



Speech By  
**Hon. Shannon Fentiman**


**MEMBER FOR WATERFORD**

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Record of Proceedings, 19 September 2018

**MOTION**

**Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance**

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development) (5.48 pm): We have heard five of the six speeches from members of the opposition, but still we have not heard a plan for the economy. I am looking forward to the contribution from the member for Maroochydore, because this might be her first contribution as the opposition's shadow employment spokesperson. I am really looking forward to that contribution. The Palaszczuk government is relentlessly focused on creating the conditions for small businesses to thrive, to grow and to employ more Queenslanders.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Members to my left, the minister is not taking interjections.

**Ms FENTIMAN:** Small businesses are the engine room of our economy—more than 426,000 small businesses employing more than 900,000 people, contributing \$113 billion to the Queensland economy. Despite the negative comments from those opposite, NAB's most recent monthly business survey shows trend business conditions in Queensland to be the highest of all mainland states and trend business confidence to be the second highest.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. Leader of the Opposition and Deputy Leader of the Opposition, it is not time for commentary. There have been contributions made. I want to hear the minister. The minister is not taking interjections. She is being factual as far as I can hear.

**Ms FENTIMAN:** The great feedback we are getting from business does not stop there. In response to our fantastic budget handed down by the Treasurer, CCIQ said—

This budget acknowledged that it is small business that grows Queensland's economy, and we saw this reflected in the priority given to small business in the budget papers handed down.

Nick Behrens—not known for being a fan of our side—referred to the payroll tax apprentice and trainee rebate as 'an excellent decision by the Treasurer'.

Just last week the Leader of the Opposition attended a business breakfast on the Sunshine Coast. She could not resist another opportunity to talk down the Queensland economy, despite the very positive comments from her host. The Sunshine Coast Business Council Chair, Sandy Zubrinich, said—

It's looking positive for business on the Sunshine Coast ... there is a lot happening here in terms of infrastructure investment, and generally as a region we are performing pretty well.

Why would they not be confident? More than 177,000 jobs have now been created. More than 50,000 small businesses have launched in Queensland in 2016-17. Small business survival is increasing.

There was a dramatic drop of 15,000 small businesses following the election of the Newman government. Since that time we have grown new businesses by 23,000. Small business finally has a government that understands their vital role in the success of the economy. We delivered the first ever small business budget paper which outlined our commitment to small business.

Our budget also included: \$40 million for the Business Development Fund for two years; \$26 million to extend the 50 per cent payroll tax rate for apprentices and trainees; \$20 million for the Business Energy Savers Program and \$4 million to continue Ecobiz; and continuation of the Advancing Women in Business initiative. That is on top of our fantastic programs like Skilling Queenslanders for Work and Back to Work that are generating jobs in this state. Both those programs were slated for cutting by the LNP in their election costing document.

It is not just about the funding we are giving business to generate jobs. We are also taking action. Queensland small business has told us that they were being placed under enormous strain by mining companies not paying them in reasonable time. We have written to every resource sector company encouraging them to pay small businesses within 30 days—fair payment terms for regional communities. We are doing what we can to reduce red tape and make it easier for small businesses.

Let us look at the LNP's record. Despite all their talk about supporting small businesses, red tape went up dramatically under the LNP. The red-tape survey report in 2015 found one in four businesses felt growth was hindered by red tape and they were disappointed the LNP government had let them down. We can all remember how small businesses were impacted under the LNP. They took them for granted. They abolished the small business commissioner.

For three years Queensland had not one representative at national bodies talking about making things easier for small business. We know they sacked 14,000 public servants. They were customers of Queensland small businesses. We are the government investing in training and skills and small business while they still want to cut, cut and cut.