



Speech by

Mr N. ROBERTS

MEMBER FOR NUDGE

Hansard 1 November 2001

RED CROSS TRAINING AWARDS

Mr NEIL ROBERTS (Nudgee—ALP) (7.16 p.m.): I recently had the pleasure of attending a very special ceremony that recognised the achievements of a remarkable group of Queenslanders. It was a graduation ceremony for 39 people with a disability, all of whom graduated from a 22-week Work Access Skills and Job Preparation certificate program run by the Red Cross Training Centre in Fortitude Valley. The graduates of this program have joined a growing number of Queenslanders living with a disability who are undertaking vocational education and training. I was very impressed and moved by the warmth of this occasion, the enthusiasm of the graduates and the caring environment provided by the staff of the centre and the family and friends of the graduates.

The Red Cross Training Centre obviously focuses a lot of attention on providing personalised attention to the participants in its training courses, many of whom have high support needs. I believe that these graduates, who have all received an accredited certificate, give hope and inspiration to other people living with a disability. The centre encourages them to undertake supportive and responsive training that equips them with the basic skills needed to enter the work force. People with a disability currently account for around 10,000 enrolments in vocational education and training programs in Queensland, approximately 3.5 per cent of all enrolments. The state's vocational educational and training strategies are paying particular attention to the needs of students with a disability. The government is committed to continue to develop policy initiatives, undertake research and implement programs that meet their needs. For instance, our state's disability support service lends students adaptive equipment and offers support services such as interpreters and note-takers.

The Beattie government's commitment to assisting people with a disability is further evidenced by the new Disability Advisory Committee which has been established to advise the Training and Employment Board on issues relating to training people with a disability. One of the board's key roles is to advise the Minister for Employment, Training and Youth on the strategic direction of vocational education and training throughout the state. The Disability Advisory Committee will play a pivotal role in ensuring equality in training for people with a disability. I was pleased to join Mr Dan Kearns, the Manager of the Red Cross Training Centre, to celebrate the achievements of the graduates at these awards. Dan has recently been appointed as the chair of the Disability Advisory Committee and brings with him a wealth of experience and knowledge of the needs of trainees in this sector.

Once again, I congratulate all of the graduates who received certificates at the Red Cross Training Awards. I had the pleasure of meeting with a number of parents and staff at the centre during my visit and was most impressed with the dedication and caring attitude displayed by all concerned. Parents and carers were also obviously appreciative of the efforts being focused on their sons and daughters as they acquired valuable and necessary life and work skills through the programs offered. Thank you to Red Cross Training Centre for its ongoing dedication to customised and adaptable training packages for people with a disability. Together with the government we are building our state's skilled work force and breaking down the barriers that prevent many talented Queenslanders with a disability from reaching their full potential.
