



Speech By  
**Jennifer Howard**


**MEMBER FOR IPSWICH**

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**MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST**

**Ipswich Electorate, Skilling Queenslanders for Work**

 **Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (12.05 pm): I would like to highlight the success of the Skilling Queenslanders for Work program in my electorate of Ipswich and how proud I am to be part of a government that creates opportunities for Queenslanders, unlike the Nicholls LNP government that squandered every opportunity that came their way. In Ipswich, the Skilling Queenslanders for Work program has not only given disadvantaged and unemployed people a pathway to skills and employment; it has greatly benefitted the broader community.

For example, last week I had the pleasure of attending the graduation of 10 women who had completed their certificate III in early childhood education at PCYC Ipswich through the Skilling Queenslanders for Work Community Work Skills Project. Some of those women had faced major barriers and hardships in their lives. All of them worked incredibly hard to get their certificate III qualification. All 10 have now secured ongoing employment and are going on to do a diploma in the same area. That is a fantastic result for my community. Those women are all now qualified employees, earning a wage and making friends among colleagues and clients. One of the graduates, a mother of three, said that the program had improved her confidence, given her the initiative to look for work, given her real encouragement and taught her how to persevere and be resilient. The story of how her life has changed due to the Skilling Queenslanders for Work program is a familiar one that shows how the program is making a real difference in people's lives.

This government is proud to have supported the Community Work Skills Project through the Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative. In the latest funding round, PCYC Ipswich received \$81,200 for their Get Set for Work childcare project. That means another 30 disadvantaged jobseekers in Ipswich will have the chance to work towards their certificate III qualification and see themselves on the pathway to meaningful employment. Throughout the Ipswich region, in the latest funding round \$1.7 million has been allocated to local Ipswich organisations to help them run training programs for unemployed jobseekers. So far, more than 580 people from the Ipswich region have got jobs as a result of Skilling Queenslanders for Work.

The Palaszczuk government is committed to getting people into jobs. In fact, 94,500 jobs have been created since Labor came into power in 2015. That is why we reinstated the initiative after it was scrapped by the former LNP Nicholls government. In the Ipswich region, our government is funding another nine projects to help get more locals into secure employment. Had the LNP still been in government, those 10 women graduates whom I met last week at the PCYC Ipswich not only would not have participated in Skilling Queenslanders for Work but also would have had no opportunity of getting back into the workforce.

When the former LNP government, under Newman and Nicholls, scrapped the Skilling Queenslanders for Work program in 2012, it showed that they were not serious about helping Queenslanders get the skills and training they need. It showed that they were not committed to helping

people find work. It showed appalling economic management, as well. During an independent analysis of the program by Deloitte Access Economics, we learned that for every \$1 of government expenditure, or in this case investment, there was an \$8 return. It is hard to fathom how Tim Nicholls, as treasurer of Queensland at the time, could not see that for himself before he made the extremely poor decision to cut funding to the Skilling Queenslanders for Work program.

Since the Palaszczuk government reinstated Skilling Queenslanders for Work, 9,000 Queenslanders have found work. Those people were long-term unemployed, disengaged youth, mature age jobseekers, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, people with disabilities and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Those 9,000 Queenslanders are now employed, earning a wage and contributing to the Queensland economy. All the evidence shows that the program is working and helping Queenslanders find jobs. This government employs Queenslanders; Nicholls and the LNP cut jobs.

Skilling Queenslanders for Work is vitally important in my electorate of Ipswich, with unemployment higher than the state average and with the recent devastating news of large numbers of job losses in the community. There is a tremendous need in Ipswich for programs like Skilling Queenslanders for Work and the Back to Work program.

Programs like these make a real difference. The Back to Work program was wildly successful in the regions and this Labor government has extended it to the south-east corner—something I know has been very well received in my electorate. The programs form partnerships with community organisations and local employers to determine local skills and entry level industry and labour needs.

I am very proud to be part of a government that has created opportunities for people in Ipswich and for Queenslanders in general. These are vitally important programs for the future of Queensland. I commend the government for them.