




Speech By
Hon. John-Paul Langbroek

MEMBER FOR SURFERS PARADISE

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Apprenticeships and Traineeships

 **Hon. JH LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Minister for Education, Training and Employment) (9.53 am): Last Friday the Rudd government released their pre-election economic statement. In that statement Labor cut \$242 million from funding for apprenticeships and traineeships. Specifically, the cuts are to incentives given to employers for the successful completion of an apprenticeship. Last week Kevin Rudd had a thought bubble and announced to the world that he wanted to take over TAFEs. By the end of the week he was cutting a quarter of a billion dollars out of training. No wonder every talented frontbencher in the federal Labor Party resigned in disgust at his revival as Labor leader.

But members should not take my word for it; they should listen to some of the people in the industry. Martin Riordan, the chief executive of TAFE Directors Australia, slammed the government, saying—

Reductions in employer incentives made—

by the Gillard government—

in July 2012 was the main reason for the dramatic drop in apprenticeship numbers in the past year. There is no doubt this decision will have a similar effect.

Contrast that with the Newman government, which has committed \$86 million to 10,000 new apprentices and in our Great Skills, Real Opportunities VET five-year action plan—a commitment to cut red tape to make it easier for employers to put on apprentices.

So this is the economic strategy of our fearless leader, Kevin Rudd. We live in a country where the central bank has had to slash interest rates to emergency lows and where unemployment is rising. Yet we still face a productivity lag because of skills shortages. And what is Kevin Rudd's answer? It is to cut money out of training, one of the few mechanisms a government has to fill skills shortages to boost productivity and increase participation in the workforce.

Here is a bloke who likes to call himself the education Prime Minister, and what is his record? He is cutting \$1.15 billion out of kindies. This will mean that fees for Queensland families will rise. He is cutting \$3.8 billion out of universities. This means fewer Australians will go to university and fewer will want to go back to undertake postgraduate study. And now he is doing his level best to gut apprenticeship numbers by stripping a quarter of a billion dollars from training.

At this point I have to say to the Queensland Teachers Union: where are you? Why are you not standing up for education? Why are you not out there condemning these cuts to kindies and training? To the Australian Education Union member running in the seat of Brisbane, Fiona McNamara: how

can you sleep at night after selling out your education scruples, supporting Kevin Rudd while he guts kindies, slashes apprenticeships and pillages universities? I said yesterday and I say again today: when I see what Kevin Rudd is doing to my portfolio, I have to agree with the *Daily Telegraph*: it is time to kick this mob out.