




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MACKAY

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PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Mackay Electorate, Women in Trades

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (2.39 pm): This week is Queensland Women's Week, showcasing the strength of women in our community. It is fantastic to see our young women exploring possibilities for their careers and having the confidence to engage in the work that best suits their talents and their interests. In my region there is a focus across industry to have a diverse and inclusive workforce. Girls and women are continuing to choose traditionally male dominated fields of work.

This year the BMA apprenticeship intake of Mackay's young people saw a talented pool of 14 young women take up apprenticeships. We need to open the doors to a diverse workforce across all industry if we are going to be able to fill many trades and the skilled workers that we need to keep our industries growing. Central Queensland is experiencing a trade shortage. It is encouraging to see that an extra 60 women have signed up for engineering apprenticeships in Mackay over the past year. The number of female engineering apprentices in Mackay has tripled in the past 12 months, with skills and training set to play a big role in the state's economic recovery. More women are pursuing training in trade industries such as automotive, construction and engineering.

In comparison to this time last year, 32 per cent more women are in engineering training across Queensland. These new apprentices are part of the 1,300 young people in Mackay and the Whitsunday region who have taken advantage of the state government's free apprenticeship initiative. The world of trades is an exciting place and it is in high demand. That is why we have extended our free TAFE from under-21s to under-25s. These initiatives will help keep so many of our young people getting the training and skills in the industries that are in demand in our region. Small and large businesses are wanting to put on more apprentices. This boost gives their businesses the confidence to engage additional apprentices.

Apprentices will have start-of-the-art facilities and training with a \$7.5 million injection of Palaszczuk government funds to expand the heavy automotive facilities at the Mackay Ooralea Trades Training Centre at CQU. Mining companies and contractors need these training facilities in Mackay and I look forward to meeting the new apprentices who will be gaining their skills in these facilities. Previously, apprentices had to travel away from home. Being able to train close to home means that we will be able to increase our rate of retention and completion.