

Question on Notice
No. 715
Asked Wednesday, 10 May 2006

MR KNUTH asked the Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations and Minister for Sport (**Mr Barton**):

QUESTION:

With reference to the current range of courses offered at Innisfail TAFE—

(1) Have facilities for carpentry, welding, electrical and hairdressing courses now been closed and are students enrolled in these courses now required to travel to Cairns for workshops?

(2) How are the new arrangements, which will cause considerable inconvenience and added expense for students, consistent with the Government's recently announced Queensland Skills Plan?

ANSWER:

(1) There have been no changes to delivery at Innisfail since 1999.

In 1997, hairdressing trade training was removed from the Tropical North Queensland TAFE Innisfail campus training schedule, due to a decline in student enrolments. Hairdressing prevocational training continued until 1998 when a drop in student numbers deemed the programs no longer viable. Hairdressing facilities and resources were moved to the Tropical North Queensland TAFE Cairns campus where evidence of demand existed. The Cairns TAFE campus continues to deliver hairdressing trade training to approximately 150 students every year.

In 1995, electrical trade training was removed from the Innisfail TAFE campus training schedule. The area serviced by the campus could not attract and sustain enough student enrolments to be considered viable. Tropical North Queensland TAFE is ready and open to running electrical trade training at the Innisfail campus, should the program attract sufficient student numbers to warrant delivery. Electrical short courses such as Restricted Electrical Licence and Test and Tag have, and will, continue to run at regular intervals to meet community demand.

Facilities for carpentry and welding remain open at Innisfail with regular prevocational courses still continuing.

Tropical North Queensland TAFE continues to promote and offer Prevocational and secondary school based programs at the Innisfail campus, at the beginning of each semester in the areas of carpentry, engineering/welding and electrical, in an attempt to improve the apprenticeship numbers within the region.

(2) Tropical North Queensland TAFE is ready and open to running trade at the Innisfail campus, should any program attract sufficient student numbers to warrant delivery.

Worksite delivery of training now forms a percentage of apprentice trade education in the Far North Region. This ensures employees are away from work for less time during training periods.

Since 1998, Apprentices from the Innisfail region seeking trade training in the areas of welding and electrical must travel 88 kilometres north to the Tropical North Queensland TAFE Cairns campus. The Queensland Skills Plan focuses on providing improved support to apprentices during their training. Travel subsidies have been increased by 3 cents to 15 cents per kilometre for apprentices travelling between 100 kms and 650 kms return and accommodation subsidies have been doubled to \$22.00 per night.