




Speech By
Joan Pease

MEMBER FOR LYTTON

Record of Proceedings, 15 June 2016

MOTION: YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

 **Ms PEASE** (Lytton—ALP) (6.16 pm): Tonight's motion is an embarrassing attempt by those opposite to ignore the deliberate neglect and, frankly, outrageous and outright hostility to training and apprenticeships whilst the LNP was in government. This motion is based on a number of statistics trying to compare this government to the last, so let us do that. This is the LNP that axed Skilling Queenslanders for Work, that stripped TAFE of its assets and sacked tens of thousands of public servants. Yes, that is right: axed the successful Skilling Queenslanders for Work, stripped TAFE of its assets and sacked tens of thousands of public servants.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Lytton, one moment please. Pause the clock. Members may not remember, but, member for Kawana, you have had a good go. I would urge you not to push your luck. Many members have been given a warning under standing order 253A. I would urge you not to test my patience.

Ms PEASE: This is the same LNP when in government for whom the only employment program it could publicise was counselling and transition for the tens of thousands of public servants it sacked. Yet here we have the member for Kawana trying to strut his stuff, pretending the LNP has a solid record in this area. The member for Kawana might not realise how much he is undermining his colleagues because, even after the 2015 election and the strong message the people of Queensland sent, the LNP refused to change its stripes on the importance of training and skills. In fact, the member for Everton—then the relevant shadow minister—spent much of the 2015 estimates hearing demanding justification of investing in training and skills, as if the government was committing some great crime by delivering on our election commitments to invest in training and skills. Indeed, the member for Everton asked time and again because he was confused about the very concept of investing in training opportunities and the importance that it had to economic growth. The member could not or would not accept the basic principle that building a highly skilled workforce not only was beneficial to those individuals but also plays a crucial part in industry development and growth. We have now all come to see that the member for Everton is not too flash when it comes to numbers, but we really should not have to be having this debate in 2015 or in 2016—that is, that investing in skills and training is a worthwhile pursuit for the benefit of individuals, for businesses and for the economy.

In comparison, the government is proud to invest in training and skills to build opportunities for apprentices. This government is committed to the training and employment of apprentices through the Queensland Government Building and Construction Training Policy, which requires contractors to employ apprentices and trainees and undertake other workforce training as a mandated component of being awarded work on eligible Queensland government projects. That means that a minimum of 10 per cent of the total labour hours on eligible projects must be undertaken by apprentices and/or trainees or through other workforce training programs.

From 1 July 2015, the Palaszczuk government introduced a new payroll tax rebate to make it more affordable for employers to hire an apprentice or trainee. That incentive will deliver up to \$40 million in payroll tax rebates for employers of apprentices and trainees. If we make it easier for businesses to be able to take on an apprentice or trainee, the business will be able to make a go of it. This boost, especially in regional Queensland, is vital to Queensland's confidence.

We have just delivered another record budget for training and skills. Meanwhile, the LNP mates of the member for Kawana are trying to undo all our good work—like the members opposite did when they were in government. Over the term of the Turnbull-Abbott government, there has been an absolute gutting of the funding arrangements available to apprentices and those who aim to employ and train them in Queensland. A longstanding funding arrangement for the group training organisation sector has been eliminated completely. After already suffering a 20 per cent cut the previous year, funding of \$2.53 million in 2015 is no longer there. Fortunately, the Palaszczuk government has continued to maintain its end of the funding bargain with a vital \$3.163 million in 2015-16 that assisted 26 GTOs in getting apprentices to work. At the end of 2014, the Abbott government again slashed the budget. Time and again we see the LNP cut training and skills, and it is left to Labor to pick up the pieces and deliver for the training and economic needs of Queenslanders. I urge members to vote against this motion.

(Time expired)