



Speech by

Hon. D. WELLS

MEMBER FOR MURRUMBA

Hansard 1 March 2000

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Vocational Education and Training in Schools

Hon. D. M. WELLS (Murrumba—ALP) (Minister for Education) (10.18 a.m.), by leave: I table the new joint policy statement for vocational education and training in schools. The statement outlines flexible and cooperative arrangements developed between Education Queensland and the Department of Employment, Training and Industrial Relations for vocational education and training in schools.

The effect of the statement will be to remove the key barriers for young Queenslanders who want to engage in vocational education and training while still at school. This Government is committed to giving young Queenslanders the help they need to move through school into the workforce and into further education and training.

This initiative will increase the number of school students who gain vocational education and training qualifications. It will help students get a decent start in life by increasing the number of people who stay in school to complete their schooling. It will combat behaviour management problems in our schools by providing attractive study options to a wider range of students.

Queensland continues to be the leader across Australia in promoting vocational education and training in schools and in student achievement in this area. We have been successful because we have removed the barriers that still exist in other States. We have innovative industrial arrangements for school-based apprenticeships and traineeships. Schools in Queensland can be registered as training organisations to deliver vocational education and training.

The Department of Employment, Training and Industrial Relations has streamlined funding for off-the-job training arrangements for school-based apprenticeships and traineeships. Much of this progress can be attributed to the cooperative work between the department of my colleague the Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations, and employers and unions.

We have promoted and achieved a high level of community involvement in vocational education and training in schools. This initiative has the support of employers, parents and local business, and extremely positive input from a wide range of community organisations. This policy will keep Queensland at the forefront of vocational education and training in schools.

By streamlining the administration of Commonwealth funding Education Queensland has been able to put \$3.6m directly into State schools. Queensland State schools are already at the cutting edge of school to work transition, and this funding for specific programs—on top of \$5.4m in senior schooling grants already allocated—will further enhance our commitment to this area. Under this policy, Queensland students will be provided with opportunities to study VET programs within the post-compulsory curriculum in any of three pathways.

The first pathway means that students can undertake VET educational experiences developed from industry endorsed National Training Packages with a view to attaining Australian Qualifications Framework certificates at Levels I, II, III or above. This maximises the freedom available to schools to be relevant to the needs of students, industry and the local community.

The second pathway means that students can, by taking up school-based apprenticeships and traineeships, get an opportunity to complete or partially complete a nationally recognised VET qualification while at the same time completing studies towards the Senior Certificate and engaging in paid and meaningful work.

The third pathway is for students undertaking board developed subjects with embedded VET. These include both board subjects and Study Area Specifications. From 2000, the majority of VET components will be aligned with National Training Packages. This will allow students to gain AQF qualifications. These three pathways will provide variety, depth and breadth of coverage for the diverse interests, goals and abilities of all Queensland students. They will give students in all parts of the State access to employment opportunities and further education.

The value to Queensland and the value to students of these reforms is clear. They will encourage more young people to remain in education and training while qualifying them for work and tertiary study. Students will not only develop employment skills that are attractive to employers; they will also find that successful transition from school to work is much easier. The vocational skills that they acquire in school will help build their confidence and will be crucial to their success in the labour market, their participation in the broader community and their capacity for lifelong learning. Queensland schools will now be more able to meet the challenge of creating an education and training system that focuses on quality, innovation and equipping young Queenslanders to support internationally competitive businesses and industries.
