



Speech by

Hon. P. BRADDY

MEMBER FOR KEDRON

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Training

Hon. P. J. BRADDY (Kedron—ALP) (Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations) (9.44 a.m.), by leave: High quality training is essential for the future development of Queensland as the smart State. Quality training means training that responds to the current and future needs of employers, industry and the community. And it means ensuring that Queensland is equipped with a skilled work force to secure its growth and prosperity into the new millennium. Quality training gives young people the skills, confidence and experience to improve their employment prospects.

The Beattie Government's training initiatives will help achieve all these aims as well as contribute to the success of the Government's Breaking the Unemployment Cycle. These initiatives are based on extensive research and consultation. In April this year, in response to growing industry concerns at the way the traineeship system was operating, I asked the Vocational Education, Training and Employment Commission to investigate the system of traineeships. This inquiry was carried out by leading vocational education consultant Kaye Schofield.

Many had been concerned for some time that the inappropriate activities of some participants would prejudice the system as a whole. Last year I ended the practice of giving publicly funded traineeships to existing workers at the expense of young people, the unemployed or those seeking to re-enter the work force. At the same time, the department commissioned an evaluation into "user choice", increased its audit activities and initiated a major internal review of the department's own administrative systems.

The focus on numbers had detracted from the true purpose of traineeships, which is to develop job-related skills for new entrants to the work force or people entering new jobs. There is no doubt that the system was heading for collapse if it was left unchecked. Ultimately we need traineeships to contribute to developing sustainable employment for Queenslanders and skilled staff for Queensland businesses.

Traineeships can offer real benefits for young people particularly, but Ms Schofield's report was in fact quite critical of some aspects of the current system. It is important, however, that while the report describes the issues confronting us, it also offers a way forward in overcoming them. The Queensland Government endorses the report's recommendations in principle, and accepts the challenge of developing and implementing the necessary strategies to improve this State's traineeship system. Government, training providers, advisory boards and employers need to work as partners towards the long-term objective of building effective business relationships and systems.

Everyone stands to benefit from an improved traineeship system, most importantly our young people. Queenslanders can only gain from the improved credibility of traineeships to be generated by the proposed reforms. New apprenticeship centres will gain easier access to information and will avoid duplication in data handling and administration. For industry training advisory bodies, the benefits will include an enhanced role in ensuring quality delivery of training for their industries. Employers will gain greater confidence in using traineeships as a means of skilling new entrants into the workforce and new employees into their firms. Most importantly, trainees will benefit from greater protection of their interests, and from enhanced credibility of traineeships as a viable and accepted way of entering a career.

This is essential because traineeships are exceptionally flexible and highly responsive to industry skilling needs. They are a key component in meeting changing and emerging industry needs, with new traineeships being developed and existing traineeships modified as industries evolve and change. Traineeships are only as good as the quality of the training delivered, and it is the effectiveness of that training delivery that we intend to improve. That is why our commitment to improving the traineeship system is so important. We want the system to create more jobs, and ultimately more sustainable jobs, for young Queenslanders.
