




Speech By  
**Michael Pucci**

**MEMBER FOR LOGAN**

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### **TAFE QUEENSLAND BILL**

 **Mr PUCCI** (Logan—LNP) (4.59 pm): I rise to contribute briefly to the debate on the TAFE Queensland Bill 2013. In keeping with this government's commitment to streamline operations offering front-line services to Queenslanders, this bill sets out to unify suppliers of vocational education throughout the state and establish a single statutory body to oversee the delivery of technical and further education for Queenslanders.

TAFE Queensland has come a long way since its humble beginnings with the first technical college, founded in 1893 after students gathered for a class in mechanical drawing. That soon expanded to include geology, bookkeeping, French, German and the history of the British Empire. Today TAFE is the largest provider of VET in Queensland and is an integral part of the vocational education and training system. In total, TAFE has provided quality, practical, industry relevant training for over seven million students. TAFE Queensland currently offers over 800 courses across its state-wide network of 70 campuses. TAFE provides a total of three-quarters of all external training in Queensland.

As a significant partner in the education industry, we must take steps to make TAFE as commercially successful as possible. The Skills and Training Taskforce was appointed by this government to make recommendations about ways to improve the VET sector in Queensland. As outlined in the Skills and Training Taskforce report, TAFE Queensland is currently facing numerous challenges which must be addressed to rebuild the capability of TAFE Queensland and ensure it is fit for purpose.

The government is committed to TAFE Queensland as the public provider of vocational education and training in Queensland for the long term. To ensure the viability of TAFE for future generations, the time has come for a significant overhaul. This bill provides the tools needed to secure the future of TAFE Queensland for the industries, communities and people it serves.

Change is not new for TAFE Queensland. In its 130-year history TAFE has undergone many changes and has had to adapt along the way to the environment in which it operates. Over the years there has been a transition from trade and technical training to paraprofessional training. More recently we have been seeing the introduction of alternative delivery methods including videoconferencing and online training delivery. There have also been structural changes to accommodate the initial growth in the number of technical colleges—to an organisation that once had 32 institutes—to the current structure of 13 institutes.

The government is committed to modernising Queensland's skills and training sector to drive economic growth, employment outcomes and prosperity for Queenslanders and our communities. The task force report found that the current structure of 11 TAFE institutes and two statutory TAFE institutes is fragmented and does not allow for a clear focus on delivering training that meets the needs of students, employers and industry. Currently there is not sufficient training in the areas that are needed in industry that will drive our state's economy.

This bill provides TAFE Queensland the power and functions to develop and implement a clear vision, strategy and action plan for the public provision of training in Queensland for the future. TAFE Queensland will be responsible for managing the provision of training through its network of individual TAFE institutes and will be held accountable for the strategic delivery of efficient and effective VET services. TAFE Queensland will control and direct funding, determine its delivery locations and modes, employ its workforce and otherwise operate as an independent, accountable public provider.

TAFE plays a critical role in securing the economic and social prosperity of Queensland and its communities. A dynamic and responsive VET sector, closely aligned to the evolving needs of the industry and students, will provide training and skills matched with real job outcomes. A labour market with the right skills will lead to employment and productivity gains, driving growth in the four-pillar economy areas of tourism, resources and mines, agriculture and construction.

I am a product of TAFE Queensland, which I attended to further my qualifications in management, training and assessment, and occupational workplace health and safety. My wife also went to TAFE to gain her qualifications in interior design. It is a great place to study, and I wholeheartedly recommend it.

TAFE Queensland is in an excellent position to reform. The task force has provided a clear direction, and students and industries are calling for change. There is support from both the government and TAFE leadership.

I would like to commend the Education and Innovation Committee—of which I was a proud member—and their parliamentary support staff for their efforts to improve delivery platforms for education in this great state. I also want to congratulate and thank the honourable Minister for Education, Training and Employment and his ministerial and departmental staff for their efforts, which have come to fruition today. I commend this bill to the House.