



Speech by

Hon. P. BRADDY

MEMBER FOR KEDRON

Hansard 24 November 1999

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Building and Construction Contracts— Structured Training Policy

Hon. P. J. BRADDY (Kedron—ALP) (Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations) (9.39 a.m.), by leave: On coming to office in June last year, the Beattie Government was committed to reinvigorating and enhancing the Building and Construction Contracts—Structured Training Policy, commonly known as the 10% training policy. After extensive consultation with unions, employer groups and contractors in the building and construction industry, we are now delivering on that promise.

The Government now will be strictly monitoring and enforcing building and construction contracts to ensure apprentices, trainees and cadets contribute 10% of labour hours on these contracts. The 10% training policy forms an integral part of the Government's strategy in Breaking the Unemployment Cycle and enhancing the skills base of this important industry. It will add to the increased numbers of apprentices and trainees already being supported by the Building and Construction Industry Training Fund created by this Government and sponsored by the industry. This fund alone is expected to help create up to 3,000 jobs over three years.

Through the revised 10% training policy, this Government is now demanding that contractors on relevant State Government building and construction projects invest in the future of the industry by hiring and training tradespeople. The most significant change to the policy has been its revision to take into account particular industry nuances and needs and methods to ensure compliance and enforcement. These changes show that the Government is serious about providing ways to help contractors meet the policy's terms.

In consultations with industry, it was revealed that many contractors on smaller building and construction projects could not comply with the 10% training policy's original terms. To address this concern, the threshold for contracts has increased from \$100,000 for all projects to \$250,000 for building projects, and to \$500,000 for construction projects. This will ensure that training is provided on projects that can sustain the employment of apprentices and trainees.

As a direct result, it is anticipated that up to 900 additional training opportunities for apprentices and trainees will be created over the next three years. These training and job opportunities will be for people entering the work force as well as for existing employees who will now be able to receive training to ensure their current skills are recognised.

The revised 10% training policy represents a major commitment from both the Government and industry to boost training and employment opportunities for building and construction workers. The new policy will ensure that contractors who invest in training are not disadvantaged by those who previously poached trained staff from them. Strict compliance mechanisms are now in existence to ensure every principal contractor on major State Government building and construction projects meets the 10% training requirement. This creates the level playing field that the industry has sought for some time.

Should the Department of Employment, Training and Industrial Relations find that a contractor has not met the training requirement, the contractor's level on the State Government's prequalification criteria will be put at risk. Our commitment to this policy demonstrates that this Government is serious about skills and training and it is serious about compliance. When apprentices and trainees become fully qualified, they will fill the skills and labour shortages left when tradespeople retire or move to other industries. Fully qualified workers will also enhance workplace efficiency, which will lower costs for construction firms and ultimately the community. No matter where building and construction projects are

located, contractors will employ apprentices and trainees, ensuring regional communities can access training and employment opportunities in their local areas. Young people will be able to get work in their own communities.

In a further move, the Jobs Policy Council has established a working group to coordinate State Government infrastructure programs on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. In summary, the Government and industry are united in our commitment to ensuring the 10% training policy works effectively for the building and construction industry. This will mean fewer skill shortages, a more productive and highly skilled industry, and more jobs for Queenslanders.
