




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MACKAY

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QUEENSLAND TRAINING ASSETS MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY REPEAL BILL

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (10.12 pm): I rise to speak in favour of the Queensland Training Assets Management Authority Repeal Bill 2015—QTAMA. I would like to congratulate the committee on its fine work. TAFE Queensland has a proud history as being Queensland's premier vocational trainer. Everyone knows someone who has done a TAFE course or maybe themselves have completed a course. TAFE is a community education provider.

In my previous employment as an organiser with the Queensland Teachers' Union, I spent many hours with TAFE teachers and I heard stories of the immense pride that they take in the delivery of their courses. I will outline a little of why TAFE is so important to Queenslanders. That will make it obvious why assets must be returned to TAFE under the management of the Department of Education and Training.

TAFE, as a state owned training authority, has a reputation for taking on students with difficult behaviours that are not always welcomed at some private providers. TAFE will run programs that are not big money earners but are important to the community. These courses include adult numeracy and literacy, giving adults who have slipped through the cracks while at school a second chance at education. Without TAFE, these adults would be left without a hope of gaining the necessary skills they need to get into the workforce.

When TAFE trains its students, quality programs and resources are used so that students have true, hands-on experiences. When being taught a skill, students have their own resources. For example, when they learn how to fillet a fish, they get to have their own fish to practise on, not just watch a trainer demonstrate like some other private providers do. A local mechanic told me that his sons went to TAFE to complete their trade. His other apprentices went to a private provider. The private provider was cheaper and quicker. He said he wanted his own sons to be trained properly because he wanted them to take over the business. That is why his own sons went to TAFE. When workers are well trained to a high standard, our workplaces are safer, especially for workplaces in heavy industry. Untrained workers are a danger not only to themselves but also to the workers around them.

The existing legislation to manage the state's training assets on a commercial basis has been damaging for our vocational training in Queensland. The QTAMA Act 2015 has seen TAFE campuses across the state significantly downsized with the offering of courses diminished. Some TAFE campuses have been sold or partially sold off. The TAFE campuses at Maryborough, Noosa and Tewantin were shut down altogether. The campus at Maryborough has been mooted to be sold to a private provider. The rent arrangements imposed on TAFE to rent back their own training rooms have made it nearly impossible for them to compete and survive financially.

The new management authority set up to manage TAFE assets oversaw a mismanagement of teaching resources. Classes in some campuses, previously taught in purpose-built classrooms, found themselves relegated to old, retrofitted classrooms and training rooms. Flexibility and timing to deliver courses to best meet the needs of students and businesses became restricted. Instead of fully utilising TAFE resources, there were empty classrooms. This hardly makes sense. It is not good management of TAFE resources. It is clear that the current act was set up to destroy TAFE as a public provider and to make way for private providers.

Businesses are crying out for skilled workers. To become a skilled worker you need quality training. The previous government set out to dismantle Queensland's quality vocational provider to make way for the private sector to move in without the same quality controls provided by TAFE. The forming of QTAMA set in train the sell-off of the state education assets without the former government taking any responsibility.

The repeal of the bill will go a long way to restoring Queensland's quality vocational service. The QTAMA 2015 bill sets out a clear plan to manage our state's TAFE assets. Labor is committed to consulting with all stakeholders, including community, public and private training providers, not-for-profit organisations, schools and local community groups. Labor is committed to gaining the best outcomes for TAFE and the needs of the broader community needing to access vocational education and training. With true consultation, we have a clear vision and a plan for our state's vocational education and training, something that has been missing for the past three years.

Returning the assets to the management of the Department of Education and Training puts the assets back in the hands of an experienced organisation that has previously managed assets with a high level of success. This is what our community wants. With the implementation of the Queensland Training Assets Management Authority Repeal Bill 2015 we will achieve this. I urge honourable members to vote for the bill.