



Speech By  
**Hon. Di Farmer**


**MEMBER FOR BULIMBA**

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Record of Proceedings, 23 May 2023

**MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST**

**Reimagining Workforce; Liberal National Party, Candidates**

 **Hon. DE FARMER** (Bulimba—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Small Business, Minister for Training and Skills Development and Minister for Youth Justice) (2.54 pm): Last week I was very proud to host Reimagining Workforce, our second workforce summit that addresses the pressures that workforce shortages are placing on every sector in every region. The event is a part of our Good People Good Jobs: Queensland Workforce Strategy, which we backed with a \$70 million action plan. It is already delivering results. This summit was yet another success. Nearly 500 people, either in person or online, were discussing how we can think differently about recruiting and retaining workers—not only because it is right to have a diverse and inclusive workforce and to treat workers right but also because you get better outcomes if you do. As far as the workforce goes, it means you get more workers.

Dylan Alcott, the keynote speaker, challenged our thinking about employing people with disabilities. Consultant David Pick talked about the four-day working week. Geoff Smith from ASA talked about employing neurodiverse people in the IT sector. Belinda Watton from Eureka, which is part of Energy Queensland, spoke about how she deliberately targeted and achieved 30 per cent participation from females in the very male-dominated energy industry. That is a topic we are very much engaged in in the employment portfolio, because we know that there are significant barriers for women in male-dominated occupations. That is why last year I commissioned the Training Ombudsman to look at barriers for apprentices, with a focus on female apprentices in male-dominated occupations. He discovered that a lot of apprentices do not know who to turn to. They do not understand what their rights are. They find it really hard to raise an issue with their employer. We have put in place a strategy that has seen us contact over 90,000 apprentices and trainees individually. In addition, we have conducted nearly 3½ thousand workplace visits. We have launched the successful Let's Protect Respect campaign, which has achieved more than 49 million impressions on social media.

Part of the work the ombudsman did was to identify which male-dominated sectors present the most challenges for women. They were construction, motor trades, manufacturing, furnishings, communications and utilities. I was actually thinking he possibly should have added another category. He probably should have added politics, but not all politics—just LNP politics, because the numbers on the other side of the chamber say it all. They have six women in their caucus. We could slip 'LNP politics' into the QTO's report and make it apply to every single point the ombudsman made. We on this side of the House say that you cannot be what you cannot see. I can tell members what aspiring female LNP politicians see. I have spoken to young LNP women who are just totally depressed about what they see ahead of them. They see that when a female, such as the member for Nanango, is in leadership they are done over by a bloke such as the member for Broadwater, who already did over another woman to get his seat—poor Verity. They see the leader proclaiming that he is going to get more women into winnable seats and then, quick as a flash, he is not doing it. Exhibit A is Callide, one of the safest LNP seats in Queensland, where they appointed a bloke. Aren't we lucky?

To be fair, the Leader of the Opposition has named three female candidates—for Cairns, Thuringowa and Redlands—but they are in seats the LNP does not currently hold. They are not rolled gold. It will be interesting to see what the Leader of the Opposition does in the seats the LNP holds. We hear that the member for Burleigh is talking about retiring. They could select a woman candidate, but the word is that Councillor Hermann Vorster, a bloke, will get it. There is a race on for Stuart Robert's seat of Fadden—two blokes and a woman. Let's hope she is successful this time, because she is one of four women done over by a bloke for the seat of Bowman when Henry Pike was preselected. Of course, it looks like the LNP is going to kick out Senator Gerard Rennick. The frontrunner is Nelson Savanh—a bloke and definitely a member of one of the boys clubs. We hear that he has senators James McGrath and David Littleproud going for him. He is a former adviser to the Lord Mayor and a former adviser to the opposition leader.

We know that the Leader of the Opposition is desperate about his women's problem. The member for Chatsworth is desperate. The member for Clayfield is desperate. The member for Moggill is desperate. The member for Bonney is desperate. He is supposed to be the voice of social conscience. They are worried sick about what female voters are going to say about the troglodytes who do not support women. There are a number of members on the other side saying, 'Don't put women in seats; we have blokes lined up for them.' Do you know how you fix it? You fix it by showing leadership. That is what leadership is all about. If he wants to know how to do that, he just needs to speak to our Premier. We are about equity and representing all of—

*(Time expired)*