



Steven Miles
DEPUTY PREMIER OF QUEENSLAND

WORKING TOGETHER FOR QUEENSLAND

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Dr Brett Dale DBA
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Dear Dr Dale,

Thank you for your letter of 21 October 2020 regarding our policy commitments in the 2020 Queensland election, and your policy proposals. The Palaszczuk Labor Government's strong health response to the COVID-19 pandemic has meant that we can now start to deliver our plan for economic recovery. This plan will support jobs, help small business, invest in Queensland's manufacturing industry, buy local, and bring forward new infrastructure.

Fiscal Structural reform

The Palaszczuk Labor Government's fiscal principles underpin the development of the State's fiscal strategy and financial decision making. The Palaszczuk Labor Government has prioritised its economic and health response to the pandemic. However, fiscal principles will remain an important part of developing strategies to support the Budget position as the economy recovers.

Prior to COVID-19, Queensland's General Government sector debt to revenue ratio had improved from its peak in 2012-13 of 91% (under the former LNP Government) down to 63% in 2019-20, based on the 2019-20 MYFER. Federal Government debt is forecast to hit \$1 trillion.

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented significant challenges to public health and public finances, and Queensland has not been immune. Since the start of the year, we have seen substantial reductions in revenues from royalties and the GST. Unlike the LNP, but consistent with the advice from the World Bank, the OECD, the RBA and the Commonwealth Government, we have committed to an affordable borrowing program to support our economy and create jobs.

We are managing our capital program to ensure a consistent flow of works to support jobs and the economy. The Capital Program 2020 Update reinforces the Palaszczuk Labor Government's commitment to a \$51.8 billion capital program over four years and provides industry with confidence to invest and sustain jobs across Queensland. This contrasts with the LNP's approach which is to cut, sack and sell.

Industry Skills and Training

The Palaszczuk Labor Government has been strongly committed to investing in opportunities for Queenslanders to get the skills and training they need for jobs now and into the future. As a result, Queensland is leading the nation in apprenticeship and traineeship completions and one in four apprentices sign up here in Queensland. In fact, we have more than half of the nation's school-based apprentices and trainees.

We want young people to continue to have the opportunities to get into jobs in high demand traditional, emerging and growth industries. That's why we introduced free TAFE for year 12 graduates and free apprenticeships for young Queenslanders.

Since 2017, the Palaszczuk Labor Government has:

- invested over \$151 million in modernising and revitalising TAFE training infrastructure across Queensland;
- introduced the \$4 million Skills Boost to slash the cost of reskilling and upskilling Queenslanders into new career pathways;
- supported almost 25,000 young Queenslanders through free TAFE and free apprenticeships in priority skill areas;
- invested \$9 million in Regional Skills Investment Strategy (RSIS) to help regional communities build skilled local workforces to meet current and emerging key industries;
- invested \$15 million in Regional Skills Adjustment Strategy, providing support to workers whose livelihoods are at risk due to industrial transition to gain further training, employability and foundation skills to help them into new jobs;
- invested in the most comprehensive COVID-19 targeted training response in the nation, with over 26,000 enrolments in micro credentials and skills sets and over 160,000 enrolments in COVID-Safe Training; and
- reaching a major milestone and created over 30,000 jobs through our Skilling Queenslanders for Work program.

We know we still have a long way to go and as our economy transitions, we will need to be able to provide growth and emerging industries with the skilled workers that they need.

That's why, if re-elected, the Palaszczuk Labor Government will invest an additional \$21 million to expand our free TAFE and free apprenticeships program to include all young Queenslanders under 25.

This ensures that we can support 37,000 more young Queenslanders into training in priority skill areas that we know will lead to a job.

We will also be investing an additional \$100 million to continue modernising our TAFE campuses so that students, apprentices and trainees can access the cutting-edge facilities they need.

We know a Frecklington LNP Government will not invest in equipping Queenslanders with the skills they need for the jobs of today and of the future. When in government, they ripped \$170 million out of TAFE funding and sacked 2,100 TAFE staff. This meant that 40,000 Queenslanders were simply priced out of a qualification.

