




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR CAIRNS

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MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Member for Cairns; Vocational Education

 **Mr HEALY** (Cairns—ALP) (2.38 pm): Before I start my contribution, I would like to place on the record my absolute rejection of the claims made earlier this morning. I have deep connections with the Jewish community and I stand against vile acts of anti-Semitism and racism and always have. Those sentiments are completely unacceptable in a modern society. What also is unacceptable is the killing of innocent men, women and children overseas. I will always voice my concerns about what is happening in Gaza, Israel, Iran, Ukraine and anywhere else that innocent lives are being indiscriminately lost. The theatrics of this morning are a smokescreen for the division within the LNP's own ranks and this government's failure to deliver what matters for Queenslanders. We hear way too much about what they think of us but not much about their policies. They have waited so long to get into government, yet we hear absolutely nothing.

What is unfolding across Queensland's training system is not reform and it is not renewal; it is retreat. Under the Crisafulli LNP government, TAFE Queensland is being hollowed out at precisely the moment our state faces critical workforce shortages. The so-called 'refresh' of the TAFE Queensland board was anything but routine governance. Board members with years remaining on their terms were removed without explanation. Deputy chair Jody Currie was reportedly given no reason for her dismissal. At the same time, new appointments with clear Liberal National Party affiliations were installed. This is the kicker: the appointment of Tim Rawlings, a former Queensland Young Liberals president, as chief executive and other politically linked figures to influential positions sends a message that allegiance to the party matters more than allegiance to students and industry. This flagrant disregard for process is absolutely stunning.

The consequences are already being felt on the ground. Courses are being cut, programs destabilised and communities left uncertain about their future. The fact that all of this is happening during a jobs crisis is absolutely unbelievable. TAFE is not an optional extra in our economy; it is foundational infrastructure. In the 2025-26 budget the LNP, from what I can see, has no new funding for free TAFE at all—not one additional state funded place. Every fee-free training position it now points the finger to is funded by federal Labor. Canberra is carrying the load while Queensland shirks from its responsibility. As I said, with a jobs shortage and a cost-of-living crisis, it is enormously concerning.

What is more concerning in a broader and deeply-troubling context with regard to this is that questions continue to hang over the Premier's own involvement in the failed training company SET Solutions. Public records show that while a minister in the Newman government the Premier funnelled \$320,000 in taxpayer funds to the company before later becoming its sole director. The company was subsequently placed into liquidation, owing \$2.7 million to creditors. Media reports revealed that Mr Crisafulli was pursued in the Supreme Court of Victoria for insolvent trading and paid \$200,000 in a confidential settlement to liquidators. Two of those payments were made while he was a shadow minister and while he was the opposition leader.

These are not minor administrative oversights. They go directly to the questions of judgement, of competence and of integrity in the vocational training sector. When the same political leadership that presided over a failed private registered training organisation now oversees Queensland's public TAFE system while fee-free places are being absolutely canned and while Skilling Queenslanders for Work is being cut and the governance is being politicised, Queenslanders are entitled to ask whether ideology is driving policy, because here is the simple truth: you cannot solve a housing crisis without carpenters, electricians, plumbers and concreters. You cannot deliver hospitals, transmission lines, renewable energy hubs or defence infrastructure without apprentices in the pipeline. You cannot strengthen regional economies while you are starving training infrastructure.