

Question on Notice

No. 922

Asked on 14 June 2011.

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

QUESTION:

Will the Minister outline how the Skills Tech facility at Acacia Ridge has enhanced vocational education and are there any additional courses being added to those presently on offer?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for her question.

In 2006, the Queensland Government created SkillsTech Australia to boost Queensland's skilled workforce and build the capacity of the vocational education and training 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. 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 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.

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

In 2006, as part of the *Queensland Skills Plan*, the State Government commenced a \$213 million (including Federal funding of \$10 million) capital works program for Skillstech Australia and continues to develop new training facilities and refurbish existing facilities both on the north and south sides of Brisbane.

These state of the art facilities will assist in enhancing the attractiveness of trade apprenticeships and improving the provision of trades and technician training. They will also ensure the Institute can deliver high quality training to meet the changing needs of students and industry.

The capital works program at Acacia Ridge is ongoing, however, new facilities completed to date include:

- Wet Trades - \$8 million
- Heavy Auto - \$12.9 million
- Electrical and Refrigeration - \$21 million
- Foundry - \$8 million
- Furnishing - \$12 million
- Painting and Decorating - \$8.3 million
- Plumbing and Carpentry - \$20 million

Facilities to be commenced in the near future include an Engineering facility (\$25 million), Light Automotive facility (\$11.5 million) and Administration and Resource Centre (\$10 million). It is anticipated that the capital works program at the Acacia Ridge Training Centre will be complete by December 2012.

In 2010/11, there have been over 200 enrolments conducted in pre-apprenticeship courses in electrical, automotive and construction at the Acacia Ridge Training Centre.

SkillsTech Australia is also undertaking extensive work, through its dedicated Quality and Product Services units, in enhancing and developing courses in order to meet current and future industry training demand. These units focus on continuous improvement by ensuring that SkillsTech Australia is registered for the latest versions of training packages currently within the Institute's scope of delivery. As industry demands change, these units also ensure the Institute is registered to deliver training in new/additional vocational areas.

To date in 2010-11, the Institute has completed more than 20 upgrades to meet training package requirements with approximately 25 additional upgrades currently in progress. It has also registered to deliver four new training packages to meet industry and community needs.

A number of new programs have also been developed including (but not limited to):

Certificate I in Plumbing Services (39278QLD) – this program was accredited in Queensland on 5 May 2011 and was developed in consultation with industry to replace the expired 39109QLD *Certificate I in Plumbing* course. It provides a seamless pathway into a plumbing apprenticeship with students who undertake this course able to gain recognition towards the foundation stage or first stage of their plumbing apprenticeship. A mandatory component of this course is vocational placement where students practice the skills they have acquired through TAFE and apply them in the workplace. This process also provides students with the opportunity to secure an apprenticeship in the plumbing sector.

Certificate IV in Post Trade Technical Applications (Supervisor) (39262QLD) was developed and accredited by SkillsTech Australia in November 2009 with the Institute offering this program to a range of trades persons. Feedback from participants has indicated the course exceeds their expectations and is very practical in its delivery. The program was developed to meet an identified gap in the training system as many trades do not offer qualifications beyond Certificate III. This program provides graduates with the skills to progress to the supervisory level and is delivered online around work based projects with mentors provide extensive support to students. Amendments are currently being made to meet the changing needs of industry to encompass new streams and expertise such as Supervisory, Coaching, Mentoring, Environmental, Safety and Risk Management. It is anticipated the redeveloped Certificate IV will be accredited and available on the National Training Information System (the official national register of information on training packages, qualifications, courses and registered training organisations) by July 2011.

Course in Preparation for Owner Builder Permit (39219QLD) – The current program expires on 25 September 2011 with the new program currently under development in consultation with all stakeholders. The program is designed to meet regulatory requirements established by the Queensland Building Services Authority for issuance of Owner Builder Permits. It is anticipated the new redeveloped course will be available by July 2011.