




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR BANCROFT

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MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Business and Consumer Confidence

 **Mr WHITING** (Bancroft—ALP) (2.41 pm): I want to inform the House about how the Queensland economy is being boosted by the increased business and consumer confidence created by the Palaszczuk government. Confidence is not a coincidence or a happenstance. It is being created by a strong and stable government that is delivering economic opportunity and jobs growth for Queensland.

Confidence in Queensland comes from things like our four-year, \$44 billion infrastructure program and job-creating programs like Buy Queensland, which is making sure local companies get a boost when applying for government contracts; Made in Queensland, which is supporting those manufacturing companies who are exporting to the world; Works for Queensland, which is bringing jobs and projects to councils throughout Queensland; and Advance Queensland, which is the best government program in Australia for supporting innovative businesses and industries.

The CCIQ reports that business confidence has now hit positive territory for the first time in four years—the first time since the Campbell Newman era. The CCIQ stated—

Businesses are feeling more confident across the board. They're telling us that political stability, the Commonwealth Games, elevated commodity prices and the value of the dollar are all contributing to stimulating business activity in the south east and, importantly, in the regions.

Since the election, a majority government has been formed, boosting business confidence which is a direct reflection of the certainty provided by a stable government.

Consumer confidence in Queensland is also rising fast. The latest Westpac-Melbourne Institute Consumer Sentiment Index showed a rise of 8.6 per cent in January. Queensland's consumer sentiment index rose 17.4 per cent over two recent months. Our jobs story also reveals this growing consumer and business confidence. We are growing jobs at a faster rate than anywhere else in Australia. We have the strongest jobs growth in percentage terms of 4.7 per cent. More than 100,000 Queenslanders have found a job in the last 12 months—152,000 jobs have been created in Queensland since January 2015. We see this confidence created by the Palaszczuk government in the business sector in Bancroft.

North Lakes is now officially the fastest growing area in Queensland. The mayor says it is now the fastest growing area in Australia. The population in North Lakes and surrounding areas has increased from 52,000 in 2011 to 72,000 in 2016. North Lakes is home to more than 900 businesses, supporting 7,700 jobs. That will rise to 13,000 jobs by 2023. Confidence is demonstrated by projects such as the \$250 million Laguna Project, offering boutique shopping, a hotel and an office tower, with construction starting early this year. The Keymax 40-room boutique hotel, with restaurant and function facilities, will also open this year. Another illustration of confidence is the creation of the North Lakes Sports Club, which has been a runaway success. It is now a 3,200-square metre club, with more than 20,000 members already, employing 130 local people.

What these businesses and consumers need is continued confidence. The biggest threat to confidence in our state is the threat of GST funding cuts by the federal government. The Turnbull government is considering changes to the GST that will strip more than \$1.6 billion from Queenslanders. As we have heard today, that is akin to losing 5,000 teachers, 5,000 nurses, 3,000 police and over 1,000 firefighters. It will mean a loss of services to our state, which is the most decentralised in all of Australia. This proposed GST cut would mean a potential loss of consumer and business confidence in Queensland. We know from the Campbell Newman era that cuts to government funding and spending is poison for business and consumer confidence. People just shut their wallets. They stop employing people.

One of the best things we can do to preserve this surging consumer and business confidence is to fight this great proposed GST rip-off being considered by the Turnbull government. To do that we need help from everyone in this parliament—but what have we heard from the Leader of the Opposition? Have we heard the Leader of the Opposition and others stand up for Queensland? Have we heard them condemn this mean and tricky proposed GST carve-up? The answer is no. We have heard nothing. They have remained virtually silent in parliament on this funding carve-up. They have preferred to back 'Mr Harbourside Mansions' and his federal government.

(Time expired)