




Speech By
Hon. Shannon Fentiman

MEMBER FOR WATERFORD

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Skilling Queenslanders for Work

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development) (9.57 am): The Palaszczuk government is committed to ensuring Queenslanders have the skills required to get a job. Today it gives me great pleasure to announce a significant milestone. As at the end of April, over 15,000 Queenslanders had got a job thanks to our highly successful Skilling Queenslanders for Work program. A further 3,737 have undertaken further training, and the Minister for Education will be particularly pleased that another 562 young people returned to school thanks to this program.

Queensland's nation-leading jobs growth has been underpinned by our commitment to training and skills. The Skilling Queenslanders for Work program has assisted people throughout our state. In the electorate of Cook, volunteer tutors were awarded \$260,000 to assist 122 disadvantaged jobseekers, the majority of whom were women wanting to return to the workforce after having children. The project was a huge success, with 92 women gaining employment—people like Lenice, who wanted to do more for her local community and who spent a majority of her time helping out on the family farm. Upon completion of the program she secured a job as the Indigenous liaison officer at the local primary school.

In Brisbane, Patricia undertook a project through Career Employment Australia for construction works at the Camp Hill Bowls Club. Patricia gained hands-on experience including landscaping, construction and painting. Patricia struggled to find an employer who would take on a mature age worker. With her previous experience as a painter, Patricia was a valuable source of knowledge for the other trainees and gained full-time employment as a painter upon completion of the course.

Throughout Queensland I meet people with remarkable stories. Many say that without the support of Skilling Queenslanders for Work they would not have got a job. Many community organisations stress to me the importance of the program and explain the devastating impact of the LNP's decision to cut the program. They could not understand why any government would walk away from a program that was so successful in getting people jobs, with every dollar spent returning \$8 back to the community.

Skilling Queenslanders for Work has been so successful that the Palaszczuk government has committed an extra \$180 million over the next three years, due to the huge demand from the community—\$80 million will now be invested every year, creating more job opportunities for Queenslanders. It is important that we continue to invest in this vital support as our state goes from strength to strength. We can only imagine what the career path will be for little Elizabeth, our five millionth Queenslanders, but we can be sure that the Labor government will invest in the skills and training she needs to follow her dreams. Like many on this side of the House, I look forward to the Skilling Queenslanders for Work graduations and seeing the very proud smiles on the families, friends and, most particularly, the graduates who have now gained a qualification and, in most cases, a job.