




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR KEPPEL

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MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Central Queensland, Works for Queensland

 **Mrs LAUGA** (Keppel—ALP) (2.45 pm): The availability of secure, fairly paid jobs is central to the wellbeing and future of every Queenslanders. The Palaszczuk government is committed to delivering a growing economy that delivers jobs, infrastructure and a better quality of living for Queenslanders. The Palaszczuk government's \$600 million Works for Queensland program is delivering just that in the Central Queensland region. This program has created or supported 990 jobs so far across Rockhampton, Livingstone, Woorabinda and Central Highlands regions.

The latest data underlines the value to our local economies of this important initiative. Works for Queensland has pumped \$32.8 million into 124 approved local government projects in Central Queensland including \$1.37 million towards the redevelopment of the 42nd Battalion Memorial Pool in North Rockhampton—local children, teenagers and even the big kids amongst us are absolutely loving the new water slides; \$1.7 million towards the Svendsen Road upgrade which is now fully sealed and open to cars and trailers accessing the Coorooman Creek boat ramp—which, might I add, the Palaszczuk government invested \$550,000 in to double the number of lanes at the ramp; and \$590,000 in the latest round of Works for Queensland and almost another \$400,000 in the previous round, taking us to a total of almost \$1 million to improve the resilience of rural roads to flood, including Dairy Inn Road, Mount Chalmers Road, Dry Weather Road, Glen Prairie Road, Hoys Road, Madges Road, Slepiner Road and Thompson Point Road. There is a whole raft of others that I could mention as well. I am sure that the residents along those roads are very pleased, and some of them have told me that they are very impressed by the works.

A total of \$1.15 million has been allocated to build the Fraser Park Canopy Walk at Mount Archer, which is a new elevated boardwalk up the mountain which sits cantilevered 7.5 metres off the side of the mountain and provides a breathtaking view of Rockhampton and surrounding areas. It is thanks to Works for Queensland that locals and visitors alike are enjoying this amazing new attraction. I am excited to open stage 2 of this project next week.

Every one of these Works for Queensland projects are making our communities more attractive and a better place to live and work. Works for Queensland continues to enhance facilities, stimulate the economy and provide jobs for hundreds of people across the region—990 now, in fact. Across the state more than 11,500 regional Queenslanders have gained jobs as a direct result of the program and that number continues to grow. The program is great for council workers, great for tradies and great for the businesses that supply the materials used. It has funded essential infrastructure upgrades across our region and enabled local governments to bring forward ambitious plans for new facilities.

Works for Queensland delivers on one of our key election commitments to create and support jobs. Since the 2015 election, the Palaszczuk government has worked with business and industry to create 177,500 jobs across Queensland. The ABS's latest labour force data shows that in the past

month we have created another 7,100 jobs across Queensland. This is the strongest rate of jobs growth in the country this month. This is the 23rd straight month of trend jobs growth with thousands more people finding work this month alone.

It is also very encouraging to see a significant rise in full-time jobs across Queensland. We know that having a secure, reliable full-time job is important to not just the health of our economy but also the wellbeing of working people. I am very proud that the latest data shows the trend unemployment rate in the Fitzroy region has dropped by 0.7 per cent to 6.7 per cent. The best news is that the Fitzroy youth unemployment rate has dropped by 1.7 per cent to 11.9 per cent. There is still work that needs to be done, but we are heading in the right direction.

NAB's Monthly Business Survey, released this week, shows trend business conditions in Queensland to be the highest of the mainland states and trend business confidence the second highest. The Palaszczuk government's Works for Queensland program is growing jobs and stimulating our local economy in Central Queensland. The program has already supported over 990 jobs, which is well in excess of the 816 jobs that local government forecast the program to generate. The Palaszczuk government is delivering more jobs, more infrastructure and more funding for regional Queensland. Works for Queensland supports these jobs and builds stronger local economies, and we are seeing evidence of that in Central Queensland at the moment.

The Works for Queensland program is unashamedly a program about growing jobs and our local economy. This is about jobs. This is what Queenslanders want to hear about. They want to hear about our government's plans for jobs and that is what we are delivering. My No. 1 priority is growing jobs in Keppel and growing our local economy. The Palaszczuk government is getting local people in Keppel back to work through programs like Works for Queensland. This is in stark contrast to the LNP when they were in government. We hire Queenslanders; all the LNP did was fire Queenslanders.