



Speech By  
**Jennifer Howard**


**MEMBER FOR IPSWICH**

---

Record of Proceedings, 9 November 2016

**ADJOURNMENT**

**First Start Initiative**

 **Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (2.50 am): Thank you, Mr Speaker, and thank you for dressing for the occasion. I rise to speak on the First Start Initiative.

**Mr BAILEY:** I rise to a point of order.

**Mr SPEAKER:** One moment, member for Ipswich.

**Mr BAILEY:** I raise a point of clarification. I notice that the member for Hervey Bay appears to be not wearing a shirt. Is that appropriate under the standing orders? I seek your clarification about standards.

**Mr SPEAKER:** No, it is okay. For the benefit of new members, in divisions when the bells are ringing you get here as quickly as you can.

**Ms HOWARD:** Tonight I rise to speak on the First Start initiative and the role it is playing in my electorate of Ipswich. The Palaszczuk government is committed to training and skilling Queenslanders right across the state and, in particular, in regional Queensland. We have seen this in the Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative, which provides training to people who are underutilised or underemployed in the labour market as well as builds the skills of young people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people with disability, mature-age jobseekers, women re-entering the workforce and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Skilling Queenslanders for Work represents a significant investment of \$240 million over four years to support up to 32,000 Queenslanders. Earlier today we heard from the minister that so far 11,137 people have been assisted back into the workforce.

An important part of the Skilling Queenslanders for Work program is the First Start initiative. The program provides funding of up to \$12,500 per trainee to local councils to employ additional trainees. It offers opportunities for young people and disadvantaged jobseekers to gain nationally recognised qualifications and 12 months of stable employment while undertaking a traineeship. A large number of those trainees go on to complete their traineeships and apprenticeships.

I am pleased to say that in the 2015-16 period the Ipswich City Council had seven trainees in the First Start program. The success of the program and the demand for places have seen the 2016-17 allocation increase to 23 places. Across Queensland, the Palaszczuk government has increased the total number of trainee allocations from 250 last year to 300 this year. I believe that the increased allocation is not only good for the trainees who participate in the program but also good for the council and our communities in general.

I cannot overstate the importance of the First Start program in my electorate. The program encourages local jobseekers, particularly young people, to remain in the local community. It allows them to be engaged in the activities of the council and provides councils with a valuable source of labour for council activities in the delivery of important community services. I commend the Palaszczuk government, in particular the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills, Hon. Yvette D'Ath, for its continued commitment to training and skilling Queenslanders right across the state.