



Speech by

**Hon. P. BRADDY**

**MEMBER FOR KEDRON**

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Hansard 22 July 1999

### **MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

#### **Vision and Constitution for TAFE Queensland**

**Hon. P. J. BRADDY** (Kedron—ALP) (Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations) (10.04 a.m.), by leave: Last Friday I launched a new Vision and Constitution for TAFE Queensland. Together, these documents provide the blueprint to reposition TAFE so that it can better contribute to the skills development of Queensland's work force. The Vision and Constitution for TAFE Queensland acknowledge TAFE as more than just another provider. Through this Vision, the Beattie Government is recognising the need to fund regional services appropriately to ensure equity of access to training for all Queenslanders.

The model allows TAFE institutes the maximum level of flexibility and autonomy while preserving TAFE's strength as an entity in its own right. It also focuses strongly on the relationship between TAFE institutes and the communities they serve. It demands that TAFE institutes be strong, flexible, publicly accountable and responsive to training needs and innovation at local, regional, State, national and international levels.

As I mentioned, the Vision for TAFE Queensland recognises the immense contribution TAFE Queensland institutes make to regional centres and cities across the State. The Constitution specifies the responsibilities of parties involved in governing TAFE Queensland, giving a stronger role for community councils.

This blueprint for TAFE's future stands in stark contrast with that adopted by the previous Government, which hived off a large proportion of TAFE's funding at a scale not repeated anywhere else in Australia.

**Mr Borbidge** interjected.

**Mr BRADDY:** I remind the Leader of the Opposition that, between 1995 and 1998, competitive funding escalated under his Government from around \$22m to \$125m. The impact on TAFE—presumably not noticed by the Leader of the Opposition—was devastating. In doing so, the previous Government failed to recognise the value TAFE as a public provider makes to regional economic development and to local communities.

The Beattie Government, by comparison, came to Government with a 10-point plan to safeguard TAFE in Queensland. The first point was a firm and unequivocal commitment to the maintenance of TAFE Queensland in public hands. To place TAFE on a firm financial footing, we immediately froze competitive funding at January 1998 levels for three years to allow the institutes to adjust. By this action, the Beattie Government was the first in Australia since the introduction of contestable funding to safeguard TAFE as a public provider.

I want to emphasise that we are not talking about a return to public monopoly. Our objective is to see TAFE able to compete in both the public and private training markets. The new TAFE Vision ensures that, in the midst of a competitive market place, industry sectors that would otherwise be ignored are serviced across the full gamut of their training requirements. And with increased autonomy, institutes will better be able to respond to the needs of individual students, industry and the community.

Today, TAFE Queensland represents an investment in buildings and equipment of more than \$855m over 16 institutes, incorporating 85 colleges and campuses across the State. It employs almost 6,000 people, manages an annual budget of around \$420m and had export earnings of \$10.6m in

1998. Over the next few years, we intend to continue the investment. We will step up our multimillion-dollar investment program in vocational education and training infrastructure, with a strong emphasis on information technology. The Beattie Government needed to step in and make changes to the system to ensure TAFE Queensland prospered in the next millennium.

When I released the report of the TAFE review last year, I was advised that if nothing was done to address the financial distress of TAFE institutes, they would have continued to decline and present a serious constraint to employment growth. I immediately announced a \$30.8m package of measures designed to provide immediate financial relief for TAFE institutes. Through the framework and infrastructure provided through the Vision and Constitution, TAFE institutes and TAFE Queensland will have in place the processes and flexibility to take a central role in the future of the State. TAFE institutes will be able to respond to this Government's highest priority of job creation and the development of a highly skilled work force in Queensland.

The fact is that nearly one in 10 Queenslanders pursues training or study through a TAFE Queensland institute every year. Through this new direction, we have safeguarded the future of TAFE Queensland institutes for everybody. Just one year ago, TAFE institutes were left battered and bruised by the former coalition Government's two-year rush into competition. I am pleased to be able to report to the House today that, a year on, TAFE Queensland is well and truly on the mend.

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