



Speech by

Ian Rickuss

MEMBER FOR LOCKYER

Hansard Thursday, 21 June 2012

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (COMMONWEALTH POWERS) BILL

Mr RICKUSS (Lockyer—LNP) (5.19 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution to the debate on the Vocational Education and Training (Commonwealth Powers) Bill 2012. I am sure the minister will do a grand job implementing some of these improved requirements in relation to the vocational education and training of young people in Queensland. There really have been some difficulties with the vocational training system in Queensland. It is always a moveable feast. As this is a House of debate I was quite interested to listen to the member for Bundamba—the little banshee from Bundamba—who was carrying on about the TAFE in Bremer simply because it is possibly moving. She was the one who was so critical of Springfield. I heard the member being very complimentary this time—

Mrs Miller: Weren't you out there last week with your minister?

Mr RICKUSS: Yes, but is it not the soulless place? If you go back to the *Hansard* of two years ago you will find those comments being made.

Mrs Miller interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Miss Barton): Order! The member for Bundamba! I ask and remind all members that comments please be directed through the chair.

Mr RICKUSS: As the little banshee stated—

Mrs MILLER: I rise to a point of order.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Lockyer, that is unparliamentary language and I ask you to withdraw.

Mr RICKUSS: I do withdraw, but the meaning of 'banshee' is—

Mrs MILLER: I rise to a point of order.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Lockyer! What is your point of order?

Mrs MILLER: I rise to a point of order. I find the words of the member for Lockyer personally offensive—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: They have been withdrawn.

Mrs MILLER:—and I ask them to be withdrawn and that he be reminded that they are unparliamentary.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: They have been withdrawn.

An opposition member: No, they haven't.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: He withdrew—

Mr RICKUSS: I withdraw.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: He withdrew. I asked him to withdraw because they were unparliamentary. He withdrew.

Mr RICKUSS: I will withdraw. For the information of the House, a woman of the fairy mounds is what 'banshee' means. I think that suits.

Mr WELLINGTON: I rise to a point of order. My understanding is that it needs to be an unconditional withdrawal.

Mr RICKUSS: That is an unconditional withdrawal. The member for Bundamba was critical of me and the members for Ipswich and Ipswich West, but it is she who needs to realise that education is a moveable feast. It continually needs revision, updating and upgrading. I have a classic example of that. I was talking to a young diesel mechanic only a couple of years ago. He was doing diesel fitting training at one of the colleges and they were still using old mechanical governors on diesel motors. Diesel motors have not had mechanical governors for probably 15 years; it is all computerised. As the young fellow said, it was great for his father's 1964 tractor; he would then be able to work on it. But if he were to work on any modern trucks, that would not assist him at all. It is a moveable feast, and that is what vocational education is about: making sure that it moves forward and continues to progress. Skills training needs to keep going.

I have an interesting letter from which I will read a little bit. I wish to table it for the minister.

Tabled paper: Email, dated 21 June 2012, from Mr Garth Graham from the netting company to the Lockyer electorate office in relation to BSA licence issue [388].

The letter was received today and it is through sheer good fortune that this bill happens to be before the House at this moment. It states—

Ian,

... we are a very small industrial textile manufacturing business in Yamanto—

and I have actually been to this gentleman's business. He manufactures netting, mesh and all that sort of thing. He is one of the premier net makers and mesh shadecloth makers in Queensland and he has done work all over Australia. He goes on—

... we now have to obtain a 'builder's licence for special structures'—

to operate in Queensland. He goes on—

We have no problem with that issue however to obtain that licence we must have a qualification that is recognised by the BSA.

We are an original Qld based family business and we learnt our textile fabrication skills from our father in the late 60's and early 70's and no formal training was ever entered into as it was unavailable ... The Recognition of Prior Learning system will normally be able to provide testing for the required Australian standard certificate III, textile fabrication ... that must be obtained prior to applying for a licence. However Qld does not have an RTO offering such testing, or even offer the training, from either the TAFE system or the RTO providers.

