




Speech By
Hon. Yvette D'Ath

MEMBER FOR REDCLIFFE

Record of Proceedings, 16 September 2015

JOBS QUEENSLAND BILL

Introduction

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (4.26 pm): I present a bill for an act to establish Jobs Queensland to give advice to the state on skills needs, workforce development and planning and the apprenticeship and traineeship system in Queensland. I table the bill and explanatory notes. I nominate the Education, Tourism and Small Business Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper. Jobs Queensland Bill 2015 [[1098](#)].

Tabled paper. Jobs Queensland Bill 2015, explanatory notes [[1099](#)].

I am pleased to stand here today and introduce the Jobs Queensland Bill 2015. The Palaszczuk government is committed to growing the economy and building new and innovative industries in Queensland. To achieve this, we need to develop the highly skilled and productive workforce required to meet the needs of the future. Jobs Queensland is part of our broader plan to make Queensland's vocational education and training sector the strongest and most productive in the nation to ensure industry can access the skills it needs to fuel growth. This plan also includes the reintroduction of the successful Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative and the introduction of our Rescuing TAFE plan, which incorporates the repeal of the Queensland Training Assets Management Authority Act 2015 and the introduction of an independent Training Ombudsman.

The establishment of Jobs Queensland will allow for a focused effort on workforce planning and engagement across a range of industries in Queensland. Funding of up to \$10 million per annum has been allocated to establish and operate Jobs Queensland. The bill establishes the new authority and describes its statutory functions and governance arrangements while providing flexibility and longevity to allow Jobs Queensland to be responsive to changing economic and industry needs.

Under the bill, Jobs Queensland will have three key functions. It will provide advice to me, as Minister for Training and Skills, on: skills needs for particular industry sectors or regional areas; future workforce development and planning; and the apprenticeship and traineeship system. It will also have a research function and be required to publicly promote its role and functions.

Jobs Queensland will identify the skills and training needs across all industries to inform priorities for this government's significant investment in VET. The Department of Education and Training will remain responsible for the supply side, making decisions about designing and delivering programs, managing the VET budget and investing in priority training. The department will also continue to regulate the apprenticeship and traineeship system.

Separating the strategic advisory role from the regulation of apprenticeships and traineeships reinforces that the new entity is different from its predecessors. It allows the authority to focus on

genuine industry engagement and the identification of demand for skilled work across the economy at the strategic level.

Jobs Queensland will also be more responsive than previous engagement bodies. Jobs Queensland will not be tied to a strict and one-off annual reporting cycle; rather, Jobs Queensland will provide advice to me on an as-needed basis throughout the year as issues arise. In addition, under legislation I will be provided with the power to refer matters relevant to Jobs Queensland's functions for investigation and action throughout the year as they arise, ensuring the skills system as a whole can react responsively as matters arise.

Jobs Queensland will not have a direct role in advising government on matters of employment policy, which will remain the responsibility of Queensland Treasury. Under the bill I will be able to influence the work undertaken by Jobs Queensland, for example, through issuing a written statement, a statement of expectations, about how they should perform their functions and reporting requirements. Jobs Queensland must also produce a public annual report about how it has performed its functions; however, importantly neither the department nor I can direct the content of the advice that Jobs Queensland provides.

I am thoroughly committed to ensuring the independence of Jobs Queensland, the independence of its membership and the independence of its advice. I believe it is imperative that industry is free to form an independent view on where future skills demand is likely to occur within the economy—a view that is not influenced by the department, government priorities or historical arrangements and a view that is solely focused on accurately identifying skills demand. We need to give industry its voice back on skills. Jobs Queensland's advice and reports will be one key input to help inform priorities for state investment in skills, training and workforce planning and inform the development of strategies and programs to respond to these priorities.

Unlike the recent ministerial industry commission, Jobs Queensland will be established under legislation as an independent entity. Members will be appointed through a governor-in-council process, and I am focused on ensuring that there are the right skills and expertise necessary to deliver high-quality advice to government. The bill also specifically states that a member of the Legislative Assembly cannot be a member of Jobs Queensland to further ensure its independence. Jobs Queensland will also have an additional focus on workforce planning, which the previous ministerial industry commission did not have. The new entity will reinstate independent industry leadership on workforce planning to support enhanced productivity and improve the responsiveness of skills development to industry skills demand.

The membership of Jobs Queensland will consist of between seven to 12 members who are appointed by the governor-in-council for a term of up to four years. In general, it will be important to have the right mix of representatives from different sectors as well as different technical skills relevant to the functions of Jobs Queensland. The bill provides for a mix of industry leaders, an equal number of employer representatives and union representatives, as well as members with expert or specialist skills in areas such as finance, workforce planning, economics and marketing.

To ensure that the important work of Jobs Queensland can commence as soon as possible, a Jobs Queensland interim reference group will be created. The group will operate until Jobs Queensland is established and the Jobs Queensland chairperson and members are appointed. I am currently working with the Department of Education and Training to establish a list of representatives to form the interim reference group. Upon my selection, these representatives will be considered and endorsed by the Premier and Minister for the Arts. This is a critical initiative to ensure that both the department and I have access to independent and unbiased advice on future skills needs across the economy.

The work of Jobs Queensland will improve our ability to target our training programs towards the needs of the future. This will ensure that individuals can access training where the jobs are so they get the most out of their training and that businesses have access to the skilled and productive workforce required to drive economic growth. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading

Hon. YM D'ATH (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (4.34 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

Question put—That the bill be now read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Referral to the Education, Tourism and Small Business Committee

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Elmes): Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Education, Tourism and Small Business Committee.

Portfolio Committee, Reporting Date

Hon. YM D'ATH (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (4.34 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

That under the provisions of standing order 136 the Education, Tourism and Small Business Committee report to the House on the Jobs Queensland Bill by 20 October 2015.