




Speech By
Hon. John-Paul Langbroek
MEMBER FOR SURFERS PARADISE

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT (SKILLS QUEENSLAND) AND ANOTHER ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction

 **Hon. JH LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Minister for Education, Training and Employment) (12.45 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Vocational Education, Training and Employment Act 2000 for particular purposes, and to make consequential amendments of the Industrial Relations Act 1999 and other acts as stated in schedule 1 for purposes related to those particular purposes, and to amend the TAFE Queensland Act 2013 for particular purposes. I table the bill and explanatory notes. I nominate the Education and Innovation Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Vocational Education, Training and Employment (Skills Queensland) and Another Act Amendment Bill 2013 [\[3153\]](#).

Tabled paper: Vocational Education, Training and Employment (Skills Queensland) and Another Act Amendment Bill 2013, explanatory notes [\[3154\]](#).

The Newman government is committed to reforming and modernising the vocational education and training—the VET—sector in Queensland, and ensuring Queenslanders can access first class training that leads to real employment outcomes. Within months of coming into power, this government commissioned an industry led review of Queensland’s VET sector. This was led by the Skills and Training Taskforce. The Skills and Training Taskforce Final Report outlined a range of recommendations to revitalise the provision of VET and the management of apprenticeships and traineeships.

The government has already implemented some of the key recommendations from the task force by reforming TAFE Queensland, and refocusing our investment on training for job outcomes. The government has also released Great Skills, Real Opportunities, a five-year plan to revitalise Queensland’s VET sector. So far under this action plan the government has introduced the Certificate 3 Guarantee, which means that every Queenslanders is able to access their first subsidised certificate III level qualification in priority courses. The government is also opening up the training market to full contestability. Under the Certificate 3 Guarantee, selected registered training organisations, RTOs, will compete for an additional \$42 million in contestable funding this financial year. From 1 July 2014, all government subsidised training will be delivered contestably, giving students an even greater choice of training provider.

Another key action under Great Skills, Real Opportunities is to encourage government, industry and employers to partner effectively to meet the challenge of matching training to employment opportunities. The Skills and Training Taskforce found that Skills Queensland, established in 2010, had not been effective in addressing the fundamental strategic skills needs of industry. In this regard, the government is establishing an industry advisory body, the Ministerial Industry Commission. This body will be responsible for advising me on the state’s skilling priorities and industry needs, and priorities for funding qualifications that will align training with job opportunities. The commission will enable a direct relationship between government, industry and employers that will give industry and

employers genuine opportunity to input into how public training investment is made. Membership of the commission will include representatives from industry sectors and employer bodies with expertise in labour market economics and contemporary human resource management. The commission will consult with industry and employers to identify the state's skilling and funding priorities. This will directly influence the relative priority of every government subsidised qualification in Queensland.

The commission will also oversee the effectiveness of the contestable training market which delivers the skills needed by the economy; streamline existing industry consultation arrangements; give small, medium and large industry a voice on local, regional and state skilling requirements; and work with industry and employers to stimulate demand for accredited training. The commission will be an advisory body that will more effectively engage with industry and employers to ensure finite public funds are directed towards priority training. The commission will not be established in legislation.

To avoid wasteful duplication, legislative amendments through this bill will abolish Skills Queensland and give the Director-General of the Department of Education, Training and Employment responsibility for the functions regarding apprentices and trainees, vocational placements, group training organisations and principal employer organisations. Under current arrangements, Skills Queensland delegates most of its day-to-day regulatory functions to regional departmental officers. It is anticipated that once the bill is passed those functions will be delegated to regional departmental staff. As such, there will be no discernible change in the nature or type of service provided to industry employers and employees as a result of the abolition of Skills Queensland. Importantly, Skills Queensland staff will return to the department and will effectively contribute to the important reforms of the training system, including as secretariat support to the Ministerial Industry Commission.

The implementation of the bill will not result in any additional cost to government. It is anticipated that, with the establishment of the Ministerial Industry Commission and the abolition of Skills Queensland with certain functions being returned to the department, there will be a saving of approximately \$1 million per annum. This government is committed to genuine sustainable reform for Queensland's VET sector. The abolition of Skills Queensland and the establishment of the Ministerial Industry Commission support effective partnering between the government, industry and employers to meet the challenge of aligning training and funding to job opportunities.

The bill also amends the TAFE Queensland Act 2013 to enable TAFE staff to continue to be employed on a temporary basis. TAFE Queensland was established under the TAFE Queensland Act 2013, which commenced on 1 July 2013. TAFE Queensland will be the public provider of vocational education and training in Queensland. By mid-2014, TAFE Queensland will take over the existing network of TAFE institutes currently run by my department. It is essential for its effective operation that TAFE Queensland has capacity to continue to employ staff under temporary employment arrangements. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading

Hon. JH LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Minister for Education, Training and Employment) (12.52 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

Question put—That the bill be now read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Referral to the Education and Innovation Committee

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Robinson): Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Education and Innovation Committee.