




Speech By
Hon. Glenn Butcher

MEMBER FOR GLADSTONE

Record of Proceedings, 6 March 2024

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Women, Manufacturing

 **Hon. GJ BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (Minister for Regional Development and Manufacturing and Minister for Water) (10.04 am): Our investment in manufacturing continues to grow because we back our local manufacturing industry. We have made significant progress working with industries to deliver more jobs, more investment and more opportunities in Queensland after significant cuts and job losses under the Newman years. However, we know that there is always more to do, especially when it comes to getting more women into manufacturing.

From the shop floor to leadership positions, women add so much to the manufacturing industry in Queensland. Research and businesses tell us that having more women leads to a better workplace culture that is more diverse and innovative and creates greater resilience in those businesses. Our manufacturing sector is one of the state's top 10 job-creating industries and already employs over 180,000 people. More workers are needed and more women are needed in manufacturing. Women make up over half the population but only one-quarter of the manufacturing workforce. We are committed to getting more women into manufacturing because it is a vital growth sector for us. That is why we were the first government to deliver a strategy to specifically attract more women into the manufacturing sector.

This week, I will be attending our 50th Women in Manufacturing breakfast for International Women's Day. Over 500 women will attend that breakfast. It marks the first birthday of our Women in Manufacturing Strategy in Queensland. We have delivered close to 50 events, connecting women and men in manufacturing with women entering the workforce and the sector or aspiring to be in the sector. Those events have been vital in helping us to build connections, networks and mentoring opportunities for the next generation of women in manufacturing. More than 3,325 women and men have joined us at those events, opening up job opportunities and building vital support networks. On International Women's Day it is more important than ever to recognise the significant contribution that women make in manufacturing and the opportunities for the whole industry that come with a gender-equal work force.

I am particularly excited that on Friday I will be announcing the winners of our first-ever Women in Manufacturing Apprentice Awards. Nominations were received from all over Queensland for outstanding female manufacturing apprentices who are showing initiative and leadership in the workforce. The winner will receive \$10,000 and the highly commended recipient will receive \$5,000, thanks to the sponsorship of Manufacturing Skills Queensland, which is another initiative of this Labor government. Unlike those opposite, we see women's issues, whether in health or representation in the workplace, as a priority for government and not a distraction.