




Speech By
Hon. Yvette D'Ath

MEMBER FOR REDCLIFFE

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Watterston, Dr J; TAFE Queensland East Coast, Fraser Coast Campus, Health Industry Training Centre

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (2.32 pm): I also acknowledge the words of the Minister for Education in relation to the Director-General of the Department of Education and Training, Dr Jim Watterston. I congratulate him on his appointment. I note that it has been a real pleasure to work with him while we have been in government. We certainly wish him well in the years ahead in his new position.

On Thursday 14 September, during the Palaszczuk government's Governing from the Regions week, I had the pleasure of visiting Hervey Bay TAFE's new Health Industry Training Centre and talk with many of the students and teachers. This centre was once the English language block and it has been refurbished into a purpose-built facility to allow the local TAFE East Coast to run more health related courses. The centre opened in January this year and now allows Hervey Bay locals to study nursing and allied health courses without having to leave their community. Before this health training hub was established, Fraser Coast students would have to travel to other regions to study a Diploma of Nursing but not anymore.

During my visit to Hervey Bay I met with a number of students and witnessed firsthand the hands-on skills that they are being taught, with demonstrations of checking blood pressure and blood sugar levels. Given the increasing need for skilled workers in the health profession in the Fraser Coast region, it is also quite possible that these students will be able to find work locally once they complete their studies.

This new health training hub was made possible through a \$250,000 investment from the Palaszczuk government. It allows Hervey Bay TAFE to offer a number of courses for the first time, including a Diploma of Nursing, a Diploma of Remedial Massage and a Certificate III in Individual Support (Disability). The new medical training facility is equipped with all the necessary medical gear, hospital beds and mannequins, which allows students to practise their skills.

Currently, about 150 students are enrolled in these new courses and TAFE expects this number to grow. In fact, TAFE enrolments in the Fraser Coast region have increased by 30 per cent compared to the same period last year. Part of that increase can be attributed to the new health training hub. I am pleased to inform the House that, since opening, student numbers have increased so quickly that TAFE is now investigating timetabling options to allow even more students to enrol to study in 2018.

The Palaszczuk government is passionate about creating jobs and providing people with the necessary skills and training to get into the workforce and build careers. It is the Labor Party that is committed to a strong future for TAFE right across Queensland.