



Speech by

**Mr LEN STEPHAN**

**MEMBER FOR GYMPIE**

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Hansard 28 October 1999

**APPROPRIATION BILL  
Estimates Committee F  
Report**

**Mr STEPHAN** (Gympie—NPA) (12.52 p.m.): It gives me a great deal of pleasure to join in the debate on the report of Estimate Committee F as it relates to employment and training. This issue is certainly very important for me and my area and, indeed, right throughout the State.

I am concerned about the possibility of not being able to get enough workers out in the fields in rural areas. There seems to be an attitude that "if you can't put a motor on it, we don't want to know about it". A lot of things just do not work that way. I know that it is difficult to match people with jobs in this area, but certainly the problem is impacting on our capacity to produce. I give the example of milking cows. Some producers are now having to milk over 1,000 cows a day. It is difficult to find someone to take responsibility for such a large task.

I refer to programs put in place in 1997 which did achieve a great deal for Queensland. The 1997 Year of Training achievements include an enhanced User Choice program, a quality framework for VET policy, a significant increase in the number of traineeships and a growing awareness by the Queensland public of the value of training.

Other initiatives of that year included the establishment of a small business training advisory committee to advise Government on improving participation in training in the small business sector. That initiative was very well received. The Rural Industry Training Task Force was developed to develop strategies to address rural training needs. Eight rural round tables were also established.

There was significant growth in overall traineeship numbers right throughout the State. There were 26,339 new approvals for traineeships in 1997-98. Included in this figure is approvals for part-time trainees and 180 new school-based traineeships. It is about looking after the young ones as well.

Specific funding initiatives were provided to deliver around 30,000 additional Government-funded places over two years. There was better access to training through the expansion of the User Choice and Competitive Funding programs, for which \$125m was committed. This figure includes new initiatives of \$6.5m for an employer assistance program. That was also very well received.

There was reform in the apprentice and trainee system through increased employment-based delivery of training, part-time apprenticeship arrangements, User Choice and new apprenticeships in schools.

Time expired.

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