

A SPECIAL ADVERTISING REPORT

Up and away

**Careers in Queensland:
A special survey on where to find
the top prospects**



The 'rocks and crops'
state is now a dynamic
global economy that
is attracting 1000
newcomers every week.
New Premier Anna
Bligh aims to maintain
the momentum with
programmes to boost
jobs and infrastructure

THE Sunshine State's transformation from a "rocks and crops" dependency to a dynamic, 21st century, global economy has created 30-year record low unemployment.

That's the view of the Sunshine state's Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations, John Mickel.

"Together with industry and our research institutions, we are constructing a knowledge-based, creative and innovative society in Queensland - from the way our kids are educated right through to the way we do business in the state," he says.

And new Queensland Premier Anna Bligh has pledged a bonanza in infrastructure construction.

Maintaining the state's strong economy was her No 1 priority, said Ms Bligh when she took over the reins of power on September 11.

"I want us to plan for that growth and manage it better," she said. "I want this growth to drive our economy and maintain our lifestyle. Our challenge is to stay one step ahead of this growth. This is the task I set for myself as premier.

"I want the building of our infrastructure - our roads, rail, ports, energy networks, schools, hospitals and most urgent of all water, to be one of the hallmarks of my premiership."

Ms Bligh said she came to the task at a time of unprecedented growth: "Growth is our biggest challenge and our best opportunity. We are

experiencing prosperous times with low unemployment, rapid industrial expansion and an economy that is growing at a rate that outstrips the nation.

"A strong economy will be my first priority as Premier. It is the strength and growth of the Queensland economy that creates jobs and opportunities - generates the capacity for us to build our roads, our schools and our hospitals and creates great futures for our children."

Growing Queensland's regions was the key to Queensland's economic strength and to managing the state's population growth.

The premier added: "I intend to renew our focus on the development of regional Queensland - and the shape of my ministry will reflect this priority."

Queensland's economic growth is forecast to strengthen to an above-average rate of 5 per cent in 2007-08, significantly higher than the 3.75 per cent forecast for Australia as a whole.

In the year to August, more than 73,500 jobs were created in Queensland, more than 27 per cent of the national increase. And almost a third of full-time jobs were created in Queensland, despite the State only having 20 per cent of the national population.

The state employment rate is growing at a rate of 3.6 per cent over the year, with Western Australia stronger than any other State and well above the national average of 2.6 per cent.

Traditionally, agriculture and mining are Queensland's biggest earners, but increasingly the state is making strides across a range of high-technology, innovative industries, like biotechnology, advanced manufacturing, aviation and aerospace, pharmaceuticals, marine industry, and information and communications technology.

Queensland is Australia's fastest growing state. The Australian Bureau of Statistics forecasts the State's population to reach the five million mark by 2021. Around 1000 people migrate to Queensland every week, from other Australian states and from overseas, drawn by a booming economy.

In the year to December, 2006, net interstate migration in Queensland totalled over 25,000 persons, and was mostly at the expense of NSW.

This huge influx of migrants is contributing to the largest infrastructure program ever undertaken in the state.

According to Projects Queensland in 2007, over 700 major projects over \$20 million each are being undertaken or planned across the state, covering mining and minerals processing, public transport, roads, rail, energy, water infrastructure, tourism facilities, schools and hospitals.

The strength of the state's growth is underlined by the 20th consecutive month of increased dwelling approvals in July. Queensland approvals increased by 10.5 per cent over the year compared

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with a national downturn of 2.4 per cent. Mickel says under the Smart State Strategy, the Queensland Government has invested nearly \$3 billion on research and development, science, technology and innovation in the State – more per capita than NSW, Victoria and Western Australia.

“This has seen enterprises like IBM, Mincom, Accenture, and Alchemia establish their research and development facilities in Queensland and has given rise to a raft of research projects throughout the state,” he says.

Queensland’s universities and research institutions also work closely with business in on research and development.

