



Speech by

**Hon. P. BRADDY**

**MEMBER FOR KEDRON**

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Hansard 26 August 1999

### **MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

#### **Skills Week**

**Hon. P. J. BRADDY** (Kedron—ALP) (Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations) (9.43 a.m.), by leave: This week, at 85 events in 30 centres across Queensland, employers, job seekers and training stakeholders are promoting employment-related skills development as part of Skills Week. Skills development is something this Government takes very seriously, both because of its link with employment and because of its role in skilling Queensland for its future as the smart State. We have some work to do to fix the flawed training system which we inherited and to improve the quality of training, particularly through the traineeship system.

Following Cabinet's endorsement in principle of Kaye Schofield's report on the traineeship system, my department is currently developing and implementing strategies to make sure trainees, their employers, and the Queensland community can have faith in the training they receive. Skills Week is an initiative of the Department of Employment, Training and Industrial Relations and the Vocational Education, Training and Employment Commission. It is supported by the Australian National Training Authority and the Queensland Chamber of Commerce and Industry, along with many other organisations in the training industry and the corporate sector.

During Skills Week, employers, TAFE institutes, registered training organisations, educators, public sector agencies, training innovators and those undertaking training are joining together to focus on the challenge of creating a training system for the future. These events are part of the Government's approach to building a training system that better meets the needs of individuals, supports the requirements of employers and ultimately leads to the creation of sustainable jobs.

But it is important that we do not overlook the positive contribution that vocational education and training is already making right now to individuals, enterprises and industries across Queensland. Skills Week is a chance for us to look at and celebrate our successes, successes such as the increase in school-based apprenticeships and traineeships. Already this year—only in August—we have twice as many young people in this program than we had for the whole of last year.

The Government's Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative is also leading to more jobs and training for Queenslanders, with almost 5,000 additional apprentices and trainees taken on by private employers in industries with skills shortages since October. Apprenticeship approval numbers are now at all-time record levels. In addition, more than 2,450 trainees and 430 apprentices have been engaged by Government departments and agencies, local government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Community Councils. Nearly 4,000 people have been assisted with training on more than 150 Community Jobs Plan and Community Employment Assistance Program projects across Queensland.

Skills Week is more than a celebration and promotion of training and skills. While Skills Week recognises the value of training and acknowledges those who have worked to meet the training needs of business and industry, it also aims to place skills development onto the public agenda. Our activities this week will generate public discussion on real issues about training— issues such as fighting unemployment, the mature-aged work force, literacy, and options for women in business. On Monday, trainers and human resources practitioners heard about practical strategies to address literacy issues in the work force from speakers including Queensland Rail Chief Executive Officer, Vince O'Rourke.

Yesterday, local and international experts discussed the issues facing Queensland's labour force at a symposium organised by Treasury and the employment task force. Today the mature-aged

work force is the subject of a symposium, again featuring international experts as well as local speakers. This is an issue which is increasingly important as our population and our work force age. Skilling is vital for older workers—now defined as people over the age of 35—to maintain their employability in a competitive marketplace.

Skills development is also important for women, particularly if they are considering careers outside the roles which have traditionally been open to them. A Women in Trades and Business Showcase on Saturday is a joint Government and community event to highlight issues and opportunities for women in business and trade and to provide information about career and training options for women. Skills Week is also an opportunity to promote vocational education and training to young people and people contemplating career changes.

This week there was a huge range of training options displayed in King George Square during the Skills in the Square promotion. There have been activities right across the State, including open days and career expos at Queensland TAFE institutes that are promoting career and trade options. Vocational education and training expos are being held in regional centres, along with regional employer forums, designed to help local businesses understand the value of training within their organisations and the incentives available to them. I am pleased to report to the House that Skills Week is proving to be highly successful.

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