP government's cut, sack and sell approach that saw growth slump and unemployment rise in Queensland.