A re-elected Palaszczuk Labor Government will always work cooperatively with everyone to achieve the best outcome for Queenslanders. Now, more than ever, it is important that Queenslanders have access to well-paid and secure jobs to recover from the global pandemic and to grow our economy.

We have worked together to keep Queenslanders safe during the COVID crisis and now we must focus on our economic recovery and keeping Queenslanders working. Only the Palaszczuk Labor Government will invest in a strong TAFE to give Queenslanders the opportunity to get the skills they need to help them secure jobs and strengthen Queensland's economic future.

Environmental Relevant Activities (ERA)

In December 2018, the Department of Environment and Science completed a review of all waste-related environmentally relevant activities (ERA) administered under the *Environmental Protection Act 1994*. The review identified significant and inequitable variations between annual fees for ERAs

that posed similar levels of risk. For example, automotive wreckers that held an environmental authority for the old ERA20 (metal recovery) were permitted to process up to 100 tonnes per day of automotive components containing regulated wastes such as oils, heavy metals and other high-risk contaminants. The prescribed annual fee for ERA20 was \$630.

By way of comparison, a regulated waste storage facility that stored the same types of regulated wastes being handled at automotive wrecking sites required the old ERA56 (regulated waste storage), which had an annual fee of approximately \$5,000.

Based on the review's findings and subsequent regulatory reform processes, a consistent risk-based regulation equitable across all waste management activities with a new ERA and annual fee structure was introduced in November 2019. This included the introduction of a new schedule of waste-related ERAs being introduced with different annual fees.

As a result, some operators saw an increase in their annual fees, while other operators saw a significant decrease in their annual fees.

Automotive Fleet

The *Future is Electric: Queensland's Electric Vehicle Strategy* (the EV Strategy), the first of its kind in Australia, continues to be implemented and it drives our commitment towards transitioning to low and zero emission vehicles.

The showpiece action from the strategy was construction of the Queensland Electric Super Highway (QESH), completed in January 2018.

The QESH is the world's longest electric vehicle superhighway in a single state. It provides Queenslanders and tourists with the infrastructure they need to drive from Coolangatta to Cairns, and from Brisbane to Toowoomba in an electric vehicle with the ability to recharge along their journey.

As of 1 August 2020, a total of 14,553 QESH fast charging sessions have occurred since the end of 2017. In the 12 months from 1 August 2019 to 1 August 2020, there was a 156 per cent increase in battery electric vehicles registered in Queensland from 1,134 to 2,904 vehicles.

The EV Strategy also identified electric vehicle tourism and the transition to electric vehicles as an opportunity to increase tourism in regional Queensland.

In November 2019, the Queensland Government officially opened the 500km Tropical North Queensland Electric Vehicle Drive. The Drive features electric vehicle destination charging stations at six key tourist attractions across the Cairns region.

Nationally, a work program through the Transport and Infrastructure Council to encourage the uptake of low and zero emission vehicles is ongoing. This work program was approved in June 2020 and Queensland is currently chair.

Queensland will be guided by this national work and there needs to be national consistency regarding any moves to transition to low and zero emission vehicles.

The Palaszczuk Labor Government is embracing the transition of its fleet to electric vehicles. This will integrate seamlessly and concurrently with the other emissions reduction initiatives being undertaken.

There are six area of focus to make this happen:

1. Replace existing vehicles with PHEV models
2. Introduce electric vehicles into car sharing pools (CBD and larger regional centres)
3. Introduce BEVs to match existing lease vehicle replacements
4. Incentivise agencies to take up electric vehicles
5. Introduce electric vehicle evaluations
6. Explore opportunities encouraging manufacturers to speed up the importation of electric vehicles through bulk purchasing deals across state boundaries.

It is expected this approach will lead to QFleet doubling the number of electric vehicles in its fleet each year during the next four years.

Small/Medium Business Support

The Palaszczuk Labor Government is committed to making it easier for businesses to do business in Queensland. We have re-established a Small Business Commissioner to provide small businesses with a one stop for advice and mediation support. This role was cut by the Newman-Frecklington LNP Government leaving Queensland as the only jurisdiction to not have representation at the National Small Business Commissioners network, which is the main national forum for discussion of small business matters. At the time, stakeholders described the decision as a step backwards for Queensland.

