



Speech By  
**Hon. Lance McCallum**


**MEMBER FOR BUNDAMBA**

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Record of Proceedings, 20 March 2024

## **MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

### **Vocational Education and Training**

 **Hon. LR McCALLUM** (Bundamba—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development) (9.54 am): Queensland is booming with low unemployment, record infrastructure and a strong economic outlook. Because the Miles Labor government is listening to Queenslanders, we are delivering record cost-of-living relief as well as unprecedented infrastructure investment. For hardworking Queenslanders, this represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity because it means that right now there are many good jobs on offer in all sectors right across Queensland. But, to gain a good job you need the right qualification, and national cost-of-living pressures should not send someone backwards. That is where the Miles government's free TAFE kicks in.

Right across the state, this year alone, there are more than 10,000 Queenslanders taking up one of the 74 courses on offer for free. Last week, the members for Caloundra and Nicklin had the chance to meet two of these students. Bailey Loenneker from the Sunshine Coast and Charli Mellon from Toowoomba are both benefiting from a free air conditioning and refrigeration apprenticeship. Speaking about her free apprenticeship, 18-year-old Charlie said, 'It is been really good because she probably couldn't do it if she had to pay for it, especially being an apprentice.'

As for Bailey, his passion and training has seen him earn recognition at the national WorldSkills competition and he is now heading to France with the Aussie Skillaroos to represent our nation on the international stage. From a keen kid in his dad's workshop to the world stage, Bailey is reaching new career goals thanks to the Miles government's free TAFE. I know that every member on this side of the House will join the members for Caloundra, Nicklin and me in wishing Bailey the very best. When we invest in free TAFE we are not just investing in a pipeline of highly skilled workers for our economy, we are giving real cost-of-living relief and a bright future to tens of thousands of Queenslanders—Queenslanders just like Charli and Bailey.