

15 June 2010

Main Committee CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS

Lindsay Electorate - Penrith Jobs Expo

Mr BRADBURY (Lindsay) (4.20pm) — I rise to take note of the recent Jobs Expo held in Penrith and to acknowledge the phenomenal success that this expo had in linking up job seekers with employment opportunities. It has been a source of great pride to me to be a part of a government that acted quickly and decisively during the global financial crisis to save the jobs of over 200,000 Australians. This is a part of the government's record of which I am proud and something that I think also highlights the failures of the opposition. They opposed the stimulus package. They only have a plan to bring back Work Choices when it comes to the labour market. Their plan is, 'Don't support jobs' and 'Make the jobs that people do have even less secure than they would otherwise be.'

After having acted decisively at the national level during the global financial crisis, I campaigned very hard at the local level with local community and business groups as part of the Keep Penrith Working campaign. That campaign was about ensuring that local businesses and local employees were able to take advantage of the stimulus package. That campaign was then followed last year by the designation of the Western Sydney area as a priority employment area, which included the appointment of a local employment coordinator. One of their roles has been to host the Jobs Expo. The Penrith Jobs Expo was the 20th such event around the country. Jobs Expos have been aptly described as job supermarkets, where businesses hold stalls and advertise employment to the thousands of job seekers who attend. I was honoured to officially open the expo with the Parliamentary Secretary for Employment, Jason Clare, and the Jobs Expo ambassador, television tradie, Scott Cam.

The Penrith Jobs Expo was one of the most successful in the country, with more than 9½ thousand job seekers streaming through the Panthers' pavilion—800 of whom walked away with a job on that day. While there are still some fragile sectors of the economy, we are unique among the major economies of the world in having the ability to hold Jobs Expos where businesses are looking for staff and are employing staff. Local businesses like Mister Ply&Wood, which I visited recently where manager Chris Carter told me that there are 11 jobs on offer across his group. In the budget we announced an extension, until November this year, of the Apprentice Kickstart program. The program triples the financial incentive for employers. Under the existing program, which has just recently come to an end, 240 apprentices were employed in my electorate. Companies such as DB Carpentry and Hix Electrical and Data Services took advantage of this opportunity. Investing in skills is the key to growing the productive capacity of the economy and that is why this government will continue to invest in skills and to support jobs in local communities like mine.