

Question on Notice

No. 1450

Asked on 30 August 2016

MR PEGG ASKED THE TREASURER, MINISTER FOR ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PARTNERSHIPS AND MINISTER FOR SPORT (HON C PITT)—

QUESTION:

Will the Treasurer advise what steps the Palaszczuk Government is taking to support job creation in Queensland?

ANSWER:

The Palaszczuk Government is continuing to deliver on its strong commitment to job creation as a core policy objective to lead Queensland to a more prosperous and inclusive future. While there are signs of improvement in the labour market, conditions remain challenging in some Queensland regions.

The State Government's priority remains focussed on creating job opportunities for Queenslanders where finding work can be tough, particularly youth looking for work in regional centres where unemployment rates are higher than the rest of the State.

In line with the Government's job creation objective, the \$100 million two-year Back to Work Regional Employment Package has been in place since 1 July 2016. This program will: support up to 8,000 regional jobs; help employers to build the confidence to take on staff; and provide an economic boost to regions facing challenging times.

The Honourable Grace Grace, Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs, has oversight of the Back to Work package, which is being delivered by Queensland Treasury in partnership with the Department of State Development, the Department of Education and Training, and TAFE Queensland.

Back to Work builds on the work already undertaken by this Government through the Jobs Now, Jobs for the Future employment plan and the Working Queensland commitments.

Back to Work is aimed squarely at regions outside of South East Queensland, and supports the Wide Bay Burnett, North Queensland, Far North Queensland, Mackay/Whitsunday, Central Queensland, North West and South West regions.

The Back to Work program includes:

- \$80 million for support payments to employers who take on regional jobseekers, including long term unemployed jobseekers;
- \$10 million for Back to Work Teams who know the local economy and local employers, and connect employers and jobseekers to opportunities and support, including through Regional Employment Networks; and
- \$10 million for the Certificate 3 Guarantee Boost program to provide access to subsidised training, including 'second chance' training for jobseekers who need to reboot their skills to get back to work.

Employers hiring an eligible unemployed jobseeker in the regions will receive a \$10,000 support payment. This increases to \$15,000 for employers hiring someone out of work for 12 months or more. Eligible part-time jobs attract 75% of the full support payment.

The Back to Work package is already providing a much-needed stimulus in regional Queensland. As at 7 September 2016, \$531,000 in employer support payments has been paid to 79 employers under Back to Work. As a result of these payments, 121 jobseekers have been employed by regional businesses.

There are also 14 officers in Back to Work Teams located across regional Queensland, who are working hard to connect employers and jobseekers.

To continue to assist disadvantaged Queenslanders across the State to get job-ready, on 30 August 2016, the Honourable Yvette D'Ath, Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills, announced the opening of the second round of Skilling Queenslanders for Work.

Skilling Queenslanders for Work is a suite of targeted skills and training programs supporting Queenslanders to gain the skills, qualifications and experience to enter and stay in the workforce. It is important that jobseekers have the appropriate training so when the opportunity comes to apply for a job, they have skills that they can draw on during the application process and improve their chance of finding a meaningful job.

The Queensland Government is also offering a higher incentive to Queensland businesses to employ apprentices and trainees through our Payroll Tax Rebate, doubling the rebate to 50 per cent. The doubling of the rebate for hiring apprentices and trainees makes it even more attractive for Queensland employers to hire and keep apprentices and trainees and grow their businesses.

The Queensland Government's \$10.7 billion capital program is also supporting an estimated 31,000 jobs in 2016-17. The 2016-17 capital program includes components of the Priority Economic Works and Productivity Program and Significant Regional Infrastructure Projects Program, which are funded from the Palaszczuk Government's \$2 billion State Infrastructure Fund.

The Queensland Government is committed to building a new economy—one that is strong and diversified, builds on the state’s competitive strengths and generates the knowledge-based jobs of the future. That is why, as part of the Queensland Government’s \$405 million Advance Queensland initiative, \$40 million has been allocated to the Advance Queensland Industry Attraction Fund.

The Advance Queensland Industry Attraction Fund has been designed to attract businesses to Queensland, either to relocate or establish new projects in the state. The fund will support jobs creation, regional growth, increased innovation and the building of local supply chains.