

Question on Notice

No. 1595

Asked on 13 September 2016

MR KNUTH asked the Deputy Premier, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade and Investment (HON J TRAD) –

QUESTION:

Will the Deputy Premier advise what action she is taking to support local governments and local contractors in securing state government tenders for the benefit of jobs in those regions?

ANSWER:

I thank the Honourable Member for Dalrymple for the question.

The Palaszczuk government remains focussed on job growth with the latest employment statistics released showing 41,500 net jobs have been created in Queensland since January 2015.

In March 2016, the Premier and Minister for the Arts and I released Queensland's first State Infrastructure Plan in more than three years and announced the establishment of a new State Infrastructure Fund (SIF) to build the infrastructure needed to grow the economy and support more than 1,000 jobs now for Queenslanders.

The SIF includes an initial investment of \$500 million to deliver major projects across the state that will grow jobs, productivity and the economy, including in regional areas. The SIF was increased by a further \$1.5 billion as part of the 2016-17 State Budget. This plan provides a clear government agenda on investment and opportunities for local governments and local contractors.

Under the SIF, the \$180 million Significant Regional Infrastructure Projects Program (SRIPP) is designed to deliver infrastructure projects in key regional centres. At the peak of the program, at least 280 jobs will be supported across regional and remote Queensland. The SRIPP will provide local workforces and contractors with the opportunity to tender for work. Projects under the SRIPP that are currently being progressed include:

- Upgrade of the Bill Fulton Bridge
- Redevelopment and expansion of the children's ward at the Townsville Hospital
- Wastewater upgrades within the Aurukun Shire Council
- Projects which will improve tourism and recreation use of the Great Barrier Reef
- Refurbishment of Finch Hatton State School classrooms (complete)

On 9 September 2016, I also announced that Queensland councils will be in a stronger position to deliver priority infrastructure and better protect their communities from natural disasters following the release of more than \$70 million in state government funding. The \$50 million grants package includes the Local Government Grants and Subsidies Program, the Community Resilience Fund and the Natural Disaster Resilience Program.

The Queensland Reconstruction Authority, in my portfolio, worked hard to get an exemption from the Commonwealth to allow local governments to use their own internal workforce (day labour) to undertake reconstruction works to repair and rebuild after natural disasters.

The Commonwealth approved a trial of the use of day labour for 2010-11 to 2012-13 disaster events, where it proved to deliver the best value for money. An independent report showed savings of about \$160 million from the day labour trial on 2010-11 and 2011-12 works.

Following repeated requests from the Queensland Government, the Commonwealth has agreed to the reimbursement of day labour for works to restore damage caused by events in the 2013-14, 2014-15, 2015-16 and 2016-17 financial years.

The Queensland Reconstruction Authority's regional liaison network helps support councils with the delivery of their Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements works and encourages the best value for money options for all reconstruction works.

The Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning adheres to the Queensland Procurement Policy, which under principle four, requires consideration that competitive local suppliers are afforded a full, fair and reasonable opportunity to supply to the government. This has been achieved by implementing a flexible departmental procurement framework that supports the identification of local markets (particularly where regional projects are to be undertaken) prior to tendering and taking local suppliers into consideration during the evaluation process. When it comes to state government tenders it is about ensuring a fair and equitable process for all potential applicants wherever they may be located.

The Department of State Development on behalf of the state government also supports local suppliers by providing 'Tendering for Government Business' and 'Capability Statement' workshops across the state to further help councils maximise their chances of success for government (and or private sector) tendering opportunities.