



Deputy Premier
Treasurer
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Our Ref: 03451-2019
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Mr Neil Laurie
Clerk of the Parliament
Queensland Parliamentary Services

Email: TableOffice@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Mr Laurie

Neil

Thank you for your letter of 3 September 2019 about petitions 3141-19 and 3185-19 received by the Legislative Assembly highlighting the importance of investment, population, jobs and business growth in regional Queensland.

The Palaszczuk Government recognises the critical role regional economies play in driving sustainable growth, creating jobs and increasing prosperity across the State. Central to the Government's economic plan is providing all Queenslanders with the right incentives and transformative infrastructure, including improved connectivity of all communities, and the provision of essential services to communities across the State.

The Queensland Government's efforts to promote regional growth and jobs is bearing fruit. Labour market conditions in regional Queensland continue to improve, despite the current hardships faced by some regional communities experiencing drought and other regions recovering from natural disasters. The gap between the unemployment rate in regional Queensland and South East Queensland is closing; in 2018-19, the gap was only 0.5 percentage point, down from 1.5 percentage points in 2017-18.

The 2019-20 State Budget builds on the Government's ongoing efforts to support regions. Around 60 per cent of the Government's \$12.9 billion capital works program in 2019-20 will be delivered in regions outside the Greater Brisbane area, directly supporting 25,500 jobs. In total, more than \$36 billion has been budgeted to fund productivity-enhancing infrastructure projects in regions outside Greater Brisbane over the five years to 2019-20.

The 2019-20 Budget also introduced a 1 per cent discount on the payroll tax rate applicable for employers located outside South East Queensland, as part of a \$885 million package of payroll tax initiatives, making it easier for regional businesses to invest, grow and employ Queenslanders across all our regions. Some 2,700 regional businesses will have a payroll tax rate up to 20 per cent lower than their previous rate.

Some of the Palaszczuk Government's key initiatives and programs supporting regional economies, investment, population, employment and business growth include:

- the flagship \$600 million *Works for Queensland* program, supporting job-creating maintenance and minor infrastructure works across regional Queensland;
- the \$515 million *Building our Regions* program, for local government regional infrastructure projects;
- a further \$110 million funding to support the North West Minerals Province and attract investment and deliver jobs in key sectors such as resources, agriculture, tourism, as well as related supply chain business opportunities;
- the \$305 million regional component of the *Back to Work* program, giving regional employers the confidence they need to take on additional eligible workers and grow their businesses;
- the \$175 million *Jobs and Regional Growth Fund*, assisting businesses and projects that will generate ongoing economic development and employment opportunities in regional Queensland. The fund supports projects from a variety of sectors in our regions, including agriculture, resources, tourism, manufacturing and construction; and
- \$30 million towards the establishment of Manufacturing Hubs in Cairns, Townsville and Rockhampton to attract increased investment and jobs and deliver world-leading technologies, process and practices.

In addition, there are a range of initiatives being implement by the Government that support regional liveability, including provision of social housing. The Government has also invested \$228.3 million to improve housing for remote and discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, including the Remote Home Ownership Program, which is designed to enhance pathways to home ownership within these communities.

Further details of the key initiatives supporting investment, jobs and business growth within Queensland regions are outlined in the 2019-20 Budget papers, which can be accessed from the website www.budget.qld.gov.au.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely



JACKIE TRAD MP
DEPUTY PREMIER
Treasurer
Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships

16 / 9 / 2019