




Speech By
Hon. Shannon Fentiman

MEMBER FOR WATERFORD

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Jobs

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development) (10.04 am): The Palaszczuk government is getting on with the job of continuing our nation-leading jobs growth. As promised during the election, the Palaszczuk government is providing extra support to mature age jobseekers across Queensland. A new mature age worker boost payment of up to \$20,000 is available for Queensland employers who hire a jobseeker 55 years or over.

I am pleased to announce the first of our new mature age boost payments have started to roll out to help more Queenslanders get that job. They have gone to local businesses like McHugh Steel in Bundaberg. It was able to recently employ Lawrence as a full-time truck driver. As one of the first mature age boost recipients, Lawrence has joined Courtney from Maryborough who was our 10,000th Back to Work regional employee. They are both shining examples of why this program is so valuable. After searching for work for more than 12 months, Courtney now has a job at the Tattersalls Hotel and is a valued staff member. Owner of the Tattersalls Hotel, Kathleen Cameron, said Back to Work has given the hotel the assistance it needed to employ more people.

This program has gone from strength to strength. When our Back to Work program was announced in June 2016 it was projected to help create 8,000 jobs over two years, but already across all elements of the program we have supported over 11,000 people into jobs with more than 5,500 Queensland businesses. Queensland businesses—the vast majority small businesses in regional Queensland—have embraced the opportunity to partner with us to create jobs.

Given the success of this program, many Queenslanders were left scratching their heads as to why those on the other side scrapped more than \$13 million from Back to Work in its election costings. The difference between those opposite and the Palaszczuk government could not be more stark. Because we are listening to small business and working hard to create jobs in regional Queensland, we decided at the election that rather than cut a job-creating program we would expand it. The Palaszczuk government is proudly extending the Back to Work program in regional Queensland until 2021 and extending the eligibility for assistance to include mature age workers. Thanks to the Palaszczuk government's ongoing investment in programs like Back to Work, thousands more Queenslanders are finding it even easier to get a job.