The Palaszczuk Labor Government has implemented the following red-tape reduction measures:

- Established the Better Regulation Taskforce to provide expert advice and recommendations to the government on improving the regulatory environment
- Established a new Regulator Performance Framework to ensure a greater focus by agencies on reducing regulatory burden for businesses in Queensland
- Released the Queensland Better Regulation Update 2019, showcasing Queensland Government reforms and key activities to streamline regulatory processes, reduce compliance requirements and improve regulator practices
- Implemented 20 calendar day payment terms for small businesses from 1 July 2020 and prompted corporations and big business to do the same
- Introduced a target of 25% of all government purchases to be from Queensland small and medium business suppliers from 1 July 2020
- Delivered eight BizLink events (formerly Regulator Rallies) since 2018 to engage with small businesses across Queensland on key regulatory issues, bringing small businesses and regulators from all three levels of government together
- Released Works with Small Business guidance material to minimise small business disruption.

A re-elected Palaszczuk Labor Government will continue to progress the following:

- Implementation of the Queensland Small Business Procurement Commitment and On-time Payment Policy, to make it easier for small businesses to supply to the Government, drive an increase in small business participation in procurement activities across government, and to pay small businesses faster.
- Establish a permanent Office of the Small Business Commissioner to advocate for the interests of small businesses across Queensland. The Small Business Commissioner will also work with the Office of Regulatory Reform in Treasury to identify solutions to lower the costs of regulation.
- Working to reduce red tape and simplify planning approvals under Queensland's planning framework. The Palaszczuk Labor Government has recently undertaken consultation on proposed changes to the Development Assessment Rules and the Planning Regulation 2017, which will enable local government to be more flexible and responsive in driving economic activity, and support business to progress development and construction projects.

The Palaszczuk Labor Government is now considering feedback received during the consultation process, and will progress reforms to the framework in late 2020.

- The Palaszczuk Labor Government is working with other states and territories and the Australian Government, as part of the Council on Federal Financial Relations and the Board of Treasurers' forums, to identify solutions to lower the costs of regulation, making it easier for businesses to invest, create jobs and grow the economy.

I am also pleased to advise the Palaszczuk Labor Government also recently announced a transfer duty exemption for business restructures which will make it easier for businesses to restructure without paying hefty fees which is a huge win for efficiency. You will be aware that the Palaszczuk Labor Government extended the moratorium on evictions for commercial leaseholders to the end of 2020 which was welcome news for thousands of small and medium businesses.

The Palaszczuk Labor Government's number one priority is backing Queensland jobs and ensuring we continue to keep Queenslanders safe and healthy during the COVID-19 pandemic. I am therefore pleased to outline key elements of a re-elected Palaszczuk Government's plan that will deliver economic recovery and help NECA and its members, including:

- Our Big Plans for Small Business policy will create jobs and future proof Queensland. We're committing to building on our support of more than \$2.3 billion in tax relief, grants, electricity rebates and loans for small to medium sized businesses with another \$140 million to support big plans for small business.
- Our Making it in Queensland: Building a Stronger Manufacturing Sector policy will see an additional \$40.5 million investment in our manufacturing sector, including through a \$16.5 million investment to give Queenslanders the skills required in advanced manufacturing, the creation of new manufacturing hubs in Mackay and on the Gold Coast and through supporting 200 new jobs by investing a further \$15.5 million in our 'Made in Queensland' grants program.

A re-elected Palaszczuk Labor Government has committed to not introducing new taxes or increasing taxes. An independent report shows the LNP will need to cut at least 30,000 jobs to fund the LNP's current commitments to return to surplus in four short years, not increase taxes and fund election commitments which now total at least \$26 billion.

Now is not the time to risk the LNP's cuts. Queensland's ongoing economic and health recovery requires leadership and stability, and Deb Frecklington and the LNP are a risk to our recovery.

I urge you to communicate this message with your members and supporters. Should the Palaszczuk Labor Government be re-elected, we look forward to working with you for the benefit of all Queenslanders.

Yours sincerely



STEVEN MILES MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Health and
Minister for Ambulance Services