

19 June, 2001

BUDGET DELIVERS MORE JOBS FOR QUEENSLANDERS

The 2001-02 State Budget renewed the Beattie Government's commitment to job creation and training opportunities for Queenslanders, the Deputy Premier and Treasurer, Mr Terry Mackenroth, said today.

Mr Mackenroth said total employment was forecast to grow by 2 per cent in 2001-02 or twice the national average.

He said this percentage growth represented an increase of about 33,000 jobs.

"We're doing all we can to fight the unemployment rate – we won't be pulling any punches in our ongoing quest to deliver more jobs to Queenslanders," Mr Mackenroth said.

"While our unemployment rates have suffered due to external constraints such as the GST, total employment has now grown for the fourth month in a row.

"This means there are 8,700 more jobs than there were in December and this strong growth is set to continue."

Mr Mackenroth also attributed the rise in unemployment to the constant rise in the participation rate.

"However, the good news is that unemployment is forecast to fall," he said.

"The Budget forecasts unemployment to average 8 percent during the next year, which means that the rate is expected to drop quickly from the current unacceptable levels.

"Positive signs are already emerging that point to the strength of the Queensland economy bringing the jobless number back down.

"We expect the Queensland economy to lead the national recovery with growth of 4 percent – higher than any other Budget forecast in Australia.

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“And armed with innovative initiatives and forward planning in the Budget the Beattie Government will continue to work to reduce the unemployment level in Queensland.”

Mr Mackenroth said \$100 Million had been allocated in 2001-02 to continue the successful ‘Breaking the Unemployment’ Cycle initiative.

He said new funding of \$75 Million had also been set aside to extend it to 2003-04, bringing the total funding over six years to \$470 Million.

“We are aiming to create 56,000 jobs under the initiative over the six years,” Mr Mackenroth said.

“The \$100 Million next financial year will help create more than 13,200 jobs and training opportunities on top of the 27,900 that have been created since we launched the initiative in 1998.”

Mr Mackenroth said the Beattie Government would also continue to target job creation through significant public and private capital investment, particularly in major projects.

“Only this month we announced the Australian Magnesium Corporation was ready to launch a public equity raising to establish a \$1.3 Billion magnesium metal plant near Stanwell. This project will stimulate investment that will produce at least 2,000 jobs and a further 5,000 in supporting industries across Queensland,” he said.

“Also this month the green light was given for the \$425 Million coal mine at Hail Creek which will create more than 600 jobs and we announced the creation of thousands of new jobs by doubling our State’s earnings from the export of education and training.

“These are just a few of the substantial investments in the pipeline ready to go.

“ In addition, the Budget contains capital works spending of more than \$5.1 Billion – money that will be spent supporting more than 46,300 jobs and building infrastructure in communities across the State.”

Mr Mackenroth said the Beattie Government would continue to work to attract investment to Queensland and to fund the infrastructure and services that would build the regions and create more and better jobs for Queenslanders.

“Jobs remain our number one priority,” he said.

