




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR ALBERT

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**FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING (TRAINING OMBUDSMAN) AND
ANOTHER ACT AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr BOOTHMAN** (Albert—LNP) (5.07 pm): I rise to make a reasonably short contribution to the Further Education and Training (Training Ombudsman) and Another Act Amendment Bill. Firstly, I would like to thank my fellow committee members and the committee secretariat. I thank the member for Toowoomba South for his role as the deputy chair of the committee. I also wish the member for Lytton all the best. We cannot understand why you left us. We are such a lovely committee. We also welcome the new members to the committee, the members for Cleveland and Pine Rivers.

Vocational education and training is a very diverse sector which is made up of public and private training providers. Under the previous LNP government we saw a major revolution with the diversification of courses and the amount of providers in the marketplace. Back in 2014 when I was at an event celebrating the diversification of courses and different providers, I was speaking to some young people who said how great it was that we have all these different courses. Educational outcomes in certain areas that they never imagined a few years ago are now available. It is certainly something that the previous minister, Mr John-Paul Langbroek, can be proud of.

As we all know, education is an expanding industry. It is a focal point of the Queensland economy, especially when it comes to the domestic and international markets. The previous LNP government had a five-year action plan—Great skills. Real opportunities.—which concentrated on enhancing participation and productivity to give greater real-world employment outcomes for those completing vocational education and training. However, under a previous bill before the House it was dismantled. It is like groundhog day and we all had to start again. We are spending \$40 million. It is like a big blank cheque. That leads me to my problem with this bill: it is a \$5 million blank cheque when this could be done in the federal sphere. This is a simple bill. It is a simple piece of legislation, designed to give all Queensland vocational education students, employers and other stakeholders a pathway for complaints. It is like having a complaints desk that duplicates the work of other services. In 2009, Labor's own Weller review into reducing bureaucracy and unnecessary red tape recommended that the Training Ombudsman be abolished. In 2012, the Training Ombudsman was abolished.

Mr Power: Shame!

Mr BOOTHMAN: I take the interjection from the member for Logan. The Labor Party's own Weller review stated that it should be abolished. I would like the member to remember that. Currently, complaints are dealt with through a number of agencies that are certainly capable of dealing with those complaints, for example, the Australian Skills Quality Authority, the Office of Fair Trading, the Queensland Ombudsman, the Overseas Students Ombudsman, QCAT, the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission and so on. During the committee's inquiry, the Consumer Action Law Centre made a very valid point, which I would like to stress. The centre stated that we should have an Australian ombudsman to cover this, because we signed this over to the federal government. Why don't we have an Australian ombudsman?

As I just stated, the current set-up for the Queensland Ombudsman is a toothless tiger. It has no powers to make any binding decisions in relation to the registration and regulation of training organisations. Therefore, to enforce any decision the Ombudsman must refer the complaint to the relevant organisation for investigation and potential action. As I stated, this is a straightforward bill. I feel it would be far more prudent to have an overarching Australian ombudsman for vocational education and training, because it is a far simpler method and, as we have sent it to the federal sphere to administer, it is far more prudent.