




Speech By
Hon. Cameron Dick

MEMBER FOR WOODRIDGE

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Economy

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Investment) (9.49 am): Yesterday federal Treasurer Josh Frydenberg met the people of Cairns and gave them absolutely nothing. Two weeks away from the JobKeeper cliff, the Morrison government is still stringing our tourist operators along, denying them the confidence and certainty they deserve. Despite the federal government, not because of it, Queensland's economic recovery remains the strongest in the nation. Last week's ABS national accounts revealed that, even in the midst of a global pandemic, the Queensland economy grew by 2.4 per cent during 2020. This was the highest rate of economic growth of any state or territory. Queensland is the best. Queensland grew twice as fast as Western Australia and, unlike the economies of New South Wales, Victoria and the nation at large, all of which went backwards during 2020, Queensland's economy is larger than it was before the pandemic.

Queensland saw growth in household consumption, private investment, and state and local government investment. Queensland's economy grew in almost every category, except investment in our state by the Morrison government. According to the ABS, national general government gross fixed capital formation fell by \$233 million in 2020 relative to 2019. In other words, the Morrison government invested \$233 million less in Queensland in 2020 than it did in the year before. Make no mistake: Queensland's economic recovery has been signed, sealed and delivered by the Palaszczuk Labor government.

More economic growth means more jobs. Here again Queensland is leading the pack. Over the past 12 months Queensland has added 29,700 jobs. Queensland is the only state to have more jobs today than it did before the pandemic. Every other state went backwards. Our strong jobs performance throughout 2020 meant that the Palaszczuk government has now added 275,000 jobs in the six years since we were first elected. Queensland also boasts the strongest growth in retail turnover, up 12.2 per cent; the strongest growth in housing loan commitments, up 65.1 per cent; and the strongest growth in dwelling approvals, up 18½ per cent, on the east coast.

It is no wonder that Queensland's economy is roaring back in 2021. The Palaszczuk government invested more than \$7 billion in stimulus, representing about 2.2 per cent of our state's total economic output. By comparison, the New South Wales government, the 'gold standard', committed an amount of less than two per cent of gross state product to COVID stimulus and support measures. Our government's support has included \$1.3 billion in tax relief, including payroll tax relief for Queensland businesses. It is worth noting that, unlike the Morrison government's JobKeeper program, which is due to end in just over two weeks, our payroll tax support will be ongoing throughout this year. That is because deferred payroll tax is paid in instalments, meaning that our government will not be receiving final 2020 payments from many businesses until January 2022. Businesses are working well with this tapered approach, with 98.5 per cent of payments due in January 2021 made on time.

The reality is that further payroll tax concessions will be of no help to many businesses, particularly those smaller operators with payrolls of less than \$1.3 million, who do not pay payroll tax. Among these smaller operators, those who depend on international tourists need the federal government's support. Even the LNP's chief economist, Gene Tunny, has said that 'unless it wants to send Cairns into an economic depression' the federal government needs to replace JobKeeper with targeted support.

In the absence of action from the Morrison government, the Palaszczuk government has again stepped up, providing more than \$750 million to help Queensland's tourism industry recover from the COVID-19 downturn. This includes 15,000 free \$200 vouchers to support Tropical North Queensland's tourism industry, \$174 million for tourism related businesses through the industry support package, almost \$75 million in small business adaptation grants, and additional commitments to the Queensland Tourism Icons Program, the Growing Tourism Infrastructure Fund and the Airline Route Support program. Queenslanders know, and Queensland businesses know, that the Palaszczuk government is on Queensland's side.