




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR IPSWICH

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MATTER OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Ipswich Electorate, Jobs

 **Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (2.40 pm): Today I wish to provide an update on the job growth we have seen in Ipswich over the past 12 months. In so doing, I want to touch briefly on how the Palaszczuk government's focus on creating jobs is really paying off in Ipswich. On 20 September I had the pleasure of attending a Skilling Queenslanders for Work graduation ceremony at the Ipswich Knights Soccer Club. The ceremony was an extremely proud moment for the 30 women who participated in the Get Set for Work childcare certificate III program. It was delivered by PCYC Ipswich in partnership with Sapere Pty Ltd. Every graduate who attended that night got a job upon completion of the program. There were a lot of very happy women in that room, and the joy was contagious.

Each and every one of those women benefited from the valuable training and career support provided to them by the PCYC Ipswich. They are now all set on a career path in a rewarding industry. It is a fantastic achievement and one which our government can also be very proud of. I want to take a moment to congratulate those women again for their achievement and wish them well in their careers. I want to mention the PCYC Ipswich team and their program coordinator, Beck Field, who supported those women throughout the course. You could really feel the relationship that had developed there and the support she had given.

Participating in the Get Set for Work program opened a window of opportunity for these women, as it has done similarly for thousands of other men and women across Queensland who have benefited from the program. I, probably along with many of my colleagues on this side of the House, love going to the Skilling Queenslanders for Work graduations. You really get to see and experience the way these programs have turned lives around and given participants a sense of hope and achievement.

In fact, around 2,100 people in Ipswich who have engaged with the Skilling Queenslanders for Work program can celebrate the fact that they have gone on to find a job or enter further training upon completion of the program. All of these people have skills and talents which can be used to benefit our economy and our society, and left untapped these skills go to waste. That is exactly what would have happened if those opposite had had their way. They were not in government even for a year or two before they cut this program. It was one of the first things that they cut when they were elected. What a missed opportunity for thousands of people despite it being a famous program about which Deloitte Access Economics reported that for every \$1 investment from government there was an \$8 return to the community. Shame on them for cutting that program. It has turned people's lives around in my electorate.

When we give people a chance to reach their full potential, we see what our communities can become. When we provide people, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, the opportunity to improve on their skills and contribute their labour in a meaningful way, it is not just the individuals who benefit but all of community and all of society. That is why our government is investing in people, because we know that it benefits all of us in the long run.

The Palaszczuk government has invested \$420 million over six years in the Skilling Queenslanders for Work program up until 2020-21, and it has helped 54,000 disadvantaged Queenslanders transition to work. I want to mention the Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development, the Hon. Shannon Fentiman, for her exceptional work in this space.

We are giving year 12 school leavers the opportunity to take up free TAFE courses and providing free apprenticeships for those under 21. We are investing in Queenslanders, and the results speak for themselves. Since 2015 the Palaszczuk Labor government has created 226,800 Queensland jobs. That shows that our government's economic plan is working, and it is working in my community in Ipswich. Recent labour force data from the ABS showed that 2,800 new jobs were created in the Ipswich region over the past 12 months. Unemployment in Ipswich has fallen 1.1 per cent in the past 12 months. Job growth over the past year is up by 1.7 per cent—higher than the state average.

In addition, we are seeing an improvement in youth unemployment. Since the Palaszczuk government was elected in 2015, youth unemployment in Ipswich has dropped four per cent. It is still too high, but I am certain that we can decrease it even more with our range of job-creating initiatives like the Skilling Queenslanders for Work, the free apprenticeships for under 21s and free TAFE for high school leavers—which are incredibly well received in my community.

The Leader of the Opposition was talking earlier about counting down the days to the next election. I would like to reassure her that in my community people have not forgotten the many things that were cut including the Public Service jobs and this incredibly important program. Our government's Youth Boost payments which help employers hire young jobseekers are also increasing youth employment outcomes in Ipswich. It all adds up, and we are seeing results.