




Speech By
Hon. Cameron Dick

MEMBER FOR WOODRIDGE

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Coronavirus, Economy; Job Creation

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (10.01 am): Under the Palaszczuk Labor government, Queensland has started 2022 as we finished 2021—leading the nation when it comes to jobs. January’s labour force data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics once again demonstrates that our government’s economic recovery plan is working. While the crest of the Omicron wave saw jobs lost in southern states, Queenslanders again stood strong in the face of adversity.

In January, Queensland created another 17,400 jobs, the most of any state or territory. Nationally, employment rose by 12,900. That means, without Queensland, Australia would have gone backwards. As always, Queensland punches above its weight. We are 18 per cent of the national economy, but we created 48 per cent of all new jobs across the nation in January. This ongoing strength in our labour market is thanks to our world-leading economic response and health response to COVID-19. That health response allowed our economy to stay open when many others were in lockdown. It also gave us time to give Queenslanders access to the vaccines that have protected us once Omicron arrived.

Since the Palaszczuk Labor government was first elected, we have created 376,800 new jobs in Queensland; that is, more than 1,000 new jobs every week—1,000 jobs every week of every month of every year for seven years in a row.

As with any recovery, we know the improvements in our economy are not consistent across the state, nor from one business to the next. As a whole, we are in the best possible position as we emerge from the pandemic. Only in recent days have New South Wales and Victoria removed restrictions that bring them to the same level of freedom that Queenslanders enjoy. Yesterday we saw the full opening of international borders for vaccinated travellers. While major markets like New Zealand and China do not currently enjoy the travel freedoms that Queenslanders do, this will see international tourists start retuning to places like Cairns and the Gold Coast. It will give sectors like hospitality access to the labour source that they have been desperately missing in recent months.

Major supermarket chains are seeing a reduction in staff absenteeism due to COVID. Mobility data from platforms like Facebook, Google and Apple shows general activity across the state has continued to increase week on week since school resumed. Queensland Treasury has analysed phone locations, map searches and restaurant bookings to gauge social and economic mobility. For the week ending last Friday, 17 February, the index for Queensland was 0.7 per cent higher than the previous week, 3.7 per cent higher than a month earlier and 2.8 per cent higher than a year ago. What does this mean? It means our government’s economic recovery plan continues to deliver a dividend for Queenslanders and will ensure Queensland is in the best possible economic position for the rest of 2022 and beyond.