




Speech By
Hon. Leanne Enoch

MEMBER FOR ALGESTER

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**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL:
EDUCATION, TOURISM, INNOVATION AND SMALL BUSINESS COMMITTEE**

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algester—ALP) (Minister for Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy and Minister for Small Business) (9.05 pm): I would like to thank the committee for their efforts. In particular, I would like to acknowledge the government members of the committee who spent the time at estimates actually asking questions about the Appropriation Bill. I appreciate that attention. It is a very important conversation to be had.

Some 2½ years ago the Palaszczuk government was elected, in no small part, on a platform of keeping public assets in the hands of Queenslanders and diversifying our state's economy. In the time since the election, the Palaszczuk Labor government has got on with the job of delivering on those promises. We have done this in a collaborative and deliberate manner, in stark contrast to the slash-and-burn policies of the former government.

One program that exemplifies these principles is our \$420 million whole-of-government Advance Queensland initiative. Advance Queensland has been co-designed with local innovators, researchers and experts and is based on world's best practice recommended by global experts. As I shared with the committee, over two years through to 30 June 2017, we have committed \$205 million to Advance Queensland and leveraged a further \$100 million in co-investment from partners. This investment is delivering results now, preparing our economy for the future and changing lives for the better. Through Advance Queensland we have delivered more than 20 funding programs that are helping some of Queensland's best and brightest minds turn their great ideas into reality.

Meanwhile, our support for 1,650 innovators, entrepreneurs and researchers is driving the creation of 4,821 jobs right across our state. As the Chief Entrepreneur points out, this is just the tip of the iceberg. We are changing the way researchers and industry collaborate, helping to solve the current issues we face as a community while preparing us to meet challenges of the future. We are fostering an environment in which we support and encourage entrepreneurialism, to create new businesses, deliver new jobs and stimulate emerging industries. We are providing our children with the skills they are going to need in the future to keep our state at the forefront of the global economy.

In this time of rapid change, it is not enough to just do what we have always done and hope we will maintain a strong and vibrant economy. We must take action to stay ahead of the pack. This transformative agenda is about more than just the economy; it is about making the lives of Queenslanders better.

For example, through Advance Queensland we are assisting researchers seeking cures for cancer and those making early detection of cerebral palsy in newborns. We are helping to improve long-term prospects for people suffering from heart disease and providing funding for next generation wheelchairs to be designed and manufactured here in Queensland. We are also getting on with the job of improving the delivery of government services online to make it easier for Queenslanders to access vital information when they need it.

When it comes to small business, we are delivering more programs through the Advancing Small Business Queensland Strategy to help Queenslanders start a business, grow their business and employ more people. We have grant programs to help small business engage in the digital economy, to get through those difficult first early years of operation and prepare their businesses for the next stage of growth.

We are also expanding the popular and widely successfully Mentoring for Growth program. We know that this work and the programs that I have mentioned have been having an impact, with 414,000 small businesses now operating in Queensland. That is an increase of 8,000 in 12 months. We have also seen a three-year high in the number of small business entries and a three-year low in the number of small business exits.

The Palaszczuk Labor government is getting on with the job of diversifying our state's economy and creating the right environment for business and innovation to thrive. Of course the opposition would know this already if they had used the estimates process to examine the budget delivered by the Treasurer. Instead, what we saw from those opposite was an exercise in cheap political pointscore, often at the expense of what is natural justice. What we saw from the member for Mount Ommaney during the estimates hearing was a clear display of her character in the line of questioning that she pursued. It was base, it was crass and it demonstrated not just the member for Mount Ommaney's complete disregard for the estimates process but that of the entire LNP.

We should hardly be surprised by this. The budget delivered by the Treasurer in June was all about building and growing our state—an approach the LNP have absolutely no interest in. We are still to hear any policy with regard to innovation from those opposite other than one aquarium at South Bank. We have still not heard any real policies with regard to small business. They spent a lot of time during estimates not talking about the budget but trying to take political pot shots at the whole system. When we actually hear something from them that is about innovation or small business, we will be all ears.

(Time expired)