




Speech By
Hon. Lance McCallum

MEMBER FOR BUNDAMBA

Record of Proceedings, 13 February 2024

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

White, Ms V; TAFE

 **Hon. LR McCALLUM** (Bundamba—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development) (10.01 am): With my first words this year I pay tribute to Vyleen White and express my sincerest condolences to her family and loved ones. I foreshadow a fuller statement on behalf of the Bundamba community at the appropriate time.

I am proud to rise in this place for the first time as a minister, and I am humbled and honoured to be the first Aboriginal man in Queensland's history to speak in this place as a minister. It is my hope that young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and those from all diverse backgrounds see that this place can be a space for them should they so choose. In the Miles government there is always a place for them.

As Minister for Training and Skills Development, I have had the privilege of meeting many Queenslanders whose stories demonstrate that TAFE and vocational education and training transforms lives for the better—quality training that leads to recognised qualifications that get Queenslanders into work and into good jobs. Last month I was honoured to kick off the construction of \$4.5 million in new facilities at Bundaberg TAFE, and I want to acknowledge the hard work and advocacy of the member for Bundaberg. In Bundaberg I met Kerryn Griffis—or, as she is known, Kez—a TAFE student and single mum of five who recently graduated with a Certificate III in Conservation and Ecosystem Management. Karen's passion about protecting the environment now means that she is pursuing a brand new career in that sector. Without the Miles government's Fee-Free TAFE Karen is adamant that she would not have been able to follow that dream.

That is what the Miles government is about: helping Queenslanders and empowering Queenslanders to back themselves and helping ease national cost-of-living pressures while we support them. It means backing more Queenslanders with free apprenticeships and free TAFE. It also means supporting our hardworking small businesses with the services and initiatives they need to thrive and compete with big business, including those that have been impacted by recent natural disasters. Small business is the engine room of our economy, and we want to help make doing business in Queensland a little easier, because the Miles Labor government will always put Queenslanders first.