




Speech By
Hon. Ros Bates

MEMBER FOR MUDGEERABA

Record of Proceedings, 5 March 2026

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Skills and Training

 **Hon. RM BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (Minister for Finance, Trade, Employment and Training) (9.50 am): The Crisafulli LNP government is delivering a better lifestyle through a stronger economy by helping Queenslanders into secure, well-paying jobs which build the houses, support the health services and deliver the community care that our great state needs now and into the future. My top priority in employment and training is to help more Queenslanders into these jobs by ensuring the programs and the services we deliver are targeted, matched to current and forecast job shortages and fit for purpose. We are investing in the vocational training educators, the best-in-class facilities and the qualifications Queenslanders need. Unlike those opposite, who neglected TAFE and created the current dire skills shortage during their decline, the Crisafulli LNP government is ensuring Queenslanders can gain the qualifications they need.

The benefit of our investment shines brightest at this time of the year—graduation season—with over 1,500 graduates from Cairns to Ipswich, Toowoomba to Brisbane. Last week I attended TAFE Queensland's South Bank ceremony to celebrate graduating students and recognise their outstanding achievements. I was particularly moved by the valedictory speech given by Elmi, who graduated from a Certificate IV in Justice Studies. Elmi shared her incredible story about how, at the lowest point in her life following a personal tragedy, she discovered vocational training. She said she chose justice studies because she wanted to right the wrongs others had endured and to help others who, like her, had lost hope. That is the power of vocational training. It provides a direct pathway from training to employment. Employers are consistently telling me that job readiness is what they need, which is exactly what we are delivering.

In 2025 the Crisafulli LNP government saw more than 120,000 students choose to train with TAFE Queensland. They are choosing the hands-on learning and transferable skills that will equip them for secure, well-paid and critical jobs which will deliver them a better lifestyle. These results show that, yet again, and despite the ongoing efforts of the member for Cairns, the scare campaign is over. We are delivering for TAFE after a decade of decline under those opposite. We will continue to deliver the skills and the training that Queenslanders need.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I made a comment not long ago about quarrelling in the chamber.

Ms BATES: It was the Crisafulli LNP government that saved 336 FTE TAFE staff who would have been out of a job under those opposite. It was the Crisafulli LNP government that saved the regional jobs committees. It was the Crisafulli LNP government that saved the Back to Work program. It is the Crisafulli LNP government that continues to boost Skilling Queenslanders for Work, and it is the Crisafulli LNP government that funded 2,000 new free TAFE diplomas of nursing. It is the Crisafulli LNP government that is delivering \$201.1 million worth of funding for four new TAFE centres of excellence—

at Rockhampton, at Moreton Bay, at Caloundra and the marine centre of excellence in the Southern Moreton Bay Islands. It is clear that under the Crisafulli LNP government TAFE, the vocational education system and Queensland as a whole have a much better future.