




Speech By
Hon. Yvette D'Ath

MEMBER FOR REDCLIFFE

Record of Proceedings, 15 July 2015

QUEENSLAND TRAINING ASSETS MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY REPEAL BILL

Second Reading

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (7.51 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

I rise today in support of the Queensland Training Assets Management Authority Repeal Bill 2015. The Palaszczuk government campaigned hard on our Rescuing TAFE election commitment because we knew that ensuring access to vocational education and training for all Queenslanders—no matter where they live or how much money they have—is the correct and responsible course to take.

This bill is the first step in delivering on our significant reforms to Queensland's vocational education and training sector, which suffered so much damage under the ideologically driven assault by the LNP. I would like to thank the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee for its detailed consideration of the bill. I note that the committee received a detailed briefing from the Department of Education and Training, considered written submissions from stakeholders and invited selected stakeholders to a hearing before preparing its report. I also thank these stakeholders for taking the time to examine the bill and provide their valuable input.

The committee has prepared a comprehensive report on the bill, which was tabled on 7 July. The government notes that the committee was unable to reach a majority decision as to whether the bill be passed. This bill ensures the Palaszczuk government can deliver on its promise to restore TAFE Queensland to its rightful place as the premier public provider of vocational educational and training in this state by ensuring that TAFE retains access to the TAFE assets into the future. The bill will also ensure that TAFE Queensland delivers quality training now and into the future across the whole of this state.

Let me make this clear: we are not attempting to repeal this legislation just for the sake of it. We are doing this because, overwhelmingly, it is what Queenslanders want and it is what they deserve. Everywhere I have travelled across the state, both in opposition and since coming to government, I have been constantly approached by individuals and organisations complaining about the direction in which QTAMA was taking the training sector and asking how long before it could be abolished.

I truly believe that had the LNP been re-elected Queensland would not have a TAFE system into the future. The LNP do not see a role for government in the provision of vocational education and training and spent 2½ years doing everything in their power to starve our public provider of VET. I have seen the damage that was done to our TAFEs in this state and we have seen the significant damage

that has been done to TAFEs in other states under conservative governments. We were not going to stand by and let that happen in Queensland. They cared little, if at all, that TAFE offers the chance for a better life to those in remote areas of this vast state and to some of Queensland's most disadvantaged people.

The Palaszczuk government, through our Rescuing TAFE policy, is working rapidly to reverse the damage done, and the QTAMA Repeal Bill is just one part of our comprehensive suite of reforms that will rebuild the public VET sector. How can those opposite honestly claim that this body was not created to sell off our assets? The act even states that QTAMA is looking to rationalise the assets. These are weasel words for a sell-off.

QTAMA was set up as an independent statutory body to which Queensland's training assets were transferred in 2014 under the then minister for housing and public works. QTAMA was placed within that portfolio by the former government as they claimed that Public Works were better positioned to provide advice on asset management. This is despite the fact that the Department of Education and Training manages more than 1,200 state schools across the state. Surely this qualifies it to manage our training assets.

Despite what the LNP claim, those opposite do not support the public provider of VET. While in government they did all they could to undermine TAFE's ability to participate in the VET sector. QTAMA was set up as an arm of the former government's asset sales agenda and at the very least it had the objective of pushing the public provider out of our public assets. This is further supported by the former government's commitment to 100 per cent contestability of funding in the VET sector that was being forced upon TAFE.

Repealing the QTAMA Act is the Palaszczuk government's first important step in regaining TAFE Queensland's reputation as the premier provider of vocational education and training in Queensland. I ask that the bill be read a second time.