



Speech By  
**Stephen Bennett**


**MEMBER FOR BURNETT**

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**PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENTS**

**Burnett Electorate, Queensland Workforce Skilling Strategy**

 **Mr BENNETT** (Burnett—LNP) (3.25 pm): I rise to share with the House the work of Queensland's Workforce Skilling Strategy for the electorate of Burnett. Madam Deputy Speaker, I am glad you are in the House because I want to say that it is very important that my electorate has a strong collaboration with your electorate.

It was a great pleasure to attend the graduation of the participants of the Bundaberg Workforce Skilling Strategy. These people who graduated are the ones who traditionally fall through the cracks and can remain on welfare while looking for meaningful employment. A primary function of Energy Skills Queensland is to assist industry to meet skills needs and mitigate workforce risk by consulting with key stakeholders to develop and retain real skills. This local program is achieving results and providing opportunities for job seekers to gain long-term sustainable employment. The people in the Bundaberg district who undergo this program are provided with real skills and opportunities to better prepare for jobs locally in the resources sector.

As construction on Curtis Island at Gladstone shifts its focus from construction to maintenance, the Surat Basin will also increase drilling activity and will require the provision of camp services. With an estimated workforce for this industry predicted to be up to 18,000 workers over the next five years, this is an opportune time to continue to link potential workers from high-unemployment areas such as Bundaberg to these jobs. Queensland's Workforce Skilling Strategy will support more than 400 participants to gain employment over the next 12 months. The successful formula involves engaging with industry upfront to source employment opportunities and identify the real skills required. Examples of success include the Bundaberg welding participants who were given a unique insight into Gladstone's Cement Australia operations. The tour of that plant with those participants was a great success.

Currently, the team at Energy Skills Queensland locally has an Indigenous employment focus, with 90 participants actively engaged in training and development opportunities. It is important to acknowledge and highlight one area of concern and that is the lack of resources to allow mentoring and retention strategies, especially after a person has obtained a qualification. We must ensure sustainable success rates with people staying in work.

This project is a success because of the industry partnerships and dedication of the staff involved. It is important to acknowledge all of those businesses and key people in Gladstone, the Bundaberg TAFE and its staff, Bundaberg Regional Council, which is a key stakeholder, and also the wonderful supervisors and the project coordinator, Tracey Smith. It is very important that we use the success rate of this program going forward. I look forward to attending more graduation ceremonies with these key participants. If we continue to adopt strategic skilling strategies, unemployment particularly in areas such as Bundaberg can be addressed.