




Speech By
Shane King

MEMBER FOR KURWONGBAH

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ADJOURNMENT

Vocational Education and Training

 **Mr KING** (Kurwongbah—ALP) (9.19 pm): I stand here tonight a little perplexed about the previous debate on the Trusts Bill, which was declared urgent, that just dragged on and on. I did not rise to talk about that. I rose to talk about something far more important: putting on the record my sincere thanks and admiration for Queensland tradies.

I encourage anyone considering career options, or a career change, to consider trying a trade, not in this place, obviously, but some members could probably do that. Tradies have never been more appreciated in Queensland. From the Big Build program that our former state Labor government invested in, to new home developments across the state and to the recovery works required when natural disasters strike, our tradies are constantly in demand, from chippies to concreters, plumbers, brickies and sparkies, like myself. I understand that we now have another sparky in the place. Welcome. I would prefer it if he were on the tools, but welcome. We can work together on some things. We need more tradies and we need them now.

I was so proud to be part of a government that invested in free TAFE for Queenslanders. It is an initiative that has been so popular—over 88,000 people have benefitted from it. According to the TAFE website, our general fee-free places in Queensland are full for this year.

Our need to train tradies is also why I was so pleased to see the Albanese Labor government pass legislation in February to lock in ongoing federal funding for free TAFE, a decision I know that our local candidates in the upcoming election—Rhiannyn Douglas for Longman and Ali France for Dickson—both lobbied for. Labor governments invest in education and training because we understand the transformational power such investment brings, unlike the LNP, who said during the federal debate on free TAFE, 'If you don't pay for something, you don't value it.' We do not think that way.

I am interested to know if the Crisafulli government agrees with this sentiment. Many of the fee-free TAFE courses started disappearing once the Queensland LNP was elected. The disappearances have not gone unnoticed. My office has received emails from constituents expressing frustration that the course they were looking into suddenly was not available after the government changed hands. I am also interested to know if the Crisafulli government intends to continue the Labor tradition of co-investing in fee-free TAFE beyond the study of the training minister's own profession, which is an honourable profession but we need other trades out there as well. I would like to hear a commitment from the Crisafulli government that it will safeguard the Certificate III guarantee introduced and funded by Labor.

With the short time I have left, I would also like to, once again, shout out to the tradies from Energex and Ergon and the people from the SES. My old workmates are still out there restoring power in a time that is really difficult for them.