




Speech By
Hon. Shannon Fentiman

MEMBER FOR WATERFORD

Record of Proceedings, 4 April 2019

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Federal Budget, Small Business

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development) (10.11 am): There is nothing small about small business in Queensland. Our small businesses are continuing to thrive after recording another year of growth, but this week's federal budget's promise on skills and training has turned out to be a mirage for small businesses struggling with skills shortages. The reality of the budget is that \$525 million was provided with one hand while it took away \$649 million with the other—a cut of more than \$120 million.

After all of the fanfare of budget night had passed, the Australian Chamber of Commerce & Industry's director of employment, Jenny Lambert, warned small businesses that the government's commitment to skills was questionable. She said—

Just because they have said they are funding the Skilling Australians Fund it doesn't mean it's happening.

Small businesses concerned about skills have been absolutely let down by this budget, but it was not the only let-down. This week's budget was also a wasted opportunity for Scott Morrison to get behind federal Labor's proposed Australian investment guarantee. Under the proposed Australian investment guarantee, all Australian businesses will be able to immediately deduct 20 per cent of investment in eligible depreciable assets over \$20,000. Unlike the federal LNP's instant asset write-off, federal Labor's approach is open to all businesses. Importantly, federal Labor's plan is permanent because they want businesses to stay in business.

Already the federal LNP's election sweetener is wearing thin. The Toowoomba Chamber of Commerce CEO, Jo Sheppard, has called for this type of tax reform to be made permanent, and it is Labor that is once again delivering for small business. Tom McIlroy in yesterday's *Australian Financial Review* said that Labor's plan 'would give business in industries with large-scale investments featuring long depreciation timeframes over decades the largest cash flow boost.' This is the type of support we need to continue to drive productivity in our economy. The need to support productivity was echoed by Jennifer Westacott from the Business Council of Australia when she said that she was disappointed by the federal budget failing to lift investment. She said—

What is missing in this budget is the whole of economy investment focus which is the only way we are going to drive productivity.

It is obvious that after all the dust has settled from federal budget night Scott Morrison and the LNP in Canberra have failed to provide Queensland small businesses with their fair share.