



Speech by

Hon. Rod Welford

MEMBER FOR EVERTON

Hansard Wednesday, 10 October 2007

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Skilling Solutions Queensland, Mobile Service

Hon. RJ WELFORD (Everton—ALP) (Minister for Education and Training and Minister for the Arts) (10.13 am): Giving Queenslanders the skills and qualifications they need to meet the skills shortages of our state is a key priority of our government.

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, there is far too much audible conversation in the House this morning. Can I ask you to please tone it down a bit. I call the minister for education.

Mr Lingard interjected.

Mr WELFORD: You wouldn't, would you?

Mr Lingard: We wouldn't.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members! I call the Minister for Education and Training.

Mr WELFORD: Bonjour, Monsieur! Members may have heard of the \$1 billion Queensland Skills Plan—

A government member: Even in France!

Mr WELFORD: Yes, and all the way from here to France they have been singing the success of this amazing plan to give us an opportunity to address the skills shortage in Queensland. An important component of the plan is Skilling Solutions Queensland. It is an innovative service that provides tailored information about training and career opportunities for Queenslanders. We now have 16 of these customer service centres around the state providing job seekers with information about starting a new career, training or receiving recognition of skills. Between March 2005 and June this year, customer service advisers at these centres responded to nearly 24,000 inquiries, nearly 19,000 of which were face-to-face interviews. During the same period they referred more than 6,400 people to training organisations for recognition of their prior learning and gap training towards formal qualifications. Nearly 1,400 Queenslanders have gained a qualification thanks to Skilling Solutions Queensland.

This year's state budget allocated \$13.4 million to the centres to ensure that the service continues to help Queenslanders to find jobs and help industry and business to find skilled workers, and now we are expanding the service to rural communities in the south-west of the state. Later today I will be pleased to launch our first mobile Skilling Solutions Queensland customer service centre. Based in Toowoomba, this van will travel to communities on the Darling Downs and other parts of the west and south-west. It will provide exactly the same service as the existing customer service centres at fixed locations throughout the state. The difference for the van is that we are taking the service out to communities where it is needed and where it can be easily accessed by people who otherwise would not have the opportunity to use the service. The van is fitted out with the latest computer and wireless internet technology and staffed with trained consultants. If this pilot project is successful, members may see other vans on the road throughout

the state in due course. The van will be in the front of Parliament House if members would like to check it out at 1 pm today, and I encourage all members of the House to take a look at this impressive vehicle that will travel throughout the west of the state to help people get the jobs they need.