



Speech by

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MEMBER FOR SURFERS PARADISE

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VOCATIONAL EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT AMENDMENT BILL 2004

Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—Lib) (3.35 pm): I am pleased to rise to speak briefly in the debate on the Vocational Education, Training and Employment Amendment Bill, to support any initiative that will help provide options for students in high schools and to endorse the remarks of my colleague the member for Currumbin. As the member for Hinchinbrook outlined in his speech, vocational education programs are an opportunity for students to undertake real world placements. This is of great importance in modern Australia.

Last week I had the pleasure of attending a careers showcase at Benowa State High School in my electorate. I echo the sentiments of the member for Broadwater. In my case the names are different. The principal there is Mark Rickard and the coordinator is Mrs Camille Carroll. I know that a lot of staff at Benowa are also engaged in finding pathways for students who sometimes are not going to follow the traditional pathways. Similarly, I echo the member's sentiments about the Gold Coast TAFE. It is a valuable pathway for these students.

Over the time since I graduated from university, and having lived in the United Kingdom and spent time in Europe, where migration concerns have partly arisen from the fact that only migrants seem to do certain jobs, I have had a nagging concern from time to time that our Australian focus on university degrees may lead to a great skill shortage in certain essential areas and even create some examples of job snobbery.

I am confident that the ebb and flow of the market will see the skill shortage taken up by school leavers, but as policy makers we need to make decisions in here that facilitate that as much as possible. I understand that there are things being done by the state government and I know of the good work the federal government is doing to help with this process. I can assure the minister that if ever there are initiatives brought into this place to open up the options for school leavers and plug the gaps in skill areas the Liberal Party will be very keen to support them.

I am also very happy with the current campaign to promote apprenticeships. I point out that if in any way school leavers think that they need a university degree to make good money or own their own business they are mistaken. I have a poster in my electorate office that I received after I attended the HIA awards at the end of last year. I am not sure whether it came from this minister's department or from the Minister for Public Works, Housing and Racing's department. It aptly points out how well people can do by taking an alternative path to the traditional university path.

I can tell members from my experience, especially on the Gold Coast, that the number of very success businesspeople I know who have made their way from a young age through apprenticeships is astounding. There are many fine examples of successful people who have made their way through a non-university educational path.

I commend the Labor Party on taking a leaf out of the Liberal Party's book and starting to merge inefficient aspects of bureaucracy. In this instance there are two bodies performing similar functions, and

this bill seeks to merge the two such that there is less inefficiency and no two bodies are doing the same task. If the government would like advice on any other of a range of Liberal Party philosophies that it wishes to implement, I would be more than happy to assist it. All in all, this is a good bill and I commend it to the House.