

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 78

asked on 24 February 2021

MR T WATTS ASKED THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND SMALL BUSINESS AND MINISTER FOR TRAINING AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT (HON D FARMER) —

QUESTION:

With reference to the unemployment rate of 6.2 percent and the youth unemployment rate of 21.9 percent in Toowoomba—

Will the Minister provide access to both the 'Back to Work' program and Regional Payroll tax exemption for eligible business owners in the Toowoomba Regional Council catchment?

ANSWER:

Queensland is well positioned to recover from the economic shocks of COVID-19, evidenced with both youth unemployment and unemployment rates falling in February 2021.

The unemployment rate in Toowoomba fell to 5.4%. Similarly, the youth unemployment rate in Toowoomba also decreased to 15.4%.

While the Back to Work program is unavailable in the Toowoomba LGA, there are alternative support programs available to young jobseekers and employers. Our Free TAFE and Free apprenticeships programs for under 25s have supported more than 1,300 young people and the Skilling Queenslanders for Work (SQW) program has assisted more than 2,000 young people in Toowoomba.

Eligible areas of the Back to Work program currently remain unchanged as the Palaszczuk Government monitors how businesses and employers respond to the unwinding of restrictions and how the economy recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic, in terms of demand for skills and job creation.

Ongoing monitoring of how the economy responds to the easing of short-term financial support, including JobKeeper and JobSeeker payments, will provide a clearer picture of where ongoing economic stimulus and programs should be provided.

Matters relating to Payroll Tax are the responsibility of the Honourable Cameron Dick MP, Treasurer and Minister for Investment.