




Speech By
Hon. Stirling Hinchliffe

MEMBER FOR SANDGATE

Record of Proceedings, 21 August 2019

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Local Government, Grants

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Local Government, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (10.05 am): One of the significant ways the Palaszczuk government creates and supports jobs in regional and remote Queensland is through our grants programs in partnership with local governments. In 2019-20 the Queensland government will provide \$1.468 billion in grants to our local councils. This is more than double the baseline funding of \$600 million for which the LGAQ advocates.

This is an acknowledgement of the vital support the Palaszczuk government gives our local governments. This support not only enables service delivery but also provides essential maintenance and upgrades to water and sewerage infrastructure. It has not always been easy to find out about these grants and to apply for them or to create long-term planning around them. That is why councils have asked us to make the grants process easier, more streamlined and more consistent.

We have listened because we value the partnership we have with our councils across the state. Councils tell us that they love these grants programs and we know that they are essential to Queensland's economy. Why? They equate to jobs. Since 2015 the Palaszczuk government has supported or created hundreds of thousands of jobs—more than 216,000 jobs to be precise. That is homes where mums and dads can sleep a bit better at night because they have more financial security; that is young couples starting a family rather than worrying about whether they are going to be able to pay the rent; that is saving for a home deposit rather than searching the jobs vacant ads day in, day out.

Yesterday I hosted a workshop with stakeholders and council executives to help finalise the new grants to local government model. We received fantastic feedback from our council CEOs, the LGAQ, the Local Government Managers Australia organisation and the Local Government Finance Professionals organisation. I am looking forward to the model's continued rollout, which includes setting up a steering group to help oversee the implementation process. This model means consistency and certainty with the grants process, including more streamlined administration, greater certainty of project time frames and funding, and alignment of funding programs with council budget cycles. Streamlining the grants process is a Palaszczuk government election commitment which we are delivering. Councils will begin to see these benefits sooner rather than later.

I have just been in North Queensland and inspected the progress on the Beautiful Bowen project. It is a \$5 million election commitment made by the Palaszczuk team which has supported or created about 55 jobs in Bowen. While I was in that neck of the woods I also visited two projects under the Works for Queensland program that are on the go at Plantation Park in Ayr. Together they are worth \$2.8 million and, again, that investment means jobs and job security.

These are just a couple of the thousands of job-creating projects happening across the state because of the work and the vision of the Palaszczuk government and our partnership with local governments. The dividend is jobs—almost 220,000 since 2015. Under this Premier we are about creating jobs, not cutting them.