Mickel says the Government is supporting economic growth with record investment in skills development.

“The \$1.1 billion Queensland Skills Plan is leading Australia in building the skills base,” he says. “Apprentice and trainee numbers are at an all time record high of 81,800, an increase of 8.5 per cent over the past year.

“We are making a major investment in skills across the board, including para-professional training. In addition, Queensland in 2007-08 will invest \$82 million in assisting the most disadvantaged into the workforce.

“The Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative constitutes a bigger investment in labour market programs than all other states combined. We are recognising that an ageing workforce is going to massively change the structure of the labour market.

“The reality is that as the workforce ages we are going to need all the people we can get participating in the workforce.

“The key to that is helping people build the skills needed by employers and industry. Our strong population growth with corresponding strong domestic demand are creating strong business conditions in Queensland, spurred on by commercial property construction as well as growing world demand for commodities, such as coal and base metals.

“Queensland has a dynamic, diverse economy and the state is experiencing the most sustained period of growth and prosperity ever recorded.”

Ms Bligh says Queensland’s population growth rate remains higher than the national average and the highest of all Australian states.

She says the latest Australian Bureau of Statistics into population growth shows the state’s population has increased by approximately 92,000 people for the year ended 31 March.

“We have the lion’s share of the nation’s 307,100 increase – the highest since record keeping began in 1789,” she says.

Queensland’s population now stands at 4.162 million people.

“Queensland has again recorded the highest growth rate of all the states and territories, at 2.3 per cent followed by Western Australia at 2.2 per

cent,” Ms Bligh says.

“Our strong economic growth is not just a flash in the pan. This Government’s policies are continuing to put Queensland in a strong economic position and people from other states, and around the world, are recognising that fact.”

She says the Government would continue to work hard for the growing state of Queensland: “Ten years ago, total capital spending was \$5 billion. This year we are committing more than \$100 million a week, or \$5 billion for the year, in roads and transport alone and our total program exceeds \$14 billion.

“Our investment in infrastructure is far in excess of other states.” Per capita, Queensland is investing \$3212 compared with nearest rival Western Australia, at \$2224 per capita. By reforming our age-old local government system, ensuring water availability for the future, providing improved health care and strengthened community services, this Government will strive to continue the strong economic growth which underpins our State’s prosperity,” she says.

Earlier this year, Mr Mickel described Queensland as the “go-ahead, green-light” state.

Migrants were coming because of Queensland’s superior lifestyle and staying to provide the solid backbone for the state’s future, Mr Mickel says.

But there are also shortages in the service industry and retailing and management as well as construction and infrastructure as the economic base expands to cope with the huge influx of migrants.

