




Speech By
Hon. Lance McCallum

MEMBER FOR BUNDAMBA

Record of Proceedings, 17 April 2024

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

TAFE

 **Hon. LR McCALLUM** (Bundamba—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development) (10.07 am): Thanks to the Miles government, right now there are electrical apprentices training to become the next crop of Queensland SuperGrid Superheroes, and they are doing it for free. There is an army of student SuperGrid Superheroes who are set to take up a high-paying, high-vis career in Queensland's big build of renewable energy. They will be working on everything from large-scale renewable energy generation, transmission and distribution to battery and pumped hydro storage or, like 19-year-old apprentice Cooper Gough, they will be working on the nation's biggest power station—Queensland's rooftop solar. Recently, the members for Redlands, Capalaba and I met Cooper and his fellow students studying a Certificate III in Electrotechnology Electrician. With a big build of renewable energy, is it any wonder that it has been one of Queensland's most popular courses at TAFE, with over 5,000 students enrolling last year. Here is the best part—Cooper is doing his apprenticeship for free.

I can inform the House that Queensland has hit another free TAFE milestone for our Big Build. As of this morning, more than 14,000 Queenslanders have taken up one of our free TAFE courses which is saving Queenslanders like Cooper around \$1,700. While Cooper is on his way to a good career, I am worried for the students who are enrolling in free TAFE for semester 2—those students who are thinking about doing it right now. What happens to the future of free TAFE students if an LNP government is elected in October? Will the LNP cut free TAFE and jack up fees like they did last time, or sell off campuses and sack TAFE workers like they did last time?

The Miles government's message to Queenslanders who are studying free TAFE is that free TAFE is locked under Labor. If you are looking to save money on upskilling, reskilling or kickstarting your career as a Queensland SuperGrid Superhero, free TAFE and our Energy and Jobs Plan are your golden tickets to getting the skills you need to get a good, secure, highly paid job. There has never been a more important time to get electrical apprentices or SuperGrid Superheroes skilled up and into the workforce, delivering vital infrastructure, securing our energy transition and delivering a generation's worth of good, secure local jobs.