



Speech By  
**Hon. Ros Bates**


**MEMBER FOR MUDGEERABA**

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**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

**Training and Skills, Investment**

 **Hon. RM BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (Minister for Finance, Trade, Employment and Training) (9.55 am): It is a huge week for skills, with the biennial WorldSkills competition taking place right here in Brisbane. Over 600 vocational students from all over Australia will be striving for the opportunity to be declared the best in the world at their chosen craft, competing against fellow VET students from all over the globe. More than half of Queensland's 118 competitors are from regional areas, and WorldSkills will generate nearly \$15 million for the Queensland economy.

There will be 63 skills categories on display—from plumbing, bricklaying, cooking to hairdressing—with spectators marvelling at the speed, dexterity and professionalism of our future tradespeople. The winners from eligible skills categories will have the chance to represent Australia at the 48th WorldSkills competition in Shanghai, which will involve more than 60 countries. Members on both sides of the House should rightly be proud of our brilliant competitors.

Our government is fighting hard to repair a skills shortage across the state, so it is wonderful to be putting the importance of trainees and apprenticeships in focus while at the same time showcasing beautiful Brisbane to the world. Unlike Labor, who were great at making announcements but not so great at funding them, we are committed to inspiring the next generation of young people to take up a career in such industries as construction, manufacturing, technology, hospitality and health care. No matter where you live—from Biloela to Bundaberg or from Toowoomba to Townsville—there is so much dedicated, innovative and passionate skills talent to be uncovered and celebrated.

With a forecast that 80 per cent of our future jobs will require higher levels of skill, the demand for skilled workers, particularly within trades, will increase more than ever. Vocational education is not just an alternative career pathway; it is a cornerstone of opportunity for thousands of young Queenslanders. Whether it is training in construction, aged care, hospitality or trades, VET equips students with practical, job-ready skills that help them enter the workforce confident and raring to go.

Our election commitments to vocational training show that, unlike those opposite, we are prepared to invest in vocational training for Queensland's future. We are investing \$2 million into training the next generation of TAFE educators by attracting trade professionals, Defence Force veterans and stay-at-home parents. We are building world-class facilities and investing in centres of excellence throughout the state. We have committed over \$600 million so far in 2024-25 to the skills needed across all economic portfolios, ensuring the best outcomes for students are at the heart of our decision-making.

Additionally, we are investing \$2 million to expand Queensland Minerals and Energy Academy, with completion anticipated to be 31 March 2028. We are boosting our skilled agricultural workers with more training opportunities through our regions, working with the Department of Primary Industries to develop actions to coincide with the development of the agricultural 25-year blueprint.

We have committed \$60 million to the Moreton Bay TAFE Centre of Excellence, with the project anticipated to be completed in 2028. Importantly, the TAFE campus will also have a training precinct for TAFE teachers. We are supporting a Marine Centre of Excellence for Southern Moreton Bay Island with industry partners SeaLink and TAFE Queensland. We are delivering new TAFE excellence satellite precincts in Rockhampton and North Queensland, with the new TAFE Excellence Precinct for Rockhampton, in partnership with CQUniversity, which will include a trades training centre, a horticultural centre, training facilities for metal fabrication, air conditioning, refrigeration, hospitality, IT, visual arts, hairdressing and beauty.

In Caloundra, we are building a TAFE Centre of Excellence in Aura to focus on construction trades, which will be critical in helping deliver the infrastructure we need for the 2032 Olympics and beyond. Last, but certainly not least, we are investing \$500,000 to boost the number of women in operating and technical roles for the resources sector.

While TAFE and private RTOs have a large responsibility when it comes to delivering vocational training, our schools also provide a good, early pipeline to help deliver a significant number of VET courses and set young Queenslanders on a positive career pathway. Unfortunately, as was the case across a large number of portfolios including youth crime, health and housing, the former Labor government neglected important work in the vocational education and training space. They failed to ensure our skills pipeline could keep pace with the rapidly changing jobs market and skills shortages were neglected.

I am very pleased that, unlike Labor, this government is focused on extracting the best possible outcomes for Queensland as we deliver skills and training. I thank the Minister for Education for his proactive approach to improving VET outcomes in schools. We must ensure students have the best opportunity to transition from school into skilled, long-term and well-paid jobs. Students will have the opportunity to complete a mix of non-accredited and accredited training, to create connections with future employers via the Gateway to Industry Schools program and will get practical, early experience by undertaking school-based traineeships and apprenticeships.

Our commitment to vocational education, whether it is provided in schools, by TAFE or by private providers, will build the right skills for Queensland now and into the future. We are doing just as we said we would do, laying the foundations for a fresh start for Queensland.