



Speech By  
**James Lister**


**MEMBER FOR SOUTHERN DOWNS**

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Record of Proceedings, 20 March 2024

**EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING COMMITTEE**

**Report, Motion to Take Note**

 **Mr LISTER** (Southern Downs—LNP) (2.28 pm): I rise following the contribution of the member for Redlands.

**Ms Richards:** I should have said ‘thank you’.

**Mr LISTER:** I can speak for the committee, since the chair missed that bit, by saying that we had a great time doing this inquiry.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Hart): When you have finished, members.

**Mr LISTER:** I want to pay compliments to all members of the committee: the member for Redlands as chair and the members for Stafford, Rockhampton, Theodore and Hinchinbrook.

**Ms Richards:** A good travelling party.

**Mr LISTER:** We were a good travelling party and we learned a lot. If there is one particular benefit of the committee system it is that it gives backbenchers exposure to all sorts of aspects of government administration and outputs. I certainly learned and experienced things that I did not even know I did not know, as I often do with committee work. I was particularly impressed—and I was just talking to the member for Theodore about this—that the Cairns TAFE has a contract with the federal government to provide ship masters certificates, particularly for our Pacific neighbours. Over many long years the federal government has provided patrol boats as a gift to our Pacific neighbours. As part of that, they train the crews to be able to sail them and take them back to their home. There was a bridge simulator there, which is fantastic, and they also give them the experience of using commercial vessels in Cairns harbour. That was great to see.

There is not enough time for me to talk about all of the recommendations, of course. One recommendation of the committee report was—

The committee recommends that the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training (i) clarify when it will open the next round of applications for Skills Assure status, and (ii) clarify how it decides whether to issue more targeted invitations to apply for Skills Assure status in response to an identified need.

It is important that there is always scrutiny and renewal in the Skills Assure supplier role because I did hear from some training organisations that deliver skills under this program that there are others out there who do not necessarily do the right thing. I am sure it is a minority, but we heard anecdotal evidence that young people in particular who have an entitlement under the federal scheme of a certain amount of funding for vocational training are being signed up to courses that are dead ends for them. An example I could concoct might involve training someone from Thursday Island as a heating engineer. Where that has happened, the government ought to be vigilant and hold suppliers to account to ensure they are not being party to a wastage of training entitlements for some of these young people.

I would also like to say how important the training system is in regional areas like Southern Downs. I was in Goondiwindi talking to some training providers who were saying that completion rates for training that is relevant and for which employers need those particular skills are always much higher. It is important that we look at the delivery of TAFE and VET training in rural Queensland to ensure we are not constraining the growth of employment, of business and of communities because of a lack of training. That is something that has become very clear to me, too.

I really enjoyed the opportunity to do this inquiry. I thank the members of the committee and those who worked with us, and I thank those people from all over Queensland who submitted to us and informed us of their needs and views. I commend the report to the House.