




Speech By
Tim Mander

MEMBER FOR EVERTON

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JOBS QUEENSLAND BILL

 **Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (4.36 pm): I rise to speak on the Jobs Queensland Bill 2015. Labor proposes to establish Jobs Queensland next year as an independent statutory body with \$40 million in funding over four years. Jobs Queensland will be established to provide advice to the minister about workplace skills needs, future workforce development and planning and the apprenticeship and training systems.

We on this side of the House will be supporting the bill and also supporting the recommendations of the Education, Tourism and Small Business Committee. We do that with some trepidation. It is quite obvious that the establishment of this statutory body is simply to replace a very successful initiative of the previous LNP government. To facilitate the establishment of Jobs Queensland, Labor disbanded the LNP's Ministerial Industry Commission in May 2015.

This commission was established in 2013 as an independent advisory body to provide advice to the relevant minister on training and skills, with a budget of approximately \$3.5 million. The MIC was a genuine partnership between government and industry, creating an annual cycle of collaboration to establish industry needs and use that as a basis for directing government investment in training.

The MIC was chaired by the former assistant minister for further and technical education in order to provide weight and standing to the commission and held monthly meetings all over Queensland, including in Townsville, Toowoomba, Cairns and Mackay. The MIC had a clear mandate to advise the minister on Queensland's skills and workforce development priorities; give industry and employers genuine opportunities to have input into how training investment is made; conduct regional industry forums to give small, medium and large industry a voice on local, regional and state requirements; and to provide small, medium and large enterprises advice on the ways they could provide advice to government.

The MIC reported to government in a number of ways including through the annual skills priority report that detailed short-, medium- and long-term workforce developments and skill requirements including evaluating economic and industry trends; asking industry across the state for feedback on the analysis and tailoring of government investment to best suit the needs of the economy; through an annual skills highlight report that outlined key achievements of the MIC and the vocational education and training system response to industry advice; through key research, policies and advice that informed the commission's market oversight role; and on an ad hoc basis depending on what emerging issues there were.

The creation of Jobs Queensland seems to be all about ideology and putting union bosses back in charge of the training and apprenticeship system in Queensland. The Premier has made no secret of the fact that this government owes its election win to union bosses. This is about repaying union bosses and returning union control to the training sector.

As this bill currently stands, it appears to be a remake of the failed Skills Queensland, which had no real links to industry or Queensland's training needs. In their own submission to the Skills and Training Taskforce, Skills Queensland themselves acknowledged that they were unable to maintain a central focus on its roles as an industry led body providing advice on skills needs and funding priority.

Why were they unable to maintain a central focus on their role as an industry led body? It is because they had too many union bosses on their board. They had representatives from the AMWU, representatives from the AWU and representatives from the QTU. The representation on the board led to Skills Queensland having to acknowledge themselves that they failed in the job for which they were tasked by becoming a mouthpiece of the unions.

The minister claims that Jobs Queensland will be independent, but I ask: how can it be independent when, through the statement of expectations, the minister dictates how the body reports to the minister, the nature and scope of activities that Jobs Queensland should carry out, and activities of Jobs Queensland? To be a truly effective body, Jobs Queensland needs future plans in order to provide certainty for industry. Students and industry should be provided as well with five-year forecasts about the skills requirements of the future similar to what the MIC was undertaking at the time it was disbanded by this government.

In the time that it has taken for Labor, who claim to be pro jobs, to establish Jobs Queensland, the LNP had established an industry led Skills and Training Taskforce, accepted the task force's interim and final report and responded with a five-year vocational education and training action plan, 'Great skills. Real opportunities'.

Jobs Queensland is not truly independent. As I said, the statement of expectations is issued by the minister and sets out the nature and scope of all Jobs Queensland activities. There is no requirement by Jobs Queensland to inform the minister if things change throughout the year. Jobs Queensland does not have the capacity to consider the supply of skills in workforce planning. Jobs Queensland is about ideology and putting union bosses in charge of the training and apprenticeship system in Queensland.

The other issue is the \$40 million budget of Jobs Queensland. At this stage we do not know of any key performance indicators. We do not know of any benchmarks. We do not know of any objectives. When the department was asked to give a bit of detail about the spending of \$40 million over a four-year period, the department responded—

The establishment of Jobs Queensland was committed under *Working Queensland*, one of the Palaszczuk Government's election commitments during the 2015 election. The allocation of \$40 million over 4 years to establish Jobs Queensland was confirmed through the 2015-16 State budget allocation. Through the Jobs Queensland Bill 2015, the Department of Education and Training is implementing this commitment.

That is simply not good enough. There is absolutely no information there whatsoever about how this money will be spent, what the salaries of the board members will be, or how many staff there will be. This seems to be again another bureaucracy that has been created by this Labor government—a bureaucracy that continues to talk about jobs but does very little about creating jobs. Of course the only job creation we have seen has been the increase in the Public Service, which already reached its annual increase target by the end of the first quarter of the financial year.

As I said earlier, we will be supporting the bill. We do have numerous questions and concerns about the establishment of another bureaucracy, and we have very grave doubts about what Jobs Queensland will be able to achieve in the future.