




Speech By
Peter Russo

MEMBER FOR SUNNYBANK

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QUEENSLAND TRAINING ASSETS MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY REPEAL BILL

 **Mr RUSSO** (Sunnybank—ALP) (9.41 pm): I rise to speak in support of passing the Queensland Training Assets Management Repeal Bill 2015. One of the purposes of this repeal bill is to again honour one of the Palaszczuk Labor government's election promises and commitments that were made to the people of Queensland during the election campaign. TAFE Queensland is the state's most experienced provider of vocational education and training, with over 130 years of experience in delivering this training to Queenslanders.

Mr Rickuss: How many?

Mr RUSSO: One hundred and thirty. From information provided to the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee's review of this repeal bill, TAFE Queensland delivered training to more than 150,000 students across more than 500 program areas in 2013-14, with 112,000 students in the year to date in 2014-15. In 2013-14, TAFE Queensland awarded 61,700 qualifications, ranging from statements of attainment to bachelor degrees. This is what the repeal bill rescues.

That promise was to restore TAFEs in Queensland to their proper place as a primary provider of vocational education and training in this great state. The reason this election promise was made by the Palaszczuk Labor government was that TAFE needed to be rescued and restored to its proper place as the peak training organisation and to keep our pledge to Queenslanders of jobs, jobs, jobs.

By rescuing TAFE we are also in the same process rescuing the youth of this great state and the problems that youth unemployment is causing in our regional areas. The rescuing of TAFE also helps those Queenslanders who have lost their jobs midlife due to redundancies and who need to access courses and effective retraining programs at a fair cost. TAFE is well positioned to provide these training programs both in the state's regions and in South-East Queensland, to enable these mature age people to rejoin the workforce and become contributors to the state's economy.

As I indicated earlier, an election promise made by the Palaszczuk Labor government was to return the control of Queensland's training assets to the relevant state government department—that is, the Department of Education and Training. The previous legislation was modelled on a flawed economic policy where there was little consultation with the institutes. Had this legislation not been repealed, the storm clouds were gathering and there were real prospects that plant and equipment and other real tangible assets would have been lost from these valuable institutions—lost to Queenslanders and very possibly never able to be replaced had the Palaszczuk Labor government not been elected in January 2015.

The Queenslanders who I have spoken to on this issue have expressed the same concern that I am expressing tonight in this House—that they had real fears for their jobs and for the students that they were training. What this would have meant in real terms is that plant and equipment and other assets in these institutions would have simply been handed over to a new entity, with no regard as to where this plant and equipment had come from and with no real regard to the services that TAFE historically had provided to the people of Queensland.

One of the impacts of the previous legislation was in relation to what fees students paid for their courses. It resulted in a very complex arrangement where courses were no longer going to be subsidised. As a result, students would have been expected to meet these new fees in circumstances where they would have been unable to pay for these courses because of the simple fact that they did not have the funds available to them. I commend this bill to the House.