




Speech By
Christopher Whiting

MEMBER FOR MURRUMBIDGE

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ADJOURNMENT

Murrumbidgee Electorate, Skilling Queenslanders for Work

 **Mr WHITING** (Murrumbidgee—ALP) (10.09 pm): I rise to talk about the return of the Skilling Queenslanders for Work program and what it will mean for the people of Murrumbidgee. Labor offered many policies focused on generating employment and jobs during the campaign, but the return of Skilling Queenslanders for Work was one of the most recognised and anticipated Labor policies embraced by my local community. We are currently facing 18.3 per cent youth unemployment in the Moreton Bay council region. This has effectively doubled in the last few years. I believe this is no coincidence, because it has nearly doubled since the LNP stripped these programs out. On the campaign trail many residents said to me that they wanted to get local kids back into work and many residents of Murrumbidgee know that this training program is one of the best ways to do that. Before being abolished in 2012, this program placed on average 330 young people a year in Murrumbidgee into work and into paid training—330 young people each year who got their first chance because of this program.

Skilling Queenslanders for Work was run by four community based organisations in my area: Murriajabree Pty Ltd; Deception Bay Community Youth Programs, which I have been connected to for many years; Redcliffe Area Youth Space; and the Deception Bay Neighbourhood Centre. We often hear that the Deloitte Access Economics report from 2012 pointed out that Skilling Queenslanders for Work returned \$8 for every \$1 invested, and this is why—by putting a massive effort early into their working life, these young people had years extra of working life instead of Centrelink payments. We avoid having to intervene even later in their working life when we would have to expend an even more intensive and costly effort to build the skills of these lost workers. These four organisations worked intensely with those young people most marginalised in our communities. They expended a massive effort over many years, truly believing in what they were doing and placing probably thousands of people into work. I thank them for all they have contributed to our community over the years.

As we heard today from the Attorney-General and Minister for Training and Skills, this government has provided \$240 million over four years to support 32,000 Queenslanders back into work through this program. Over 1,000 people throughout the state have registered to come along to the information sessions about Skilling Queenslanders for Work. I know the information sessions conducted this week at the very fine Caboolture Sports Club at the lakes centre would have been very busy indeed and they would have heard how Skilling Queenslanders for Work will take an integrated approach—employer engagement, skills development and job creation. I am committed to getting jobs for the young people of Murrumbidgee, and the Skilling Queenslanders for Work program is one of the best and most effective ways of doing this.