




Speech By
Hon. Yvette D'Ath

MEMBER FOR REDCLIFFE

Record of Proceedings, 14 October 2015

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Training Ombudsman

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (2.29 pm): I believe Queensland has one of the best vocational education and training systems in this country. However, given the ever-changing landscape of VET, when issues arise the system can sometimes be difficult to navigate for stakeholders, employers, apprentices, trainees, students and other key stakeholders. The Palaszczuk government is also committed to working with stakeholders to make sure that the training services provided in this state are of the highest possible quality. To assist Queenslanders in dealing with the complexities of the VET sector and to provide an independent avenue to pursue issues of concern associated with training services, our government is investing \$5 million over the next three years to deliver on our election commitment to establish an independent training ombudsman. The training ombudsman will provide a recognisable and accessible avenue for complaints and consumer advocacy for VET stakeholders to progress disputes and seek advice and assistance relating to the overall conduct of the VET sector in Queensland. In short, this will enhance consumer protection in the VET sector and inform strategies to improve the quality and confidence of training and skills development in Queensland.

The training ombudsman will be independent from the Department of Education and Training and is planned to be established through amendments to the Further Education and Training Act 2014. The training ombudsman will not duplicate the work of other regulatory agencies in the training sector, but will take a personal approach to guiding VET consumers through the often lengthy and complicated processes that they may need to follow to resolve their complaints. This can sometimes be a daunting process for those disadvantaged individuals such as young students who may not otherwise seek a solution to their concerns or issues. It is important to note that the training ombudsman role will be subject to the passage of legislation that would be brought before this House.

However, in recognition that the issues to be dealt with by the training ombudsman are ones that need to be addressed sooner rather than later, I have established, through a ministerial charter, an interim Training Ombudsman role to get started on assisting our training stakeholders. Mr Geoff Favell, an experienced leader in the VET sector who has significant insight into how the system works, has been appointed as the interim Training Ombudsman. I can advise this House that before this new role was even publicised, the office had been contacted with complaints that are now leading to investigations in relation to quality of training. The interim Training Ombudsman can be contacted by email at info@trainingombudsman.qld.gov.au or by telephone on 1800773048. Further information can also be obtained from the Queensland government website.

All members of this House who have any constituents, whether they be training providers, employers or individual students, who have concerns about training quality or access to training should encourage them to contact the interim Training Ombudsman. We encourage anyone with concerns in relation to the quality of training to contact the Training Ombudsman, so that we can make sure that in this state we have the best quality training.