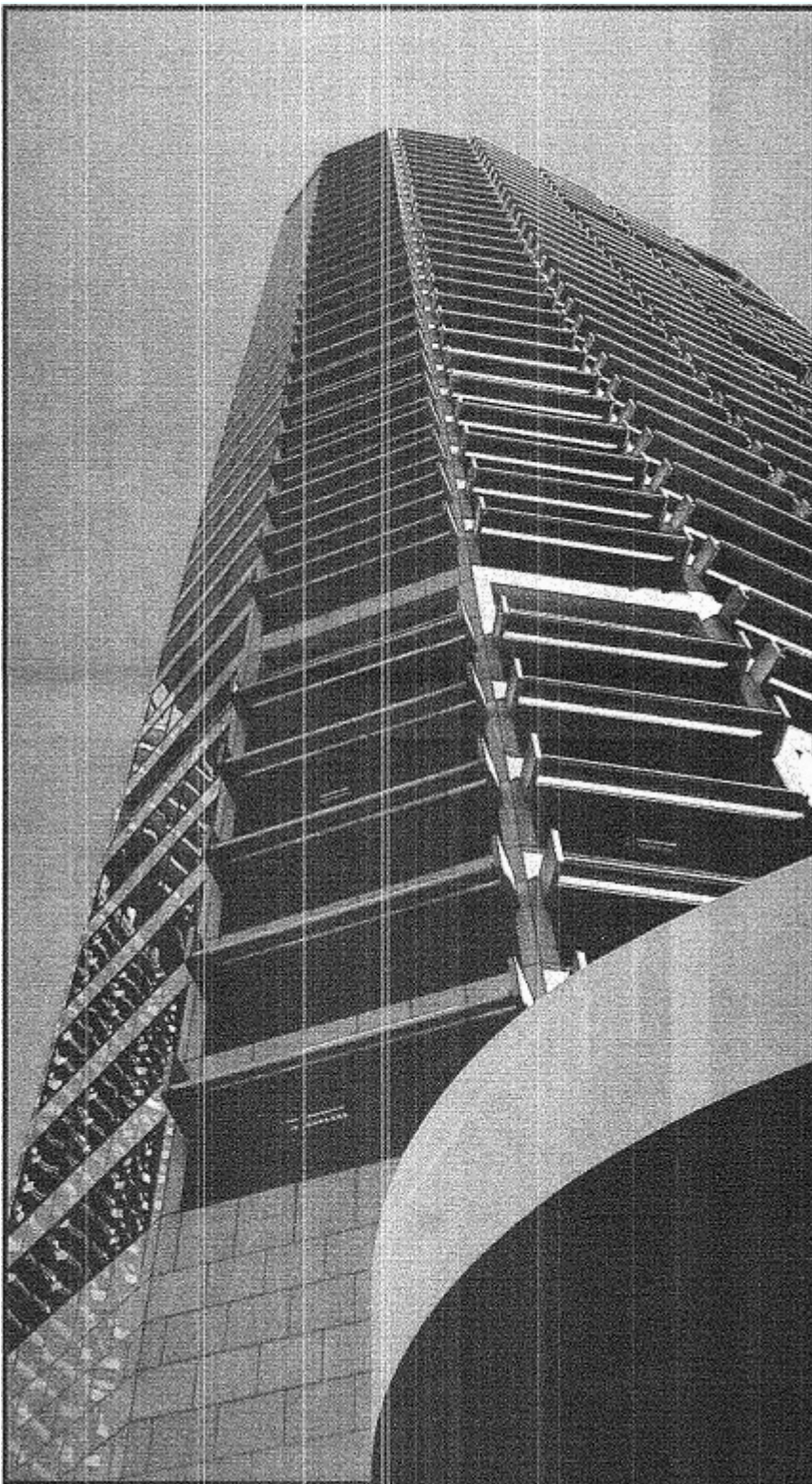
“If you have a young family and you feel you want to have a go at life, why wouldn’t you come to live in Queensland,” he says. “Queensland has problems with infrastructure, and we are pouring billions of dollars into them in the face of a skills shortage, which, of course, means even more employment and more need for skilled people.

“We have massive infrastructure spending in water, electricity, hospitals, school, roads – just about all essential services for the existing population and the 1200 a week who are moving here. And it is cheaper to maintain a family in Queensland.”

For a family with only one full-time worker, 42.9 per cent (\$23,916) more in salary is required in Sydney and 5 per cent (\$2771) more in salary is required in Melbourne to achieve the same standard of living as a Brisbane family.

A family with both parents working full-time requires 55.8 per cent (\$46,610) more in salary to live in Sydney and 13.3 per cent (\$11,147) more to live in Melbourne to achieve the same standard of living as the Brisbane family.

The figures are based on a report completed in the first half of 2006 which presents estimates of salaries in Brisbane that would allow the achievement of equivalent standards of living in Adelaide, Perth, Melbourne and Sydney. Both examples are based on couples who have two children and who have purchased their home.



Powering ahead: Queensland's burgeoning economy on display in Brisbane's CBD



Premier Anna Bligh: Pledges on infrastructure