




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR BANCROFT

Record of Proceedings, 21 February 2023

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Skilling Queenslanders for Work

 **Mr WHITING** (Bancroft—ALP) (2.23 pm): After listening to that diatribe of mansplaining for five minutes, I want to point out one thing that the LNP could never deliver which makes a real difference to this state. That is the Skilling Queenslanders for Work program, the program that they cut. Today we have been talking about programs that make a real difference in turning people's lives around and making sure they are breaking the cycle. I say that the Skilling Queenslanders for Work program is probably one of the most successful programs seen in Australia that changes young people's lives. I have seen it in my area.

In Deception Bay Skilling Queenslanders for Work at the neighbourhood centre has helped 962 people into employment; Movement TwentyTwo, 410 people into employment; and Community Youth Programs, now called Younity, 570 people into employment. The numbers are probably much higher. These are on-the-ground, successful, community-based programs that are making a difference, breaking the cycle and turning people's lives around. That is one thing the LNP would never do and could never do. They never invested in our young people in our communities when they were in government and they will never do so again.

I want to talk a bit about how we got our successful community-based programs that take on these programs to break the cycle. Community Youth Programs started in Deception Bay over 25 years ago. There was a youth issue and it was pretty intense at night. A group of local people got together to hold barbecues at midnight so these young people could come and talk about their problems and build up that trust over many months. Once you have that trust, you can work with the young people and get them into programs. We started doing community programs to help those young people.

Then they decided to start programs for families, working with those families for young people. They extended what they did for young people to families. Finally, they started working at getting into employment and employment programs because that is what turns people's lives around. That is what helps break the cycle when there are programs that are working with young people and families to put them into work. That is one of the things that really changes lives and breaks the cycle.

Community Youth Programs also run the YAMBI program, which is funded by youth justice. They work with a variety of young people in every aspect of life, whether it be helping them get mental health plans or working with them to get the skills to get the job they need. In the last couple of weeks I visited a program they run called the Push! program. There was an issue with young people at the Deception Bay shopping centre, so the shopping centre provided a space for Younity. There are two men there—they are great role models for young people in the area—and they are working on bikes. These young people come down and they get a bike. It is like a professional workshop. They work on that bike and when their project is finished that bike is theirs. During that time they are liaising with other young people and engaging with Community Youth Programs and those really strong role models.

That is just one program run by an organisation that we are supporting. I want to applaud the work of the neighbourhood centre, Community Youth Programs—Younity—and Movement TwentyTwo. They are doing everything they can in our community to make sure young people and their families are not caught in that endless cycle. We are breaking that cycle.

One of the things we do fund—and we would never see the LNP doing this—is services that provide those wraparound services such as mental health, health and education. It is about working with the young people and their family to make sure every aspect of their life is being helped. They are also delivering those soft skills: turning up for work, having a shower, having a shave, making sure they turn up on time, learning how to write a resume and how to catch public transport. These things are all small things, but they are absolutely crucial if we are going to address those issues that many young people in our community face.

These are only some examples of the work we have been doing for years and years that has helped make a difference to tens of thousands of lives throughout our state. Over the coming years we will be seeing even more of an emphasis on these programs that are delivered because that is something we will never stop doing. We will never stop working with communities and young people to make sure they get the best start in life. We are not going to throw them on the scrap heap. We will make sure they have the skills to be productive Queenslanders for the future.