



Speech by

## Hon. Robert Swarten

MEMBER FOR ROCKHAMPTON

Hansard Thursday, 21 May 2009

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### MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

#### QBuild, Apprentices and Trainees

**Hon. RE SCHWARTEN** (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Public Works and Information and Communication Technology) (11.05 am): At a time when the world economy is in crisis it is even more crucial that governments train people, especially in the building industry. The future of this industry lies in its ability to attract and train capable young men and women, and the mighty QBuild is playing its part.

I am delighted to inform the House that QBuild has created 1,239 new apprentice positions in the past decade. As at 1 May this year, QBuild is training 343 apprentices and trainees to take their place in the industry. As far as I know we are the only government anywhere that has that number of building apprentices.

Competition for positions in the 2009 QBuild intake was fierce with more than 3,200 applications received for the 100 apprenticeships on offer. It is a myth to suggest that young people are not interested in construction apprenticeships. Interviews were held across the state, and 70 per cent of these positions were filled in regional Queensland. Twenty Aboriginal apprentices or trainees took up positions and four female apprentices joined our growing ranks of female tradespeople. This year's intake includes 15 school based apprentices who will continue full-time once they finish year 12.

QBuild's apprenticeship program is helping us achieve our Toward Q2 target of a smarter Queensland, ensuring three out of four Queenslanders hold trade, training or tertiary qualifications by 2020. QBuild's role in the construction industry cannot be underestimated. From February, and as a result of the Nation Building—Economic Stimulus Plan, QBuild commenced managing a \$40 million repairs and maintenance program under the plan's social housing initiatives. This coming financial year QBuild will manage a further \$40 million repair and maintenance program.

QBuild recently played a key role ensuring security upgrades at Queensland Health staff accommodation and they were delivered in record time. In just three weeks QBuild completed these security upgrades at 56 sites across the state from the south-west corner to the outer islands of Torres Strait. QBuild also conducts a housing improvement program delivering planned and responsive maintenance works to more than 4,000 dwellings throughout 34 Indigenous communities. This is a snapshot of great work done by QBuild. This is the QBuild that those opposite would privatise as part of their new slash and burn response to the global financial crisis.