



Speech By  
**Hon. Shannon Fentiman**


**MEMBER FOR WATERFORD**

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Record of Proceedings, 17 October 2018

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

**Anti-Poverty Week**

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development) (10.06 am): As many members would know, this week is national Anti-Poverty Week. Now in its 15th year, Anti-Poverty Week gives us an opportunity to highlight the plight of people experiencing poverty and to recommit to addressing these issues. It is estimated that there are currently half a million people in Queensland currently experiencing poverty. It remains important that we continue to focus on combating women's poverty. Research released yesterday by ACOSS and the University of New South Wales reminds us that women are more likely to live in households below the poverty line than men. Yesterday it was an honour to co-host a women and poverty forum with Micah Projects and my colleague Minister Farmer. It was a fantastic event and we were privileged to hear personal stories from women with a lived experience of poverty. I want to thank them for their courage in sharing their stories.

The ability to access education and training is often key to escaping poverty and gaining financial independence. Initiatives like Skilling Queenslanders for Work are giving women the training tools to break the cycle of poverty and create meaningful careers. More than 17,500 women have been assisted through the Skilling Queenslanders for Work program, with 63 per cent reporting a positive outcome of either secure employment, further training or education.

During the recent period governing from Toowoomba, I visited the YWCA to congratulate them on winning the 2018 Community Training Initiative of the Year award in this year's regional training awards. They are a fantastic example of how our Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative is helping women gain work skills and giving them a step up to find a job. Through the giving a hand project the Toowoomba YWCA has assisted 26 women gain work while at the same time giving back to the community. The project sees food that would otherwise be wasted delivered to homeless people and women and children fleeing domestic violence. It is truly an incredible program. They are showing the difference that one organisation can make in addressing poverty in our community.

While I was at the Y, I had the opportunity to meet Zahra. She is a migrant from Afghanistan who engaged with the Y and Skilling Queenslanders for Work program and has now commenced employment as an apprentice electrician with Ergon Energy. Not only has Zahra worked incredibly hard to gain work skills; she has commenced employment in a male dominated industry and she is loving it. Zahra is showing what can be achieved if we give women the education, training and mentoring to achieve their dreams. It is fantastic to see programs like Skilling Queenslanders for Work giving women like Zahra meaningful careers, helping them break the cycle of poverty.