




Speech By
Hon. Lance McCallum

MEMBER FOR BUNDAMBA

Record of Proceedings, 7 March 2024

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Women, Vocational Education and Training

 **Hon. LR McCALLUM** (Bundamba—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development) (9.51 am): We know that TAFE and vocational education and training has the extraordinary potential to change the lives of Queenslanders, and with so many good jobs on offer through our Big Build and record investments in health, education, clean energy and housing, there has never been a more important time to 'count her in'. So we can give our Queensland women the best support for their new or existing careers, we are investing in free TAFE for over 70 courses and extending our free TAFE supported apprenticeships for under 25s so we can skill up more Queensland women for our state's best jobs and industries now and in the future.

So far, this year alone there are over 10,000 new Queenslanders benefiting from free TAFE. An incredible two-thirds of them are women. It is thanks to this Labor government that nearly 80,000 Queensland women have taken up a new skills and training opportunity in just the last eight months. That is equivalent to the population of Rockhampton, and I know that will please the members for Keppel and Rockhampton, who are both great advocates for working women.

Right now there are more than 36,000 women training across TAFE Queensland, and in the last five years the number of Queensland women in apprenticeships and traineeships has grown by a whopping 72 per cent. That is a record this Miles Labor government is proud of. To get even more women into careers we have also introduced the let's protect respect initiative. It is building more equitable and inclusive workplaces for apprentices and trainees in construction, and it is paying serious dividends. The number of female apprentices and trainees entering the industry has more than doubled since 2019, but we are not stopping there to count her in. The Miles government this week launched a new campaign to inspire Queenslanders to earn while they learn. It is called Apprenticeships Work for Everyone. A key emphasis of this campaign is encouraging and supporting many more Queensland women to get qualified and into a rewarding new career.

While today we are celebrating Queensland Women's Week with our free TAFE and free apprenticeships, every day is another proud opportunity for the Miles government to count her in.