




Speech By
Hon. Shannon Fentiman

MEMBER FOR WATERFORD

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Coronavirus, Training and Skills

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development) (9.53 am): COVID-19 has hit every economy. No-one has been immune, including Queensland. The Palaszczuk government's response has been swift. We were the first state in Australia to declare a health emergency and the first to roll out economic support for our tourism industry. As we focus on our economic recovery, we are ensuring that Queenslanders have every tool available to help them get back to work.

As we continue to transition towards a post-COVID-19 economy, we know that skilling and training will be critical in ensuring Queenslanders can fill the jobs that are in demand. Along with free COVID-19 safe training to get businesses back up and running as our restrictions ease, we have also provided a wide range of free online training through TAFE Queensland and Central Queensland University. The free online courses cover skills in health support, community care, food service and customer engagement, as well as digital literacy and data security.

There have been almost 20,000 enrolments since the program came online in March. In June we launched a partnership with Go1, an international online training company based right here in Queensland, to deliver hundreds of online courses for free to Queenslanders and to Queensland businesses. It is a world first. Queenslanders can skill up in skills like CV writing, interview preparation as well as sales, finance and IT. The Netflix for training platform is available to small businesses, their employees and anyone whose job may have been impacted by COVID-19.

Today the Palaszczuk government has announced additional support for Skilling Queenslanders for Work. Up to 500 Skilling Queenslanders for Work trainee positions will be created, with an additional \$10 million investment. We are extending the popular Back to Work program, including for the first time an additional apprentice and trainee boost of \$20,000 for businesses who employ an eligible apprentice or trainee. Back to work has created almost 23,000 jobs across Queensland including in Mount Isa, where HardRok Engineering has been able to hire Jacob McLaren who started his boilermaker apprenticeship late last year. Elayne said that Back to Work was so helpful in supporting businesses at that time because so much money goes into training and skilling up new employees.

Queensland remains the national leader in providing the most comprehensive training response during this pandemic. Our extensive free training and skilling packages ensure that we remain a step ahead on the road to economic recovery. The Palaszczuk government has been unwavering in its commitment to supporting Queenslanders through this crisis and focusing on jobs.