




Speech By  
**Hon. Shannon Fentiman**

**MEMBER FOR WATERFORD**

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Record of Proceedings, 25 February 2016

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

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Communities, Women and Youth, Minister for Child Safety and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (3.24 pm): This bill delivers on the Palaszczuk government's election commitment to rescue TAFE and reinvigorate vocational education and training. Queensland's proud TAFE sector suffered under three years of attack by the LNP government. The Palaszczuk government acted swiftly to repeal the Queensland Training Assets Management Authority and return TAFE assets to the government, employ 100 extra teachers and support staff and invest \$34 million to restore TAFE's status as Queensland's premier public provider of vocational education and training. That is because we believe in the power of these assets to change lives, to teach vulnerable adults literacy skills, to give young people an opportunity for a career and to educate and train the skilled workforce of the future.

It goes beyond the power of these institutions to change the lives of the participants. Our great TAFE facilities change the communities in which they are located. As one of the members lucky enough to represent the great and diverse community of Logan, I see every day the positive influence of the Loganlea TAFE at Meadowbrook. It is a place that offers opportunity and builds hope in our community and I could not have been prouder to stand in this place to return these assets to state control. Loganlea TAFE is located in my electorate of Waterford. It is located in a hub which includes Griffith University, Logan Hospital, Loganlea State High School and, of course, the TAFE. It is part of an exciting triangle of learning, training and research.

Loganlea TAFE is a busy and exciting facility giving young people in Logan the opportunity to equip themselves with first-class skills and training. An array of courses and certificates are offered to Logan residents from aged care to hairdressing, media, community services, hospitality, horticulture and business. This facility is an essential part of my electorate and, more widely, Logan City. It has educated thousands of residents and has instilled in them skills and confidence which in turn has allowed them to move on to bigger and greater things.

In my first speech to this House I spoke of the value people in my community place on accessing TAFE when I mentioned Daniel, who had to wait for Labor's reinvestment in TAFE to bring fees back to an affordable level so that it was within his reach. These reforms in this bill go even further. The re-establishment of an independent Training Ombudsman was an important part of Labor's election commitment because it creates a dedicated complaints mechanism for participants in the training sector. The Training Ombudsman will be a one-stop shop to which students, parents, providers and others can turn to navigate the vocational education and training system, make complaints and be assisted to resolve disputes. As a statutory body, the Office of the Training Ombudsman will provide free impartial and independent advice and, where possible, resolve complaints from trainees, apprentices, employers and other interested people about the apprenticeship and traineeship system.

The Training Ombudsman will identify systemic issues about the provision and quality of vocational education and training in Queensland which may be identified by complaints and report to the Minister for Training and Skills on strategies to resolve these issues. For example, in 2010 the then Training Ombudsman undertook a review of school based apprenticeships and traineeships as part of the Queensland Skills Plan in 2008. The Training Ombudsman report made a number of recommendations about how the government can improve outcomes for SATs by improving transitions from school to industry. With more than 5,000 young people combining school with vocational training through school based apprenticeships in Queensland, it is important we provide them the opportunity to raise concerns and have them listened to by an independent person.

While TAFE has incredibly high satisfaction rates of over 85 per cent among both students and the employers who engage them, a clear mechanism with authority for raising complaints or concerns can only strengthen its future. Since 2012 there has been a decline in the number of students in government funded vocational education training programs. According to the Report on Government Services 2016, in 2014 there were 63,500 15- to 19-year-olds in government funded VET courses, compared with 73,800 in 2012. Our commitment to invest in vocational education and training support services, increase the number of courses available through vocational education and training in schools, create new vocational education teaching positions and establish a fully independent Training Ombudsman are all aimed at increasing VET participation and ensuring we have an accessible and equitable training system in Queensland.

Young apprentices and trainees are some of the state's most vulnerable workers. By re-establishing the Training Ombudsman, the Palaszczuk government is standing up for the rights of those young workers and is ensuring that they get a quality education and on-the-job training. I commend the bill to the House.