



Speech by

**BRUCE DAVIDSON**

**MEMBER FOR NOOSA**

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### **TRAINING FOR MATURE-AGE WORKERS**

**Mr DAVIDSON** (Noosa—LP) (6.45 p.m.): Nothing shows the vital difference between the forward-thinking coalition and the back-to-the-fifties Labor Party more clearly than the attitude in Government of the minority Beattie administration to the question of mature-age training. The people of Queensland deserve to have that difference pointed out to them at every opportunity. The only opportunities that this Government is interested in are those that can be used to promote its own survival.

The vital difference between this sad and sorry minority Government and the coalition is best illustrated by an actual example of progress from our time in office, which is provided by the reformed and revitalised system of staff management that was introduced into the Department of Training and Industrial Relations when my colleague the member for Clayfield was the Minister. The annual report of that department, which has just been tabled, illustrates this point. It describes the 1998 Business Through Our People initiative for staff, which was introduced by the former director-general of the department, Mr Col Thatcher. This took an innovation further than simply balancing work and family demands. It was about creating a sustainable work force in leading-edge public organisations. This reformist and forward-looking approach to meeting the real needs of today's workers and the 21st century workers who will come after them is based on an understanding that business success contributes to the feeling of a sense of individual achievement and security.

In any operation, public or private, future business success depends on acknowledging all aspects—the mental, emotional, spiritual and physical dimensions—of people's lives. Labor pays lip-service to this principle and these requirements, but Labor's way is the way of the collective—the one size must fit all philosophy—that has forever blighted the Left's approach to humanity. The coalition's policy of enhancing individual self worth within the public sector stands as a shining example of the real way to make progress in a world where enterprise and energy are the true benchmarks of success. The Business Through Our People initiative of the Department of Training and Industrial Relations gave form to this policy. In the department's 1997-98 annual report, Mr Thatcher states—

"Within its competitive business setting we needed to cultivate an environment where all staff feel a sense of personal growth and that their creativity is being recognised. Where each person feels their work is expanding their personal boundaries, they feel highly motivated and their 'full commitment' is recognised."

I believe that that stands as a sound explanation of the breadth and depth of the personal commitment that people can be encouraged to make when they are not mere ciphers in some musty little socialist collective.

There is ample evidence that this Government—and particularly its Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations, and the department of which he is a political head—has no real vision for 21st century business or management practice. As my colleague the member for Clayfield pointed out in moving this motion, it is abundantly plain that Labor's preference is for the dullness and collective non-enterprise of the past. The Labor Party refuses to see that nowadays training and education is a lifelong task or, if it sees it, it views it as something that the public sector training system should not provide. We have had the Minister's word for that on several occasions. He has even tried to make a virtue out of his lack of vision and his party's shameless acquiescence to the enterprise-sapping demands of the big unions.

Under the coalition, the Department of Training and Industrial Relations was striving to become a learning organisation. We were never so arrogant as to presume that we knew it all, unlike the clone collective opposite. As the community as a whole—across all age groups—needs to be at the forefront of anticipating the needs of customers in order to deliver services and products more effectively, under our stewardship the public sector was adapting to the climate of swift change. It is impossible to make those adaptations and to respond quickly to demands for new or better services without embracing the requirement for constant upskilling and reskilling. It is impossible to separate the new demands on the management of any enterprise of any size, public or private, from the need for the constant renewal of corporate and personal skills. That is what makes this minority Government so culpable in the training area. It is hung up on rhetoric and on the political plausibility of this promise or that pledge.

As a society, our goal must be to make the most of every asset in our human armoury. Under the late and largely unlamented Goss Government, the record of continuous Public Sector Management Commission reviews put the public sector right offside.

Time expired.

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