




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR HINCHINBROOK

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ADJOURNMENT

Youth Unemployment

 **Mr CRIPPS** (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (11.04 pm): The Palaszczuk government is always carrying on about its so-called efforts to create jobs in Queensland. Labor's policies have failed to reduce unemployment rates, particularly youth unemployment rates in Townsville and North Queensland. During the debate of the budget in early June I mentioned that I had written to the Minister for Training and Skills about the Skilling Queenslanders for Work program failing to support the Ultimate Rural Training Centre at Alice River, near Townsville, operated by well-respected rural trainers Geoff and Vicki Toomby.

Geoff and Vicki get excellent outcomes for the people they train, primarily young Indigenous kids, many with problematic and disadvantaged backgrounds. We were told that the Toombys' program was too costly per participant, but this response ignored the fact that they achieve upwards of 80 per cent employment placement in real jobs for students who complete their courses. They are real outcomes that make a huge difference to the people who get this training.

I was appalled to learn recently that the Palaszczuk government has significantly cut funding to RTOs for the purpose of delivering certain training programs covered by the certificate III guarantee. The certificate III guarantee is a fantastic vocational training initiative of the previous LNP government. The Ultimate Rural Training Centre delivers a Certificate III in Rural Operations on behalf of its RTO partner, LD Training. The Department of Education and Training provides funding for training programs through the certificate III guarantee on a priority basis, with demand for the skills influencing the size of the government investment or subsidy to the cost of delivering that training. Funding levels also depend on factors such as skills being in demand from what are called disadvantaged learners and people from rural and regional areas.

Certificate III guarantee funding for a Certificate III in Rural Operations has been slashed by the Palaszczuk government in the last six months for non-concessional students by more than \$1,000, from \$4,656 to \$3,576; for concessional students by more than \$1,300, from \$5,328 to \$4,023; and for year 12 students in the fee-free category by a whopping \$1,350, from \$5,820 to \$4,470. This is a huge funding decrease for this training program when the costs of delivery have not changed. The Toombys insist that demand for employees in the rural sector with these skills is still strong. To their knowledge, this funding cut was unannounced. If the changes are not reversed, the student contribution fee will have to increase and, given the size of the cuts, the training will be out of reach for most of the participants. The Toombys regularly take students referred from youth justice programs, the department of corrective services and the department of communities. The government has made a mistake here. The Ultimate Rural Training Centre needs more support, not less.