




Speech By
Hon. Shannon Fentiman

MEMBER FOR WATERFORD

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ADJOURNMENT

Waterford Electorate, Apprenticeships

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development) (7.14 pm): Earlier this month it was fantastic to host my cabinet colleagues in Logan in the seat of Waterford. I was delighted also to visit Marsden State High School with the Premier and the education minister to announce that we are delivering free apprenticeships for people under 21. Access to education and training should be the right of all Queenslanders. I am proud that the Palaszczuk government is delivering on this commitment and extending our free TAFE for year 12 graduates. An apprenticeship is not just a great training opportunity, it is also a job and the start of a great career.

Marsden State High School was the perfect backdrop to launch this game changing \$32 million investment. Marsden State High School punches above its weight when it comes to VET in schools and has the fourth largest uptake of VET in schools across Queensland. This means a large number of their students already have a qualification before they even leave school. I am pleased to say the leadership shown by the school community, led by principal Andrew Peach, is making a real difference.

As I talk to small businesses in my electorate of Waterford I am hearing that our government's programs are making such a difference to enable them to grow and employ more people. Last Friday I met 16-year-old Bailey, an automotive spray painting apprentice, from Bayer Smash Repairs. Bailey is one of the 60,000 apprentices across Queensland who will benefit from our initiatives. Travis Cowley of Bayer Smash Repairs said it is not easy finding young people to take up apprenticeships and welcomed our new announcement. The manager welcomed the initiative, saying it was important to teach young guys now so that there would still be skilled tradesmen in 10 or 20 years time.

As part of our small business roadshow I attended the Logan Chamber of Commerce AGM and spoke to them not only about free apprenticeships but also about our \$885 million payroll tax rebates. We are increasing the payroll tax threshold, the biggest change to payroll tax in a decade, and we are continuing our apprenticeship rebate. These initiatives are making it easier for Waterford businesses to grow and employ more locals. It was great to speak with business owners Laura and Eric Guthrie from Munster Mechanical in my electorate about how they can continue to grow their business. Munster Mechanical is a fantastic local business that has taken on a school based apprentice, Ihaka Tango. Ihaka is a Mabel Park State High School student and he will continue on as an apprentice boilermaker once he finishes high school. Free apprenticeships, payroll tax initiatives—we are backing Logan businesses, we are backing young people in Logan and I am so proud to be part of the Palaszczuk government that is making it easier for businesses to grow and employ more Queenslanders.