




Speech By
Charis Mullen

MEMBER FOR JORDAN

Record of Proceedings, 1 September 2022

MOTION

Jobs, Skills and Training

 **Mrs MULLEN** (Jordan—ALP) (12.15 pm): I am pleased to speak in support of the Deputy Premier's motion and commend the Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development on this week's launch of *Good people good jobs: Queensland Workforce Strategy*. The strategy aims to connect, educate and attract the state's workforce to ensure the continued success of our economy and enhance our state's reputation as the best place to live, work and play. However, I will tell members what is not in the strategy: there is no strategy to destabilise and undermine TAFE, because we are not the LNP. In 2014 the Newman LNP government passed the Queensland Training Assets Management Authority Act. This act established QTAMA as a statutory authority. Its role was to operate commercially with the capacity to dispose of 'under-utilised' government property but without any requirement to assess the impact of its operations on training needs.

With this model in place, TAFE came under a punitive rental rates scheme designed to push it out of facilities it had previously owned. In order to minimise the financial impact, TAFE compressed its footprint in campuses, even abandoning some. The result? Empty buildings, including some of the newest and best trade-training facilities. People looking suspiciously like real estate agents started to be seen on TAFE campuses, showing prospective clients around, and RTOs moved into facilities with no thought given to whether they would be in competition with TAFE or the impact on TAFE's reputation from clients mistakenly thinking their educational experience was being provided by the public provider. The impact of these attacks on TAFE Queensland were exacerbated with the LNP government's move to fully contestable funding, making TAFE scramble in the street with other providers for dollars for its employees.

But let us take a step back. In a media article in 2012, then minister for education John-Paul Langbroek moved to calm TAFE students after a government commissioned task force report recommended closing more than a dozen Brisbane metropolitan campuses. Mr Langbroek told prospective TAFE students that 'it's business as usual' at campuses until the government decided whether to uphold the recommendations of the report. He went on to say that media reports about claiming wholesale closures of TAFE campuses were untrue and should not deter prospective students considering study options for the next year.

Of the 40 recommendations in that task force report, the minister accepted 35, with the other five receiving in-principle support, so TAFE students had nothing to fear—except they did. The report recommended a rationalised structure of TAFE, and we all know what that meant—a raft of campus closures and sales across Queensland. A little closer to home, the *Redland Times* reported the Alexandra Hills TAFE campus on Windemere Road was one of the campuses facing possible closure.

Then Cleveland MP and now member for Oodgeroo, Mark Robinson, said the three Redland City state MPs were working to ensure the city retained some form of tertiary institute, possibly in Cleveland near the train station. I am not making this up; this is from the article—

Mr Robinson, a teacher at TAFE before taking up politics, said a 'TAFE-like tertiary college' would help revitalise the Cleveland CBD.

No credibility on training and skills, no plan on jobs.