




Speech By
Hon. Shannon Fentiman

MEMBER FOR WATERFORD

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Apprenticeships

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development) (10.01 am): A little over a year ago the Palaszczuk government announced the free apprenticeships for under-21s initiative. That \$32 million investment was about one thing: taking away the cost of training for a young person to get a ticket to a trade. I am pleased to report that, one year on, more than 21,000 Queenslanders have been supported through this program. That is a fantastic result and we are well ahead of our goal of supporting 60,000 free apprentices by 2023. Investing in skills and training will be absolutely crucial to our economic recovery. The program is supporting thousands of young people into careers in key industry areas including construction, engineering, hospitality and manufacturing.

Across the state when I have visited TAFE campuses and local businesses I have met many young Queenslanders who are on their way to a bright career for free thanks to this program. Recently, I visited Buywood Furniture in Alderley where I met Ethan and Bryn. They love the hands-on skills they are learning at that 130-year-old Brisbane family business. In Bundaberg I met young engineering apprentice Kurt, who said that he was able to use the money saved on training to purchase more tools. Ethan, Bryn and Kurt are just some of the many young Queenslanders undertaking one of 139 free apprenticeship qualifications on offer in the industries where we know there will be jobs.

As we continue to rebuild our economy we will need skilled workers to help Queensland get going. That is why investing in skills is one of the pillars of our economic recovery plan to unite and recover. Our free apprenticeships program backs local businesses by removing the cost of training for taking on a young apprentice or trainee. Not only does this help the business to grow but it also provides fantastic career opportunities for young Queenslanders.

We know economic conditions are incredibly tough and that is why we want to give Queenslanders the opportunity to skill and train for the jobs now and in the future. Now more than ever, our free apprenticeships and free TAFE initiatives are crucial in helping young Queenslanders to find their dream job and build a successful career.