



Speech by

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MEMBER FOR CUNNINGHAM

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WORLD SKILLS INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION

Mr COPELAND (Cunningham—NPA) (11.13 p.m.): This morning I listened with great interest to the ministerial statement of the Minister for Employment, Training and Youth. The minister very enthusiastically pronounced Queensland's magnificent achievements at the World Skills International Competition in Korea last month. As the minister mentioned, one of the competitors was Stephanie Bug, who I am very happy to say is a constituent in my electorate of Cunningham and who works for her father's refrigeration company in Toowoomba. We are all very proud of Stephanie's efforts in representing the Darling Downs and Queensland and winning two gold medals, including best female tradesperson. I congratulate Stephanie on her wonderful achievements.

In the minister's statement he went on to proclaim how his government had long been committed to the goal of producing world-class tradespeople. It is a great pity, then, that the minister and his government were not prepared to show some of this commitment when our Queensland representatives required financial assistance to cover travel and accommodation costs to attend the Korean World Skills final. The state government refused to provide vital funds to match industry support of \$38,000 to help the competitors make it to the international event. The South Australian government could manage to find \$12,000 for each of that state's competitors to assist with travel and accommodation in Korea. When the World Skills competition was in Montreal, the Victorian government came up with \$75,000 for its competitors to assist with travel and accommodation. I find it a very sad indictment on our state government that it refused to find funding to help our champions travel to Seoul and compete when other states willingly came to the party for their representatives.

Equally poor is the state government's distinct lack of commitment towards assisting the coordination of World Skills within our state. The New South Wales government obviously has a greater commitment than our state government towards creating a Smart State, because it has set up the specific position of TAFE New South Wales World Skills Coordinator. This position is vital in that it takes the considerable financial and physical burden of state-wide coordination away from overworked volunteers. The Queensland state government is not willing to establish such a position, and sadly volunteers must coordinate and develop World Skills in Queensland entirely off their own backs. However, the minister is quite correct in stating that TAFE means jobs, and these World Skills results are a wonderful advertisement for undertaking a TAFE course in Queensland.

I have been informed that Queensland has the opportunity to sponsor the 2004 national World Skills finals in Queensland. I strongly encourage the minister and the state government to properly show their commitment to producing and displaying the skills of our world-class tradespeople and do everything in their power to secure this event in our state. I also urge the minister to establish a TAFE Queensland World Skills Coordinator. Volunteers are currently lumped with all of the organisation and coordination in Queensland. As we have witnessed, the state government simply sits back, does nothing and takes the credit. It is time the minister and his state government became fair dinkum about providing tangible support and commitment towards developing our Smart State rather than continually jumping in to steal the credit for achievements in which they have played a very limited role.
