




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR JORDAN

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MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Regional Projects Forum

 **Mrs MULLEN** (Jordan—ALP) (2.27 pm): Last Thursday, on behalf of the Minister for State Development, I had the honour of officially opening the Regional Projects Forum for the South-East Queensland west region. This is the fifth annual event for the region held by the Department of State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning. The forum highlights the significant regional projects providing strong foundations for new industry, regional economic growth, supply chain opportunities and, importantly, jobs for local businesses and workers. More than 200 representatives from regional businesses attended this year's event, and why wouldn't they? The South-East Queensland west region is in a prime position.

According to recent data from Cordell Connect, more than 2,000 construction projects are in the proposal-to-commencement stage in the South-East Queensland west and Brisbane region, ranging in value from \$130,000 to \$6 billion. The Palaszczuk government is committed to strengthening the region's economy by creating jobs and growth and ensuring that those businesses are aware of upcoming opportunities and how to best take advantage of them.

From this year's budget, the Palaszczuk government will directly support the Ipswich region with more than \$1 billion for productivity-enhancing infrastructure and capital works, estimated to support around 2,000 jobs. We will spend \$607 million on the West Moreton Hospital and Health Service and \$63.8 million on maintenance and capital works projects for schools in the region.

We have delivered \$21 million for training over the past three years to increase workforce participation through the \$420 million Skilling Queenslanders for Work program. We are spending \$59 million for Back to Work in South-East Queensland, including an additional \$20.5 million to support employment in areas facing significant labour market challenges. Ipswich will also benefit from \$679 million for redevelopments at the Logan, Caboolture and Ipswich hospitals.

One of the biggest game-changers coming to this region is the development of our nation's next generation defence production facility at Redbank. This \$170 million Military Vehicle Centre of Excellence, known as the Milvehcoe, will support 300 jobs during the two-year construction period and 450 once operational. This state-of-the-art manufacturing facility will be an asset of national significance.

The Milvehcoe will be Rheinmetall Defence Australia's headquarters for Australia and New Zealand and the company's largest presence outside of Germany, right here in the heart of the largest heavy vehicle manufacturing and sustainment precinct in the country. The Milvehcoe will manage the delivery and sustainment of the 211 Boxer combat reconnaissance vehicles under the \$5.2 billion Land 400 phase 2 contract and will also accommodate Rheinmetall's other defence projects.

The Palaszczuk government's vision of a 10,000-person-strong, \$7 billion defence industries sector by 2028 is being driven by our government's Defence Industries 10-Year Roadmap and Action Plan, which underpins \$15 million in industry development programs. The Milvehcoe and the corridor of capability stretching from the Brisbane Airport through to RAAF Base Amberley will be compelling support for Rheinmetall's bid for the Army's \$15 billion phase 3 Land 400 contract due to be decided early next year.

This was but one of the major projects highlighted at the forum that is driving jobs and growth in the Ipswich region. Of course, these projects are about more than just the very valuable jobs they will create. They are also about training opportunities, expanded skills and more supply chain expertise that will serve our region well into the future. This major projects forum held in our region has been replicated across the state and is helping to advance Queensland's regional communities.

I want to pay tribute to the Minister for State Development for the work that his department is doing in this area. We actually believe in supporting regional communities, not through empty promises and talking down the economy like those opposite but through actively supporting real and meaningful major projects that are strengthening regional economies and through important programs like Back to Work and Skilling Queenslanders for Work—valuable programs that we know are supporting Queenslanders to find jobs and real opportunities across our state.