




Speech By
Hon. Tim Mander

MEMBER FOR EVERTON

Record of Proceedings, 8 May 2014

QUEENSLAND TRAINING ASSETS MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY BILL

 **Hon. TL MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works) (5.26 pm), in reply: I thank the honourable members for their interest and contributions to the debate this afternoon. In particular, again I acknowledge the members of the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee and thank them for their diligence and the hard work they have put into examining this legislation. I would also like to thank those that made submissions to the bill and took the time to present their arguments before the committee at the hearing held on 2 April 2014.

I will just briefly address some of the comments that were made during the debate, and if I can initially go to the member for Redcliffe. I thank the member for her contribution; however, I need to state once again that this bill is not about selling assets. This bill will not lead to any reduction in training services. As to the rest of the member for Redcliffe's argument about the quality and cost of training provision, I think that the Minister for Education, Employment and Training put those ridiculous misrepresentations to bed and just totally made a mockery of that argument.

This bill responds to the demand from training organisations across the state to access valuable facilities and boost the provision of VET state-wide by properly utilising assets that have been running on empty long before this government came to office. QTAMA addresses the low utilisation rate of Queensland TAFE assets and provides a practical and workable solution to the deplorable legacy of inefficiency and wastage of resources left by the previous Labor administration. The creation of QTAMA will allow our TAFEs to do what they are supposed to: deliver high-quality vocational and educational training across the state.

I once again thank the member for Warrego for his informed and intelligent contribution to the development of this bill and his leadership in its preparation through his role as chair of the parliamentary committee. The satisfactory response to the committee demonstrates the important due diligence work that they have conducted to support this bill. In particular, I am grateful for the member for Warrego's far-sighted support for the provision of vocational education in this state.

I thank the member for Mount Coot-tha and Assistant Minister for Technical and Further Education for her passionate and committed role in the development of this bill. Her depth of knowledge and grassroots involvement on this important issue is clearly apparent. She mentioned the \$75 million capital works shortfall and overexpenditure by the previous government that the Queensland Skills and Training Taskforce identified. This is ample evidence of the former government's mismanagement of these valuable resources. The member is as committed to seeing through the successful reforms of the VET sector as I am. I thank the member for Springwood for his contribution to the debate, especially his recognition that this reform will revitalise VET services, allowing TAFE to focus on the core business of providing vocational services. As the member correctly suggested, QTAMA will allow for greater use of state owned training assets in regional Queensland, allowing private training providers to use facilities that were previously for the exclusive use of TAFE Queensland. I thank the member for Morayfield for his informed contribution to the debate. I especially appreciated the personal and family experiences in the VET sector that he shared

with the House as part of his resounding and passionate support for QTAMA. I acknowledge the member for Condamine's contribution and particularly note his comments that no other jurisdiction is doing this and so there is no track record to measure this against. That is true and this government is proud to be leaders in the reform process.

Mr Rickuss: That's why the member for Condamine is not with us anymore. He couldn't stand the change.

Mr MANDER: I take that interjection from the member for Lockyer. The separation of infrastructure assets and service provision is widely used across a whole range of different sectors, including the telecommunications, transport and energy sectors, and this bill will prove that it can work in education as well in the VET sector. I acknowledge the member for Algeester's contribution and clear explanation of QTAMA's background, history and goals. I particularly appreciate the member's reiteration of the preferential access TAFE will receive in the use of the infrastructure.

I acknowledge the member for South Brisbane's contribution to today's debate and note her concerns for the showpiece TAFE college in her electorate, the Southbank Institute of TAFE. Interestingly, this flagship of VET learning is used only 51 per cent of the time and at night is empty 95 per cent of the time. As the Southbank TAFE, it has been classified at the moment as a distressed asset as it has long-term contractual obligations, has fallen short of initial financial performance targets and has cashflows of \$1.3 billion over the remaining life of the agreement to 2039. In fact, the QTAMA board's commercial acumen will be directed at reducing rather than eliminating the facility's drain on the state's resources by managing project costs, using revenue earned from TAFE and third parties and identifying and facilitating opportunities for the state to improve financing arrangements. Just as well for QTAMA, this bill is sorely needed to pull this flagship out of the financial shipwreck it is heading for. The bill is not about asset sales, as I have repeatedly stated. The government remains committed to establishing TAFE Queensland as a viable training provider and ensuring the continuity of TAFE services into the future. In fact, the establishment of QTAMA as a separate asset manager allows TAFE Queensland to get on with the business of delivering quality vocational education and training across Queensland.

I thank the member for Nudgee for his contribution tonight and appreciate his support for this important bill. I also thank the member for Ferny Grove for his contribution and particularly his appreciation for the variety of training services at the Grovely TAFE campus—a TAFE campus that is in my electorate and borders the electorate of Ferny Grove. His support for the government's pursuit of efficient and effective management of these assets is appreciated. I am very grateful for the contribution from the Minister for Education, Training and Employment. He is obviously a passionate supporter of VET training and his speech acted as a myth buster to some of the misrepresentations that came from those opposite. I appreciate the member for Burdekin's contribution as a former TAFE teacher who has a hands-on knowledge of what goes on in these colleges. I think her summation sums up the bill very well—that is, let us let the teachers and the experts teach and be involved in education and let us let the experts in asset management go about doing their role. I also note the contributions from the members for Dalrymple and Nicklin. In conclusion, I simply want to thank members for their contributions to the debate this afternoon.