This means we have to travel to another state to receive testing, from an approved textile RPL provider, and then return and apply to the Qld BSA for the special licence.

This is the sort of thing that this bill will assist. I am sure that when the minister realises that this situation needs to be looked at he will endeavour to ensure it is improved.

It really is important that we continue to train and upgrade people's experience with VET training. It is extremely important. The Gatton Vocational Education Centre at the Gatton campus of the University of Queensland offers some VET training in animal care, agriculture, horticulture and land management training.

Mr Trout: Great college!

Mr RICKUSS: It is a great college. There is also the Australian Agricultural College Corporation, and I must endeavour to make a submission to the Skills and Training Taskforce that the minister set up simply because these two vocational educational centres are both based on the Gatton campus and they are both struggling with the same types of issues. I do not know whether there is quite enough focus on one or the other or whether they should be amalgamated. It really is a difficult situation.

As the campus at Gatton continues to evolve, the high schools are sending more students out to these types of vocational education centres. We want this recognition carried right around the country, because the work tasks that Australians engage in are national. We are a very mobile population. People want to have their qualifications recognised in the Northern Territory, South Australia, Western Australia or wherever they go. It is important that this type of upgrading and improving of skills continues.

The Gatton campus is one of those great campuses. It is actually the oldest tertiary institution in Queensland. It started over 100 years ago. It continues to provide vocational education, particularly in animal and agricultural vocations. However, there are other vocations that would fit in well, too. The Gatton Vocational Education Training Centre is fitting in extremely well with the high schools in my area. The high schools are upgrading their facilities—they are building trade training centres—and, showing great cooperation, all the schools have got together on this issue. I think Lockyer has a mechanical school and

the Faith college is offering more of the building and carpentry type skills. So they are all starting to work together and fit in.

In times gone by young people left school at 15 and went and worked for a tradie while they did their apprenticeship. Now, tradesmen require people to have more skills than that. They want people coming out who actually know what a Phillips head screwdriver or a chisel is. That is just a fact of life. My brother was a major employer in the electrical industry. He would not employ anyone unless they were 17 and had a licence so that they could get to jobs and get to work.

A government member interjected.

Mr RICKUSS: They do. That is how it has evolved over time. The vocational education system continues to evolve. It is great to see that members on our side of the House can see that we are evolving. As I said before, it is a bit of a shame that members such as the member for Bundamba are still stuck in the past and cannot move forward. They are worried about the name of the Bundamba TAFE college. The member's biggest concern is the name of the Bundamba TAFE College. She is not worried about whether it is delivering appropriate courses or whether it is getting—

Mrs MILLER: I rise to a point of order. The member does not even know. He made a reflection on me about the name of the TAFE college. He called it 'Bundamba'. It is actually called 'Bremer'. He does not even know what it is called.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: That is not a point of order.

Mr RICKUSS: I thank the member for Bundamba for pointing out my error. I mean the Bremer TAFE college. There you go, as I just said, she is still worried about its name. She is not worried about what courses it delivers or the appropriateness of the courses being offered at the Bremer TAFE; she is worried about its name. She is worried about it talking to the Toowoomba TAFE and the Gold Coast TAFE. Why? Because it might change its name. Holly heaven! Considering we have members on this side with skills such as those of the member for Ipswich West who, as was highlighted previously by other members, spent 20 years involved in the TAFE system, of course we will look after TAFE. That is why we are here: to look after TAFE. We are here to look after things such as the Bremer TAFE, which was let down for years by the incompetency of members of other governments. We are here to help out TAFE. We are not here to gut TAFE. We are here to make it better and improve it. That is what it is all about. Let us see TAFE continue to improve and evolve. We are not living in the past. We are not living in a time when we used to get 15,000 votes and we only get 10,000 now. We are living today.