




Speech By
Hon. Cameron Dick

MEMBER FOR WOODRIDGE

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Employment; Coronavirus, Economic Recovery

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Investment) (9.49 am): Queensland's plan for economic recovery is underway, with our nation-leading jobs growth seeing an additional 23,900 Queenslanders find work in our state just last month. Full-time employment increased by 53,800 in February 2021—the largest monthly rise on record and further evidence of the extraordinary rebound we continue to see in Queensland's labour market. Since May 2020—the peak of national lockdowns—an additional 244,700 Queenslanders have gained employment. During this period, employment has grown more than 10 per cent—faster than any other state or territory.

Queensland was the first jurisdiction in the nation to see employment return above pre-COVID levels. As of February, 39,500 more Queenslanders were employed than in March 2020, in contrast to national figures showing 36,000 fewer people employed in February than in March 2020. This is a terrific result for Queensland. It is also a consequence of our strong health response to COVID-19. Currently the number of hours worked across the state is 4.5 per cent above pre-COVID levels.

Encouragingly, our unemployment rate has continued to drop from a peak of 8.8 per cent in July 2020 to 6.1 per cent in February 2021. This is the largest decline in the nation over this period. However, we know there is still more work to be done. That is why our government has implemented a range of measures to promote domestic tourism and make sure all Australians know that Queensland is the place to be. Unfortunately, many of our tourism businesses, particularly in our regions, continue to do it tough with international borders remaining closed.

To combat this, the Palaszczuk government continues to provide rebates to operators and travel incentives to Queenslanders, including our Cairns Holiday Dollars initiative that has put \$200 travel vouchers in the pockets of 15,000 Queenslanders. We cannot do all the heavy lifting alone; we need the help of the federal government. That is why we continue to call on Scott Morrison to extend JobKeeper and protect thousands of Queensland businesses and Queensland jobs.