




Speech By
Christopher Whiting

MEMBER FOR BANCROFT

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ADJOURNMENT

TAFE

 **Mr WHITING** (Bancroft—ALP) (7.07 pm): I rise in the House tonight to welcome the Palaszczuk government's initiative to extend free TAFE to all year 12 graduates in Queensland. This is a world changer for all those young Queenslanders who are finishing or have just finished high school. I truly thank the Minister for Training and Skills Development for creating this opportunity.

The minister announced that, if you start a high-priority qualification at TAFE within 12 months of leaving year 12, the Queensland government will cover the cost of your training. That will change lives of many 18-year-olds in Bancroft. I think in particular of the graduates from Deception Bay State High School. Deception Bay High has become a leader in Queensland. It specialises in providing vocational education and training to students. It offers seven certificate I qualifications, 14 certificate II qualifications and seven certificate III courses internally. It is registered as an RTO and delivers training to seven high schools.

In 2018, 363 students were awarded certificates I, II or III from Deception Bay High under the Australian Qualifications Framework. It has been incredibly successful. Enrolment is going up about 10 per cent a year. I want to thank acting principal Kyrra Mickelborough for her outstanding leadership. Our Free TAFE initiative will make Deception Bay State High School even more successful.

Free TAFE will open up opportunities for working-class kids throughout Deception Bay. It is another practical measure from the Palaszczuk government to get them into work and training, but it is much more than that. It is a signal to young people, a prompt for them, to aspire to higher education. It encourages them to believe that it is their right to receive higher education, to learn and to get decent and fair qualifications. It encourages them to believe that university or higher education is not just the preserve of kids from expensive schools. It encourages them to believe that TAFE will not slip out of reach for them because it is unaffordable.

This drive to get kids into higher education is reflected within federal Labor as well. We heard today from Tanya Plibersek, the opposition spokeswoman for education, that a federal Labor government will deliver \$175 million in funding to develop and implement programs to encourage young people to study at university. She made that announcement today in the Moreton Bay region, as only 13 per cent of young people in our area go to university, compared to over 50 per cent of young people in the inner-Brisbane area.

Only Labor has the drive to create those opportunities to get young people into higher education. That is the core of what we do as Labor—that is, create that equality of opportunity for all. I welcome working with federal Labor to hear about this funding program aimed at specific groups and geographic areas, and to hear how they are going to partner with our TAFEs, high schools and universities to make sure that the young people in our area can aspire to so much more.