



Speech By  
**Hon. Yvette D'Ath**


**MEMBER FOR REDCLIFFE**

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Record of Proceedings, 16 September 2015

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

**Skilling Queenslanders for Work**

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (2.18 pm): The Palaszczuk government is proud of its commitment to jobs and to growing an appropriately skilled workforce to meet industry demand now and into the future. A significant commitment of this government was to reinstate Skilling Queenslanders for Work, a successful initiative cut by the former LNP government despite the proven positive outcomes it delivers. This government is investing \$240 million over four years to assist up to 32,000 Queenslanders back into work through a suite of targeted skills and training programs.

Last week I had the pleasure of announcing the successful applicants for the first round of the Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative for 2015-16, with 200 organisations around the state to share in over \$26 million. Mr Speaker, this government committed to assisting up to 8,000 people annually through the new Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative, and I am very excited to let you know that in this first round of funding for 2015-16 we will have already exceeded this commitment, with 8,126 individuals gaining assistance this round alone.

We had an overwhelming number of applicants for this round of funding—a testament to the success of the prior Skilling Queenslanders for Work program that was axed by the former government. I would like to thank the Department of Education and Training for their tireless efforts in working through the 550 applications they received, and I thank the regional committees for their work in identifying projects that meet the needs of their communities. Skilling Queenslanders for Work puts regions in the driving seat, and we believe that locals are best placed to identify the training and employment needs in their area.

While it was exciting to announce the recipients last week, I am also aware that a significant number of applicants were not successful in their applications in this first round. These organisations will have received a letter by now identifying the main reasons their applications were rejected and they are encouraged to contact the department via the email address provided to seek further feedback specific to their submission. Applications for the next round of funding have already opened and will remain open until 12 November 2015. I encourage all MPs to contact their community groups and not-for-profit organisations and let them know that there is still an opportunity to receive Skilling Queenslanders for Work funding in 2015-16.

The former LNP government refused to acknowledge the vital role played by the community sector in Queensland. They demonstrated this in their first budget, where we saw them rip over \$360 million over four years from the sector that helps the most vulnerable in the state. This has affected community groups across the state, forcing them to make staff cuts and reduce service delivery. These staff cuts have led to organisations having reduced capacity to write applications and to meet the

requirements of program delivery. This capacity will take time to rebuild. For this reason, I encourage smaller not-for-profits to consider collaborating and creating programs that encompass the strengths of organisations. This reduces both the financial burden and the man hours required to develop and deliver a quality program. I again encourage members to get in touch with their local organisations and let them know the opportunities available through Skilling Queenslanders for Work so we can gain the best outcome for Queenslanders.