



Speech By  
**Hon. Tim Mander**


**MEMBER FOR EVERTON**

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Record of Proceedings, 4 March 2014

## **QUEENSLAND TRAINING ASSETS MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY BILL**

### **Introduction**

 **Hon. TL MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works) (12.22 pm): I present a bill for an act about the management of State-owned training assets for the provision of vocational education and training, in accordance with sound commercial principles, and for related purposes. I table the bill and explanatory notes. I nominate the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee to consider the bill.

*Tabled paper:* Queensland Training Assets Management Authority Bill 2014 [[4585](#)].

*Tabled paper:* Queensland Training Assets Management Authority Bill 2014, explanatory notes [[4586](#)].

This bill delivers on the Queensland government's commitment to boosting front-line services and marks an important point on the road towards a new and improved vocational education and training sector, otherwise known as VET. Last year, my colleague the Minister for Education announced major reforms to the VET sector. Through this bill, the Queensland government continues that program of reform by giving all existing and prospective training organisations equal access to VET facilities, which in recent times have been substantially underutilised.

The government understands the link between the state's economic growth and the skills of its people. Within the first 100 days of office, this government commissioned the Skills and Training Taskforce, the first ever industry-led review of Queensland's vocational education and training sector. The task force concluded that there was significant room for improvement in the way VET is provided in this state. Specifically, the experts said that Queensland's TAFE structure and facilities management reduced its competitiveness. A major contributor to this problem was that the majority of our TAFE assets are grossly underutilised.

For example, let us take a look across the river: we have a beautiful facility at South Bank. It is one of the best VET facilities in the nation. It is modern, and it is located on the edge of the CBD and close to public transport. Despite all of that, it is used only 51 per cent of the time. Between 6 pm and 9 pm, which are the traditional night-class times, it is empty 95 per cent of the time. The public-private partnership agreement for that facility, put in place by the previous government, has forecast cash outflows of \$1.3 billion over the remaining life of the agreement to 2039. Those sorts of numbers do not stack up next to utilisation rates that struggle to hit 50 per cent. South Bank TAFE is not alone. TAFEs across the state are 60 per cent empty. We can do better than this.

One of the recommendations of the independent Commission of Audit was that asset management should be separated from TAFE and transferred to a specialist entity with skills and expertise in owning and managing those kinds of assets. By creating a new body to manage the property side of things, we can free up TAFE to concentrate on doing what it does best: the delivery of vocational education and training services. In the VET sector, the ability to deliver effective training often depends on access to appropriate facilities. Sadly, those facilities are frequently out of the reach of otherwise qualified trainers. However, when our state's TAFE assets are sitting dormant more than

50 per cent of the time, it is nothing more than common sense to make those assets available to other registered training providers, as well as keeping them freely available to TAFE.

This legislation will pave the way to allowing existing or prospective non-government training organisations to expand the availability of VET, particularly in regional areas. To that end, this bill will establish an independent body, the Queensland Training Asset Management Authority, or QTAMA, to provide for the efficient and effective management of state owned training facilities primarily for the provision of vocational education and training. The bill achieves those objectives by establishing QTAMA to be the specialist owner and manager of the state's training assets, with an experienced board appointed by the Governor in Council; and to enhance competition and improve utilisation by providing access to state training assets to all registered training organisations on a non-discriminatory commercial basis.

A statutory body was chosen as the most appropriate vehicle for QTAMA because it is an independent body under the government umbrella that can be directed by an experienced board while having a strong governance framework. This board will consider all options on how to improve use by attracting existing and prospective trainers, and will look at various lease-rental options for those trainers based on their needs and circumstances. Establishing QTAMA as a statutory body allows the government to retain oversight of its investment in training assets through the governance, accountability and reporting framework provided for in the bill.

The VET sector is undergoing major reform all around Australia and initiatives such as this prove that Queensland is leading the way. This bill will lead to the creation of a stronger and more sustainable way of managing our training infrastructure and has the capacity to substantially boost the availability of VET in the regions. I for one think this is a thoroughly worthy goal. I commend this bill to the House.

### **First Reading**

**Hon. TL MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works) (12.27 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 Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee**

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Dr Robinson): Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee.