




Speech By
Hon. Ros Bates

MEMBER FOR MUDGEERABA

Record of Proceedings, 26 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 and providing real cost-of-living relief for Queenslanders. While the federal Labor government continues to make excuses about the fuel crisis, the Crisafulli LNP government is working tirelessly to bring costs down across the board for Queenslanders.

One of my top priorities is overcoming the dire skills shortage left behind by Labor's decade of decline. One of the legacies of failure of those opposite was a predicted peak shortage of 50,000 skilled construction workers, but I can tell the House that under the Crisafulli LNP government that predicted peak has now eased by 15,000 workers. We are doing this by supercharging TAFE and getting Queenslanders the skills they need today for a job tomorrow. There are thousands of students attending classes today free of charge thanks to the Crisafulli LNP government.

As is typical of those opposite, the former Labor government's approach to free training would have seen funding run out this year, meaning tens of thousands of students would have had another hit to the hip pocket. We know that young Queenslanders were ignored during a decade of decline and left without pathways to work, and we know how important it is to undo Labor's mess and get Queenslanders back on the job. We know that the best way to help Queenslanders recover from Labor's cost-of-living crisis is to get them the skills they need so they can get into well-paying jobs. That is why the Crisafulli LNP government funded 2,000 brand new free training positions for nursing students; that is why we have boosted free apprenticeships for under-25s and free construction apprenticeships for over-25s; that is why we have invested over \$201 million to build new TAFE centres of excellence, which will provide high-tech accessible locations for students to train; and that is why we have invested \$19 million to help small business cover the cost of putting on an apprentice.

Unlike those opposite, we understand that the cost-of-living crisis is only being further flamed by Canberra's inability to handle the fuel shortages Queenslanders are facing. The Crisafulli LNP government is committed to supporting our hardworking apprentices, including with travel allowances to make it easier for them to get to training. We are also investing heavily in skills and training to get Queenslanders into work, including the construction workforce, where we have already had more than 9,000 sparkies, almost 7,000 chippies and more than 3,000 plumbers in training. Unlike those opposite, we have a clear plan to get Queensland's construction industry moving to deliver jobs now and into the future. We are not only training our tradies of tomorrow but also improving industry standards so they can get on with the job and earn a good living for themselves and their families.

The Labor Party let the CFMEU ride roughshod over the construction industry during its decade of decline. In stark contrast, the Crisafulli LNP government has introduced new laws to block the CFMEU's bullying—and guess who stood in the way? The Labor Party. They have learned nothing and

they have not changed, but today we will give them a chance to learn something new. We have a showcase of the Crisafulli LNP government's improved Gateway to Industry Schools program out on the Speaker's Green. There will be everything from bricklaying to a hospitality skills competition. I warmly invite everyone to get along if they can. This is just part of how we are delivering a plan to get Queensland's workforce back on track after Labor's decade of decline.