



Speech By  
**Julianne Gilbert**


**MEMBER FOR MACKAY**

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Record of Proceedings, 16 June 2020

**MOTION**

**Coronavirus, Economic Response**

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (3.16 pm): I support the Premier's motion. The Palaszczuk government's stage 2 of the Unite and Recover for Queensland Jobs plan will support more than 6,000 jobs over the next year, and this is really needed. Regional Queensland is the powerhouse of the Queensland economy, and we have the capacity to drive our state through the economic distress of COVID-19. We know that we can do the heavy lifting in this economic recovery phase.

Our state is a resource statistic, with best practice in mining and innovation for decades. We always are researching and developing the industry. The Palaszczuk government's commitment to the industry will next month see the Mackay Resources Centre of Excellence open in Mackay. This is a joint government and local government project. The centre will roll out training. Workers will be able to get the majority of their underground tickets before going out to the pit. The centre will also be a drawcard for innovation and research nationally and internationally. The Mackay region will remain one of the world's best sources for mining expertise and innovation in the METS sector.

We already have seen proven investment for local innovators pay off. Earlier this year, Real Time Instruments with the Made in Queensland grant increased its staff by 14 and is still adding to its team. Currently it is looking for two new staff members, and its reach into international markets keeps growing. Not a lot of Queensland companies can say that they export to the Republic of Congo! The company is able to do this because of the Palaszczuk government's grant.

Our mining industry is always looking for the new minerals which are in demand for emerging technologies like battery storage. There is a huge potential to open up new reserves in our region. The Palaszczuk government's \$10 million commitment to promote this vital exploration activity is vital. This will guarantee a pipeline of projects in the Queensland mining sector—what my region is asking for. Not everyone works in the mining industry, though.

Our construction workers and tradies need government support, and that is what the Premier delivered today. Greg Porter, a fifth-generation person in a hardware business in Mackay, has been advocating for the construction industry since COVID-19 slowed down business. He was excited when I called him this morning. The \$267 million construction package will let local builders start building homes. The extension of the First Home Owners' Grant is really welcomed. Locals such as Justin Giblett, who has struggled to meet the benchmark, will be able to get into the housing market.