




Speech By
Hon. Shannon Fentiman

MEMBER FOR WATERFORD

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

TAFE Queensland

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development) (10.06 am): The Palaszczuk government's free TAFE is proving a winner with young Queenslanders. Last month I saw firsthand the difference free TAFE is making when I visited TAFE Queensland campuses at Southport, Nambour and Gympie. At just these three campuses we are supporting over 400 students gain valuable training for free.

In Nambour, Ben, who graduated last year from the Suncoast Christian College, is on the way to a successful career in our growing horticulture industry. He was considering setting up his own lawn-mowing business when his parents mentioned free TAFE. He grabbed the opportunity with both hands to upskill with TAFE to give his business dreams the best chance of success.

I visited the TAFE Queensland Southport Hospitality Hub with the member for Gaven and met Moana, who graduated from Beenleigh State High School last year. She is looking forward to a bright future in hospitality once she finishes her Certificate III in Hospitality and she hopes to work in a five-star establishment. This is something Moana said she could not do if it was not free. These are just a few of the thousands of young people taking advantage of the Palaszczuk government's free TAFE initiative. We want all young Queenslanders to have the opportunity to access quality training without barriers, and that is what free TAFE is all about. It is paving the way for young Queenslanders to pursue their dream job and, to quote the students, it is too good an opportunity to pass up.

Vocational education and training is so critical in so many industries and launches young Queenslanders into amazing careers. We are doing all of this without any assistance from the federal government. In fact, there has been a \$70 million cut to the training budget in Queensland, which puts the 7,000 trainees and apprentices at risk. In tonight's budget we want to see a fair share for TAFE in Queensland, for apprentices and for trainees.