




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR EVERTON

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MATTER OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Queensland Economy

 **Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (2.15 pm): Here we are for the first sitting in 2019, three months since the Labor government decided to take an extended holiday, and, unfortunately, the economic news that has been communicated over those three months tells us the damage that four years of a Labor government has done to Queensland. All the signs point to the Palaszczuk Labor government completely failing to manage the state's finances and the state's economy. Sadly, it is everyday Queenslanders—those hardworking people and businesses—who are paying the price for Labor's failures.

I will recap what has happened over the past three months. One of the most damning statistics of this government is that Queensland has one of the highest unemployment rates in the country. Queensland's unemployment rate is now at 6.2 per cent.

Ms Jones interjected.

Mr MANDER: I take that interjection from the member for Cooper, who referred to rates of unemployment. The relevant issue in relation to unemployment is not what is happening in our state but what is happening in other states in the nation. Comparatively speaking, we are just not cutting it. Queensland's unemployment rate is 6.2 per cent. The national unemployment rate is only five per cent. The economy that is being managed by the federal coalition government is thriving but, in this state, because of this Labor government, we have high unemployment, with around 165,000 Queenslanders looking for work. Heaven help us if Bill Shorten ever gets to control the reins of the federal Treasury. If he does, the national economy will go the same way as the Queensland economy.

There are 165,000 Queenslanders out of work. Since the last election, 9,400 Queenslanders have been added to the jobless queue—nearly 10,000 in one year. Whichever way we look at it, on average, over the past four years Queensland's unemployment rate is higher than it was under the LNP government. Queensland's unemployment rate goes against the trend of the unemployment rate of the rest of the nation. States such as New South Wales and Victoria have unemployment rates of 4½ per cent, if not less.

One of the reasons we have a high unemployment rate is that, under the Labor government in this state, business confidence has plummeted. The December CCIQ pulse survey continues to show that not only has Queensland's economic outlook taken a dive but also business conditions and profitability has rapidly weakened. For December 2018, business confidence in Queensland's economic outlook sat at 40.7 index points—a massive drop of 10 index points since the term of the LNP government. According to the Sensis Business Index, for four consecutive quarters the Palaszczuk government has been rated the least popular government in Australia among small to medium sized businesses. Businesses in Queensland do not just think that the Palaszczuk government is out of touch; businesses believe that the Palaszczuk Labor government is implementing policies that work against them. No wonder business confidence has crashed.

According to the December NAB business survey, Queensland is tied for last place in relation to business confidence. Let us not forget the January CommSec State of the States report which again puts Queensland at sixth place amongst the states. The Deputy Premier's response to that is to shoot the messenger, shoot the people who are telling the truth about our economic outlook. After four years we have an economy that has performed the worst of any state in the latest national accounts data. In fact, we have fallen backwards by 0.4 per cent. The ABS trend building approvals in Queensland have fallen every month since 2018. Just today figures have come out showing that Queensland has recorded the largest fall in new home loans of any state.

This government has no idea how to manage the state economy. It is only a LNP government that instead of introducing taxes will say that we will not have new taxes. It is only a LNP government that will bring the cost of running businesses down. It is only a LNP government that will invest in the infrastructure that is necessary to get Queensland moving again. It is only the LNP that has a real economic plan to make Queensland an economic powerhouse once again.