




Speech By
Hon. Lance McCallum

MEMBER FOR BUNDAMBA

Record of Proceedings, 10 September 2024

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Queensland Training Awards; TAFE

 **Hon. LR McCALLUM** (Bundamba—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development) (10.05 am): Good training not only changes lives; it transforms communities. Over the weekend, we celebrated Queensland's finest at the 2024 Queensland Training Awards. From apprentices to trainees and teachers to employers, the awards showcased the very best of Queensland's frontline training heroes, none more important than those in our healthcare sector.

The dedication of Aurukun's own Rhonda Woolla to a Certificate IV in Pre-Hospital Emergency Medical Response earned her the title of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student of the Year. What a true champion! I am sure that everyone in the chamber will join me in congratulating her and all of the winners, who will proudly fly the maroon flag at the nationals.

Behind many of the nearly 750 nominations for this year's awards lies the transformative power of free TAFE. Labor's signature cost-of-living initiative has opened doors and unlocked dreams for tens of thousands of Queenslanders, providing them with the opportunity to gain qualifications and pursue their dreams without the burden of financial constraints. It is an investment in our people. It is an investment in our communities. It is an investment in our future.

A few weeks ago almost 300 new frontline healthcare heroes graduated, thanks to free TAFE. With savings of up to \$25,000 each, they are stepping up to serve our communities. These are the workers who will literally be saving lives. Incredibly, there are those in this chamber who would undermine them and risk it all—dismantling free TAFE, stripping away cost-of-living relief and undermining our training sector and its educators. As a result, businesses will struggle to find the skilled workers that they need to grow and innovate and our communities will be deprived of frontline healthcare heroes.

These risks are a direct attack on the aspirations of Queenslanders. They are a threat to the future of our workforce, our economy and our communities. Queenslanders deserve access to quality training and education, regardless of their background or financial circumstances. Queenslanders deserve free TAFE, and delivering free TAFE is doing what matters. Only the Miles Labor government has the guts to back Queenslanders with a fully funded plan to deliver free TAFE.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Bundamba, I would ask you withdraw that unparliamentary language, please.

Mr McCALLUM: I withdraw.