



Speech by

**Mr M. HORAN**

**MEMBER FOR TOOWOOMBA SOUTH**

---

Hansard 17 November 1998

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

**Mr HORAN** (Toowoomba South—NPA) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (6.11 p.m.): I second the motion moved by the member for Clayfield. What members are discussing tonight is policy developed on the run by the Minister—policy that is being picked out of the report on apprenticeships and traineeships, Queensland trends, which quotes significantly from the Victorian scene. In particular, through Estimates committee hearings and ministerial statements, the Minister has criticised the coalition for providing traineeships for older members of the work force. The Minister has indicated that he wants to restrict traineeships to those between 15 and 19 years of age.

The coalition goes along with providing good opportunities for young people who want to enter the work force, but in the interests of justice and in the interests of everybody, surely there are other people who need traineeships and additional training throughout their careers. Whereas it is absolutely essential for young people to get a start in life, to have a job, to turn up on time, to accept the discipline and direction of working for employers, to learn new skills, to take home a pay packet, to budget and to make a start in life, other people have kids to raise. Many people have worked throughout the years, they are perhaps over 40 or 50, they have raised their kids, and they are trying to save some money towards their retirement, or they are continuing to pay off their houses after raising their families throughout their working years. What we see here is an absolute discrimination against people. The Minister is making policy on the run out of this flawed report, which contains about one page of disclaimers at various stages giving all sorts of reasons as to why we should not take particular notice of the detail of the report. This is quite unjust.

I ask members to look at what happened over the past few years. Under the Goss Government, we started to see an increase in traineeships being applied to people other than those who have just entered the work force. That practice continued under the coalition Government to the extent that now there are about 1,275 traineeships for young people aged 15 to 16, whereas about four years ago there were in the order of 275. So about 1,000 new traineeships have been created for 15 to 16-year-olds over the past four years. The coalition Government and, indeed, the previous Goss Government were doing their bit for younger people.

In many instances, those who provide the system of training under traineeships are older people in the work force who have the work experience. They have learnt it through the university of life, and they pass it on to the younger people who come in under the traineeships system. Traineeships are a great scheme, because they provide flexibility. A trainee in the hospitality industry might work for six months in a restaurant, then move on to six months in a takeaway set-up and then to some other type of catering institution. So traineeships do provide flexibility and an opportunity that would not exist under an apprenticeship, because someone may not be able to take that person on for the required three or four years. It is the older or middle-aged people who are passing on that knowledge. In many cases, those people have not had the opportunity to obtain formal qualifications, but they are passing on this knowledge to younger people, who can then get their qualifications and perhaps leapfrog them in the workplace or even take away their positions. Let us remember that many people are very concerned about downsizing, the corporatisation of organisations and losing their jobs. They have as much need for training as do the young people who are entering the work force.

I turn now to some statistics. In 1994-95, about 10.9% of trainees were 15 to 16-year-olds. That figure is about 5.1% now. The point is that this equates to 1,275 young people, compared with 275. There has been a big increase in the number of traineeships that are available. What could we expect,

though, when one of the members of this Labor Government—the member for Springwood— stood in this House last week and absolutely did over people aged over 50? He has not apologised yet. That is the attitude shown towards older people by members opposite. The member for Springwood talked about dementia and dribbling. He spoke about the need for CPR, but there is still no apology forthcoming from the member for Springwood. He was joined, in his usual style of behaviour, by the member for Logan, who did over the doctors. Then the member for Chermside did over the very police who helped him out when he got his office rammed. And the Premier in this House talked about the people——

**Mr SULLIVAN:** I rise to a point of order. That statement is false. It is untrue. I criticised a group of police at the Logan Police Station—and no-one else—over one incident. I ask that that statement be withdrawn. It is false, misleading and untrue.

**Mr HORAN:** If the member finds unpalatable what he said in the House, I will withdraw.  
Time expired.

---