



Speech by
Ian Rickuss

MEMBER FOR LOCKYER

Hansard Wednesday, 7 February 2007

**VOCATIONAL EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT AND
OTHER ACTS AMENDMENT BILL**

Mr RICKUSS (Lockyer—NPA) (4.57pm): I rise to speak to the Vocational Education, Training and Employment and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2006. I have read the Queensland Skills Plan and I support the shadow minister's contribution given earlier in the day where he went through the details of this bill. The workforce has changed over the years. Once upon a time young people went out as 15-year-olds and did their apprenticeship. I have two older brothers who are tradies. Virtually all tradesmen started their apprenticeship at 15. The world has moved on since then. I have a 26-year-old son who is doing a trade at the moment.

Competency based training is an important part of the program. I encourage all employers to keep training their employees. It does not matter how old they are. There are always good training courses that should be undertaken to improve the skill levels of employees. What we have to do is encourage a continual upgrading of skills.

I was quite amused to hear the member for Bundamba talk about the skills shortage. If the government wants to take some of the credit for the Howard government improving the unemployment rate in Queensland, surely it has to take some of the credit for the lack of skills training here as well. I cannot believe that the government is not training people and that the training has not been updated at all. That is a problem.

Quality assurance of the training programs is important. That is something we have to do—that is, make sure the training programs are kept up to speed. I am sure most of the people doing the training realise that they need to be trained appropriately too. They do not want to be trained substandardly, and nor do the trainers want to train people substandardly. So I am sure this will be a much improved system.

I have been starting to receive a few complaints in my electorate from people who cannot get the TAFE training for their apprentices. There are delays. They have been calling to say that they are 12 months behind with their TAFE training. That is a concern, and I hope this bill will improve that standard of training so some of that is sped up.

Mr Copeland interjected.

Mr RICKUSS: That is right. Early completion is really dragging them down. Like I said, I have a 26-year-old doing a trade and he is frustrated by the fact that he is virtually equivalent to a second year yet he has done two weeks of TAFE; that is about all he has done. It is very frustrating for them. That really will discourage people from going into the trades, because they do want to finish early. All I can do is encourage the minister to make sure he gets some of this legislation in place to improve some of the TAFE places so there are enough places there to put the appropriate training in place. With that, I support the bill.