




Speech By
Hon. Yvette D'Ath

MEMBER FOR REDCLIFFE

Record of Proceedings, 23 March 2017

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

National Partnership Agreements

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (9.59 am): We are just over three months away from the expiration of the National Partnership Agreement on Skills Reform. Unfortunately, I must inform the House that the federal government still refuses to even commence discussions about an extension or a new agreement. It has now been nearly four months since state and Commonwealth skills ministers met in Darwin, and there is still no sign that the Prime Minister and his education minister, Senator Birmingham, or his assistant minister, Mrs Andrews, are willing to come to the table. It is time for them to end the uncertainty facing the entire VET sector by making a formal deal.

I remind the House that this financial year this agreement was worth \$105.7 million to Queensland and current projections are for a zero dollar figure come 1 July. This is an issue that is bigger than just the Palaszczuk government. It is with interest that I saw a joint release and policy position from the Ai Group, Business Council Australia and the Australian Chamber of Commerce & Industry that called on the federal government to maintain the current level of funding to training and skills and, with it, negotiate a new national partnership tied to a new set of priorities. I would like to table that position paper that has now been submitted by those three business bodies.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 14 March 2017, from the Australian Industry Group, Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Business Council of Australia to the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills, Hon. Yvette D'Ath, regarding Australia's vocational education and training system [\[494\]](#).

In that position paper it is specifically stated that the Commonwealth government should commit to continuing its funding of \$1.75 billion over the next five years for reform of VET in the form of a national partnership. It talks about preventing the VET sector from being left behind in government investment. Queensland is leading the calls across the nation urging the federal government to make a move on this issue. I also want to make mention of my state and territory colleagues, who have also remained unified in our calls for action. This is a federal government that since 2013 has stripped around \$2.5 billion nationally from skills and training. In contrast, the Palaszczuk government continues to believe in and invest in the future of Queenslanders by funding quality training from both public and private providers.

It would be refreshing if those opposite would stand up for Queensland instead of sitting on their hands and saying nothing. If there were genuine concern for the future of training in this state, I would have thought that the shadow minister would pick up the phone or even make the drive down to Assistant Minister Andrews' office on the Gold Coast and make some representations.

I implore the federal government to listen to what industry and the community are telling them and negotiate in good faith a new agreement which provides maximum flexibility for states to implement state run programs that meet skills demand and focus on quality and innovation.