




Speech By
Hon. Shannon Fentiman

MEMBER FOR WATERFORD

Record of Proceedings, 15 July 2015

QUEENSLAND TRAINING ASSETS MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY REPEAL BILL

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Communities, Women and Youth, Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (10.08 pm): I am pleased to speak in favour of the Queensland Training Assets Management Authority Repeal Bill. Putting public training assets out to open tender for the private sector to outbid TAFE undermines the ability of the public provider to continue its delivery of quality vocational education and training. QTAMA's purpose was to manage the state's training assets on a commercial basis with no requirement to prioritise the interests of TAFE Queensland.

Only the LNP could claim that selling training assets to private providers would improve the state's ability to deliver quality training. The former government would rather make a quick buck than put the effort into consulting with communities and developing a plan to meet local needs. In contrast, what Labor thinks is: how can we use state assets to provide the best opportunities for as many Queenslanders as possible? It is because we care about jobs for the future and we care about providing Queenslanders with access to the training they need to get the jobs of the future. That is why our election commitment to rescue TAFE committed us to repealing the QTAMA Act, returning control of Queensland's training assets to the relevant government department and investing \$34 million over three years to restore TAFE Queensland as the state's premier provider of vocational education and training.

For many of my constituents, TAFE courses represent a future trade or profession and increased job prospects. Repealing the QTAMA Act is an important step in ensuring that the public provider remains viable because we know in training and skills there remains a crucial role for the public provider, especially for people coming from disadvantaged backgrounds. Importantly for residents in the Logan region, undermining TAFE and putting pressure on it to meet unrealistic commercial targets ignores the community service obligations of TAFE to deliver foundation skills courses or courses that deliver a senior certificate for people unable to obtain them through mainstream schooling options. Worse than that, support services for vulnerable students and students with additional needs, such as disability or literacy support, were cut because they were seen as not fully utilising facilities for commercial benefit.

During the election campaign many people in my electorate and across Queensland proudly showed their support for TAFE in rallies and demonstrations across Queensland. I was proud to stand with local TAFE teachers from the Meadowbrook TAFE on 29 January this year. They knew that a re-elected LNP would see an end to TAFE in Queensland. They knew that they would see more TAFE teachers sacked, more courses cut and the quality of vocational education and training delivered in Queensland plummet. I am pleased that, instead, they chose a Labor government, which values the public provider and wants to invest in TAFE rather than actively try to cause its demise.

TAFE staff were treated appallingly by the previous government. Consultative committees were dismantled, requirements to consult were removed and pressure was put on staff to compete commercially and cut costs. Just imagine what they would have done if they had time to apply this same approach to our state school assets? Thankfully, they did not get the opportunity to succeed.

I look forward to working with my colleagues as we rebuild and reinvest in Queensland's public provider and restore TAFE Queensland as Queensland's premier provider of vocational education and training. Queenslanders voted to restore TAFE, and we will deliver.