




Speech By
Hon. Di Farmer

MEMBER FOR BULIMBA

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Training and Skills, Infrastructure

 **Hon. DE FARMER** (Bulimba—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Small Business, Minister for Training and Skills Development and Minister for Youth Justice) (10.09 am): The latest figure on the Fee-Free TAFE initiative that the Palaszczuk government is jointly funding with the federal government is 45,000. That is 45,000 people who may never have otherwise had the opportunity to get the training or skills to get a job. This initiative is life-changing—even more so in these times when the cost of living is such an issue. We look forward to negotiating Queensland's share of the next tranche of 300,000 fee-free TAFE places across Australia which the federal government has just announced.

Relief on fees is only part of the equation for vocational education in Queensland. This government believes that, no matter who they are or where they are in Queensland, people deserve the same access to high-quality vocational education. This is why investing in TAFE facilities across the state is a key part of this government's Big Build program—a record four-year \$88.729 billion capital program.

Since 2017 we have invested over \$288 million to build new and upgrade existing TAFE facilities across Queensland. Every month I seem to be opening a new TAFE facility: the \$1.1 million Toowoomba stage 2 of the Rural Centre of Excellence in February; the \$2.95 million South Bank Cyber Security Training Operation Centre and Robotics Lab in February; the \$1.32 million Hervey Bay nursing and allied health upgrades, which I opened with the local member; the \$3.5 million Mount Isa Engineering and Trade Workshop in June; and the TAFE Coomera Cyber Security Training Operation Centre in August.

There are more Big Build TAFE projects underway across the state. I am looking forward to opening the \$1.5 million community TAFE learning centre in Yarrabilba; the \$7.5 million Ooralea Trade Training Centre expansion in Mackay; the \$8.4 million campus consolidation in Rockhampton; the \$13.2 million Hydrogen and Renewable Energy Training Facility and the \$5 million advanced manufacturing skills lab at Bohle TAFE in Townsville; the \$7 million metal trades, manufacturing and robotics centre in Bundamba; and the \$4.1 million advanced manufacturing skills lab in Cairns.

There are yet more Big Build TAFE projects to come: in Cairns, the \$16 million Great Barrier Reef International Marine College expansion; at Eagle Farm, the \$40 million robotics and advanced manufacturing centre; and at Bundaberg, the \$1 million advanced manufacturing skills centre and the \$3.35 million agriculture and horticulture centre. There are new TAFE Big Build projects across the state. This government's capital program will directly support around 58,000 jobs, creating generational change and providing first-class facilities for all Queenslanders. We are continuing to deliver the economic and social infrastructure needed to support a growing Queensland.