




Speech by  
**Reg Gulley**

**MEMBER FOR MURRUMBA**

Hansard Thursday, 21 June 2012

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## **VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (COMMONWEALTH POWERS) BILL**

 **Mr GULLEY** (Murrumba—LNP) (4.17 pm): I rise today to speak in support of the Vocational Education and Training (Commonwealth Powers) Bill 2012. I remind the House that the bill was introduced by Minister John-Paul Langbroek on 29 May 2012 and that this bill was reviewed by the Education and Innovation Committee chaired by the very capable Rosemary Menkens MP who reported on the bill on 8 June 2012. As the minister mentioned in his introductory speech, the bill was previously introduced to the House during December 2011. The then parliamentary industry, education, training and industrial relations committee issued a report on 23 December, and I note the committee's commitment to keep the ball rolling. Due to parliamentary process, that bill lapsed when the writs were issued for the March election.

Why are we here? Why has the bill arisen? When did this educational journey start? To answer those questions we would need to go back to December 2009 when the Council of Australian Governments, or COAG, agreed to establish the national, and therefore consistent, regulation of the vocational education and training—VET—sector across all state and Commonwealth governments in order to strengthen quality assurance within the VET sector. Under this agreement, the Commonwealth will lead the national regulation. The Vocational Education and Training (Commonwealth Powers) Bill establishes the Australian Skills Quality Authority, or ASQA, to be the single national vocational education and training regulator. The existing Queensland regulatory body, the Training and Employment Recognition Council, or TERC, will transfer its functions to the Commonwealth body effective 30 June this year.

As a proud Queenslanders I find inside myself some reluctance to see regulatory power handed to Canberra, but that reluctance is overtaken by my desire to see waste and red tape cut and Queensland based VET organisations allowed to operate nationally without further regulatory hurdles. As part of my research for this speech I researched the fields of study that are covered by vocational education and training—areas such as, but not exhaustive of, aged and child care, agriculture and horticulture, business, construction, creative arts, entertainment, engineering, furnishing, hospitality, information technology, laboratory operations, manufacturing, sport, recreation and tourism. I note that many of those were part of the four pillars of our economy. Providers of VET are varied and include public, industry and private providers. Providers of VET include public organisations such as schools, TAFE colleges, universities and other organisations. I note that my last employer, which was an independent school, offered VET education as part of the program that we offered to years 11 and 12 students. Vocational education and training is also offered through private and public networks through the eight state and territory jurisdictions and the Commonwealth jurisdiction providing a nationally consistent training platform across Australia. The VET sector is crucial to the Australian economy for the development of the national workforce.

In my own electorate I have several quality not-for-profit organisations that provide vocational education and training. Since being elected I have had the pleasure of attending several of those VET graduation ceremonies. I congratulate the Murrijabree Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Association, which provides VET through its Mindle Goolghun Wunbee program, which is a Bundjalung word from Northern New South Wales that means 'clever tracks to learning'. I also congratulate the Deception Bay Neighbourhood Centre, which provides VET programs to the Deception Bay community. These local

Murrumba vocational education programs not only provide workplace skills for participants but also, importantly, give the participants the personal social confidence that is required to tackle the workforce. I take this opportunity to congratulate those local Murrumba organisations on that success.

I note that we are already past the middle of June and that this bill needs to take effect on 30 June this year. I support this legislation. During the campaign the party that I am here representing campaigned that it would cut red tape. This decision to unify the registration and supervision of vocational education and training under a national scheme cuts red tape for training organisations that operate across state jurisdictions. Clearly, the good people of Queensland and Murrumba are better off with the can-do government of Campbell Newman. I note this bill has bipartisan support, which I must admit took away much of the opportunity to compare and contrast our record as an LNP government with the ALP government that had a lust for waste and red tape. I support the minister, the Hon. John Paul Langbroek, in his efforts to get Queensland back on track. I commend the bill to the House.