




Speech By
Hon. Shannon Fentiman

MEMBER FOR WATERFORD

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Back to Work Program

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development) (10.09 am): Since the 2015 election the Palaszczuk government has been delivering on its commitment of jobs, jobs, jobs for Queenslanders. Today, I am proud to announce that the Back to Work Program has achieved a significant milestone by assisting 18,000 jobseekers. This has been made possible because the Palaszczuk government has invested \$369 million into expanding this program—a program that those opposite, in their election costings, wanted to cut.

I am pleased to report that, out of those 18,000 jobseekers, over 12,000 are young Queenslanders, many finding their first jobs, and more than 4,000 are apprentices or trainees. That is a fantastic outcome for local business owners and Queenslanders who have struggled to find a job. This government is proud to support businesses to have the confidence to be able to take on a new employee.

Over the last month we have seen the true Queensland spirit among our small-business community in their response to unprecedented flooding in North Queensland. As we have done through prior natural disaster recovery efforts, my department is prioritising Back to Work applications and claims in affected areas to ensure that local businesses are getting the very best support during this difficult time. Businesses affected will also be given special consideration on a case-by-case basis for late applications and employee hours worked.

Back to Work is providing exciting career and training opportunities for Queenslanders. Gibson Billy found a job through Back to Work at Mamu Health Service in Innisfail as a trainee health worker. With a passion for working in the growing healthcare industry, Gibson undertook a certificate III in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health care and it was fantastic to hear that he has been nominated for Trainee of the Year.

The Back to Work program was designed to support our state's local businesses and provide job opportunities for Queenslanders who have struggled to get a job. That is exactly what we are doing. This is a wonderful example of where the Palaszczuk government has made a real difference to support employment in our local communities. I look forward to more people getting a job thanks to this fantastic program that is delivering real job outcomes for Queenslanders.