




Speech By
Hon. Cameron Dick

MEMBER FOR WOODRIDGE

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Defence Industries; Job Creation

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (10.23 am): We may not be shipping coal to Newcastle yet, but the prospect of Rheinmetall Defence Australia exporting Queensland-made reconnaissance vehicles to the German army is a great endorsement of Queensland manufacturing. The prospect of Rheinmetall Defence Australia building Boxer combat reconnaissance vehicles here at Redbank for the German army comes as no surprise. Achieving this kind of export contract is precisely why we put so much hard work into becoming Rheinmetall's partner of choice to build the Boxer. This opportunity has the potential to build on Rheinmetall's current Queensland workforce of 520 which has already surpassed the company's initial expectations.

Whether it is Ipswich or the Gold Coast, Cairns or Charleville, Queensland is the best place to live, work and raise a family. Queensland's employment growth since the start of COVID leads the nation. We are also the best place to start, grow or move a business. Nowhere has Queensland's job-creating entrepreneurial spirit shone brighter than on the Gold Coast. In the 12 months to July 2022, the Gold Coast region had some of the strongest employment growth in Queensland, with the number of jobs rising by 23,400 or 6.6 per cent. Our targeted investment facilitation programs are designed to encourage more companies to establish headquarters in Queensland or pursue major expansions in our state.

Today I can announce that another company will move its corporate headquarters from interstate to the Gold Coast. Aspire42 runs a range of businesses across consumer and business finance, trade services, consumer leasing and health care. These include online consumer finance brand Snaffle, home services provider Local Expert, and health and wellness company Madison Health. Supported by Queensland Treasury's \$520 million Invested in Queensland program, Aspire42 will move to the Gold Coast to facilitate its growth.

I am pleased to announce today that over the next five years Aspire42's operations on the Gold Coast will deliver another 280 new full-time jobs. These will include its executive and finance teams, a centralised call centre, procurement and fulfilment teams and information technology and support teams. Aspire42 CEO Wayne Richardson said—

We believe the Gold Coast is a great place to live, work and play, so establishing our corporate headquarters here is the right move for us to capitalise on a range of domestic and international opportunities.

Mr Richardson went on—

The support of the Queensland Government's Invested in Queensland program will enable us to create a strong foundation for Aspire42's future corporate and commercial growth.

Aspire42's move follows the opening in May of Westpac's multimillion dollar IT hub in Surfers Paradise, creating 200 local jobs for software engineers and data specialists. Westpac's Chris de Bruin highlighted the significant tech talent available locally and described the Gold Coast as a 'globally connected city with one of the fastest growing economies in Australia which offers great lifestyle benefits'.

Other Gold Coast based companies also recognise these benefits as they pursue expansion thanks to the support of the QIC managed Business Investment Fund. ModnPods is doubling the size of its manufacturing facility at Arundel to produce prefabricated buildings for residential and commercial markets. That will see its workforce increase from 16 to around 100 staff over the next three years. Buildsafe, also based at Arundel, is also utilising the Business Investment Fund to increase production and hire 40 new staff. Gilmour Space Technologies at Helensvale, which joined us at parliament earlier this week for the launch of the Good People Good Jobs Workforce Strategy, are leading Queensland's drive to benefit from the \$1 trillion global space economy. Our investment is helping Gilmour pursue innovative new technologies and manufacturing capabilities and to nearly double its workforce by the end of the year.

The budget I delivered in June was all about delivering good jobs, better services and supporting our great lifestyle. By partnering with the private sector, our government is unlocking more investment to create more jobs right across Queensland, and the Gold Coast is leading the way.