




Speech By
Hon. Yvette D'Ath

MEMBER FOR REDCLIFFE

Record of Proceedings, 1 December 2015

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Training Ombudsman

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (10.10 am): Today I rise to inform the House of the important job being undertaken by the Palaszczuk government's interim Training Ombudsman, the significant volume of complaints received since the interim Training Ombudsman site went live and the outcomes achieved in just 2½ months. The Palaszczuk government was elected on a commitment to create jobs now and into the future. But with jobs growth comes the necessity of an appropriately trained workforce, and this government is committed to ensuring that this workforce has access to the highest quality skills and training. We are committed to delivering the high-skilled workforce Queensland needs for innovation and future growth.

In 2012 the LNP government cut the office of the former training ombudsman, leaving Queensland's trainees, apprentices, trainers, employers and training providers in limbo with no support in navigating the often complicated VET sector and nowhere to raise their concerns and seek assistance in resolving complaints regarding the delivery of skills and training in Queensland. In the recent election Queenslanders supported Labor's commitment of \$5 million over the next three years to reintroduce this position with increased capacity to investigate and, where possible, resolve complaints and the funding necessary to provide assistance and advice to Queenslanders.

On 14 September this year I appointed the interim Training Ombudsman under a ministerial charter to initiate the necessary systems and put in place appropriate processes until the relevant legislation is enacted. Since 14 September the interim Training Ombudsman has received 25 complaints and five formal inquiries. Formal inquiries are those that require the Office of the Training Ombudsman to investigate a matter in order to provide the correct referral advice and information to the client. Of the 25 complaints, 13 have been completed and 12 are ongoing and are at various stages of investigation. Complaints have been received from apprentices, trainees, students, employers, RTOs, other stakeholders, parents and guardians. So far a number of complaints have not just affected the complainant; one complaint currently with the department impacts 127 apprentices while another regarding the wording on a certificate impacted seven students.

As well as receiving and investigating complaints and inquiries, the interim Training Ombudsman and his staff are in the process of setting up memorandums of understanding with a range of significant stakeholders in the VET sector. I wish to thank Geoff Favell for his hard work as the interim Training Ombudsman. Geoff and his staff have worked tirelessly recreating this position, ironing out issues encountered by the former training ombudsman, setting up the parameters within which the Training Ombudsman will operate, finding office space to lease and setting up MOUs with key stakeholders, all while receiving and investigating inquiries and complaints.

Finally, I wish to thank those opposite for endorsing the government's plans and supporting the important work of the interim Training Ombudsman. Some MPs opposite have already referred matters to the interim Training Ombudsman, recognising the necessity for this position. I look forward to bipartisan support for the legislation when it is introduced.