



Speech by

**Mr N. ROBERTS**

**MEMBER FOR NUDGE**

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### **YOUTH INITIATIVES**

**Mr NEIL ROBERTS** (Nudgee—ALP) (11.41 a.m.): Not all young people in high school are going to easily make the transition from school to work or from school to further education and training. A number of our secondary school students require assistance with this transition. The Beattie government has developed a comprehensive strategy—including a program that aims to keep students, who are at risk of leaving school early, in school, and employment and training programs for those who have left school early, to prevent them joining the queues of the long-term unemployed.

Research has shown that those who leave school early have the greatest difficulty in securing employment and are more likely to become long-term unemployed. Due to previous negative experiences with education, they are also unlikely to access further education and training.

The ABS Transition From Education to Work Survey showed that persons under the age of 22 in the year 2000 who did not complete the highest level of schooling had an unemployment rate of 21.4 per cent compared with 7.7 per cent for those who had completed their schooling. The same survey also reveals that persons who did not complete the highest level of schooling made up only 28.2 per cent of the labour force but 50.1 per cent of the long-term unemployed.

As has been said many times before in this place, our youth are our future. At the recent state election the Beattie government promised \$7 million over three years for the Youth Access Program. This program will provide 1,750 students with crucial work readiness skills. This program targets secondary school students who are at risk of leaving school early. These students may have difficulty in securing employment or an apprenticeship or traineeship because of inadequate learning skills and lack of employment opportunities for early school leavers. The program also provides prevocational training or work readiness skills and leads into a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship for successful students.

We need practical solutions to helping young people in the transition from school to further education and training and sustainable employment. The Beattie government has already been successful, with almost 54 per cent of Queensland's year 11 and 12 students in 2000 enrolled in a vocational education and training in schools program. Ninety-five per cent of Queensland's secondary schools now provide vocational education and training opportunities for their students. Last year Queensland continued to lead the nation, with 55 per cent of the total number of students commencing school-based apprenticeships and traineeships.

An evaluation of the program undertaken last year confirms the positive influence this program has on students remaining at school. The 2001-02 budget saw a further commitment to this highly successful program, providing for 10,500 commencements over the next three years at a cost of \$5 million. From 1 January this year to mid-July, over 1,800 students have commenced a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship in Queensland, and this puts us well on track to meet our target of 10,500 by the year 2003-04.

In subsequent years the Youth Access Program and the school-based apprenticeship and traineeship program will have reduced the number of early school leavers, but in the meantime we need to provide assistance to those who have already left school and are having difficulties finding employment. That is why in the last election we promised two new labour market programs for youth: the Get Set for Work Program and the Youth for the Environment and Local Communities Program.

The Get Set for Work Program aims to assist 500 unemployed early school leavers. Participants will receive intensive employment and training assistance and will be assisted in their search for a job with a \$4,000 wage subsidy. The Youth for the Environment and Local Communities Program will create 600 additional traineeships for 15 to 24 year olds. Through this program they can gain nationally accredited qualifications through work in their local communities in areas of environmental protection, horticulture and waste management.

The Beattie government is committed to providing the best possible opportunities for our youth in their transition from school to further employment and training or to finding employment.

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