

Question on Notice

No. 778

Asked on Tuesday 24 May 2011

Mrs Scott asked the Minister for Employment, Skills and Mining (Mr Hinchliffe) —

QUESTION:

Will the Minister outline how Skills Tech is preparing young Queenslanders to fill many of the jobs required to build the Queensland of the future?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for her question.

I have been advised by the Department of Education and Training that SkillsTech Australia is undertaking many initiatives to prepare young Queenslanders for employment that builds the Queensland of the future.

The Queensland Government created SkillsTech Australia in 2006 to boost Queensland's skilled workforce and build the capacity of the vocational education and training (VET) sector. SkillsTech Australia is the lead TAFE institute and the largest public provider of trade and technician training in Queensland.

The Institute develops and delivers training to service key industries including automotive, building and construction, electrical and electronics, manufacturing and engineering, and sustainable technologies.

SkillsTech Australia provides over 120 training programs including school-based programs, pre and post-apprenticeship training, diplomas, advanced diplomas, licensing, traineeships and apprenticeships. The Institute is taking trade and technician training into the future with blended learning - a mix of face-to-face teaching, workplace-based learning, video conferencing and e-learning.

There are approximately 20,000 students of all ages, from school students to mature age students, undertaking training across the Institute's seven metropolitan training centres.

SkillsTech Australia is modernising the way trade and technician training is delivered and is currently working with stakeholders to achieve the vision of the Queensland Government's *Towards Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland*. The Institute is playing a pivotal role in meeting the *Towards Q2* target that three out of four Queenslanders will hold trade, training or tertiary qualifications.

As part of the Queensland Skills Plan, SkillsTech Australia commenced a \$213 million capital works program in 2006 (including Commonwealth funding of \$10 million) and continues to develop new training facilities and refurbish existing facilities on both the north and south sides of Brisbane.

These state-of-the art facilities are assisting in enhancing the attractiveness of trade apprenticeships and improving the provision of trades and technician training. They ensure the Institute can deliver high quality training to meet the changing needs of learners and industry. It is the Institute's aim to offer flexible delivery models including the effective use of information and communication technology to maximise learning outcomes.

The teaching staff employed at SkillsTech Australia have current teaching qualifications and proven industry knowledge and experience.

Some current initiatives in place at SkillsTech Australia to provide young people trade and technician training include:

VET in Schools

SkillsTech Australia has a dedicated Schools Unit with a strong focus on VET in Schools programs and pathways. These programs can be accessed by students in Years 11 and 12 and provide credit points towards the Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE) as well as hands on training and a head start into further study and the workplace, including full-time apprenticeships.

SkillsTech Australia also offers a Trade Taster program for Year 10 students. This allows Year 10 students to sample three different trade areas, attending one day per week for a Semester. Students can then make a more informed decision regarding future pre-apprenticeship training or school-based apprenticeships or traineeships.

The Institute has also worked closely with the Office of Women to encourage girls to “give trades a go”, as part of the Women in Hard Hats initiative.

The Institute has various partnerships with schools for the co-delivery of trade training programs both through Trade Training Centres in schools and through normal school VET programs. There are 16 successful partnerships continuing this year with 12 schools and an overall total of 46 partnerships with 20 schools for 2011. The Institute currently trains 405 school based apprentices and trainees.

Pre-vocational Training

SkillsTech Australia currently offers pre-vocational trade training programs across all five industry sectors. There are more than 1,200 students that have either completed or will complete their training this year. These certificate I and II programs are designed for participants who wish to gain basic skills and technical knowledge to assist in gaining an apprenticeship.

Apprenticeship Foundation Program

This program is designed as an early intervention for an incoming apprentice, where the apprentice and employer are involved in the commencement of training with SkillsTech Australia in areas of OH&S, reading job sheets and understanding planning, communications within industry, trade aligned computer skills as well as undertaking a language, literacy and numeracy assessment.

The Apprenticeship Foundation Program commenced on 3 May 2011 with 26 Engineering students and 12 Plumbing students participating. The students worked through a number of competencies in a blended learning environment as a part of their first year apprenticeship requirements and all participants successfully completed the program.

On 30 May 2011, another 29 students commenced the program in trade areas including fitting and turning, diesel fitting and refrigeration. Two plumbing groups (28 students) will commence on 6 June 2011 and, by early July, SkillsTech Australia will be able to offer this program for all trade sectors available at the Institute.

Try'a Trade Program

WorldSkills Australia is a national, not-for-profit organisation that provides young Australians the opportunity to gain new skills, compete against peers in their chosen trade and fast track skills and career development. WorldSkills Australia partners with TAFE Queensland to give young people a taste of the trades.

WorldSkills Queensland is coordinated through SkillsTech Australia where a number of programs are run to promote and showcase youth skills excellence. Key features of Queensland's program include Try'a Trade activities and a series of competitions aligned to the National Training packages, at regional, national and international levels.

Try'a Trade activities are run throughout the year in conjunction with training providers, industry and schools. Students who attend Try'a Trade activities receive "hands on" experience of the trades. This is a key tool in promoting pathway options to students. WorldSkills Queensland is coordinating approximately 30 Try'a Trade events in 15 locations throughout Queensland in 2011.

Support Services

SkillsTech Australia has a highly qualified support services team that works closely with educational staff to provide a supportive learning environment for all students. SkillsTech Australia offers a range of support services including learning support, disability support, indigenous support, employment services and career and personal counseling.

The Institute also offers Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) services that formally acknowledge skills, experience, knowledge and qualifications, enabling students to fast-track study, reduce learning costs and take advantage of the benefits of formal qualifications faster.