




Speech By
Hon. Di Farmer

MEMBER FOR BULIMBA

Record of Proceedings, 24 October 2023

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Renewable Energy, Training

 **Hon. DE FARMER** (Bulimba—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Small Business, Minister for Training and Skills Development and Minister for Youth Justice) (10.05 am): Since 2017 the Palaszczuk government has invested close to \$300 million in building new and upgrading existing training facilities across Queensland. There is so much going on through our Big Build investments that I have literally turned a sod or opened a new or upgraded TAFE facility on average almost every month for the last year. Through this program we are building the infrastructure to meet the demand for the jobs of the future and in no space more so than in making sure Queensland workers are skilled to work in the renewable energy future of our state under our Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan.

Last week it was my great pleasure to turn the first sod on the latest of these projects, the new \$40 million Big Build robotics and advanced manufacturing centre at Eagle Farm TAFE. Expected to be completed in September 2024, this new facility will provide specialised training in robotics, advanced manufacturing and process instrumentation and, importantly, renewable energy technologies. The investment in this project is on top of the significant investment we have already made in equipping our workers for the renewable energy future: the \$50 million we had already committed to new facilities, including for our new hydrogen training centre of excellence at Beenleigh and the new Pinkenba renewable energy training facility; \$12.45 million to build a hydrogen and renewable energy training facility at Bohle TAFE; and upgrading facilities at Gladstone State High School. Under our \$15 million VET Emerging Industries initiative, in partnership with industry, we are investing in pilot projects to develop new training initiatives in renewable energy like the skills mapping at the Kogan Creek green hydrogen demonstration plant and training for battery EVs and H2 fuel cell vehicles.

Queensland was the first state to produce a hydrogen industry workforce road map, guiding our investment in skills—many of those still to be defined—in this very important but emerging industry. That includes an investment in our school students. Many of our future hydrogen industry workers are still at school. We know that if a student has direct experience in an industry they are more likely to choose a career path in that industry. That is why this year we added hydrogen to our successful Gateway to Industry Schools program. The hydrogen GISP is being delivered to 32 schools and is projected to help 2,000 students over the next three years and build a pipeline of workers for the hydrogen industry.

Last week we signed the National Skills Agreement with the federal government, providing access to over \$2.5 billion for skills and training in Queensland. This is a major coup for Queensland, recognising the challenges but also the opportunities in delivering training to a vast and decentralised state like Queensland. It includes an allocation of 44,500 Fee-Free TAFE places, on top of the 37,000 Fee-Free TAFE places we funded in partnership with the federal government last year, which we managed to convert to 58,000 free training places with additional allocations. Under this initiative, important renewable energy courses have been offered free, including in sustainable energy, in battery

electric vehicle inspection and servicing skill set, and in automotive electric vehicle technology—Queensland's first EV apprenticeship through TAFE Queensland. Clean energy industries are an important future for our workers and we are making sure we have the skills and training to get them there.