

~~service the communities of Ravenshoe, Malanda and Atherton. Call-outs to those towns are dispatched from Mareeba, which is over an hour and a half drive away and there are numerous incidents.~~

~~However, this morning we saw the government continue with Premier Beattie's North Bank plan in Brisbane, while the rest of the infrastructure in the state continues to rot, as it did under the previous government. The Premier stated that this development will not cost taxpayers anything, yet the plans involve the sale of government owned—that is public—land to create an ivory palace for politicians and their friends. This is a matter of major public concern, because the government made a commitment to my electorate and to many others in rural Queensland that it would not focus on the south-east corner but would invest in infrastructure development in regional Queensland infrastructure such as the upgrade of the Bruce Highway and inland highways such as the Gregory Developmental Road and the Kennedy Developmental Road.~~

~~If buildings have to be sold, then the money from that should be used in areas that have been neglected. That will generate an income for the state. The Tablelands alone generates over half a billion dollars for the state. Money could be better invested to make southern markets more accessible for northern producers. The Bruce Highway has been closed numerous times in three years. I cannot see how a massive expansion of the Brisbane CBD can be seen as a cost-effective use of income in the light of huge revenue losses every time the Bruce Highway is closed off, thereby cutting off northern producers from the southern markets. Usually, when the Bruce Highway is closed, a convoy of vehicles use the inland highways. It would be better to upgrade the Gregory Developmental Road and the Kennedy Developmental Road so that people can access the Tablelands and northern producers can access the southern markets when the Bruce Highway is closed.~~

~~There are also areas like Shovel Creek and Gardner Creek that are cut off during a flood. We can spend money on those areas. During the election campaign we had LNP politicians continually coming to Charters Towers to say that they support the building of a recreational lake. They did that in the hope that they could unseat me. We want money to build that lake as it will bring great benefits to Charters Towers. It will breathe life into that town. It will create an atmosphere so that people will invest in the region.~~

~~We could also upgrade the road network in the Tablelands. As I said, half a billion dollars in gross revenue comes out of that region and what do the people in that area get? The crumbs off Brisbane's table. Now we see a \$2 billion asset and an area that produces half a billion dollars gets nothing.~~

~~**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Dr Robinson): Order! The time for matters of public interest has now expired.~~

## VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (COMMONWEALTH POWERS) BILL

### Introduction



**Hon. JH LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Minister for Education, Training and Employment) (12.06 pm): I present a bill for an act to adopt the National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011 (Cwlth) and the National Vocational Education and Training Regulator (Transitional Provisions) Act 2011 (Cwlth), and to refer certain matters relating to the regulation of vocational education and training to the Parliament of the Commonwealth, for the purposes of section 51 (xxxvii) of the Commonwealth Constitution, and to make amendments of the Building Act 1975, the Gaming Machine Act 1991, the Liquor Act 1992 and the Vocational Education, Training and Employment Act 2000, for particular purposes, and consequential amendments to the acts mentioned in the schedule. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Education and Innovation Committee to consider the bill.

*Tabled paper:* Vocational Education and Training (Commonwealth Powers) Bill.

*Tabled paper:* Vocational Education and Training (Commonwealth Powers) Bill, explanatory notes.

I am pleased to introduce to the House the Vocational Education and Training (Commonwealth Powers) Bill 2012. This bill will refer legislative power to regulate registered training organisations—or RTOs—and vocational education and training, known as VET, courses to the Commonwealth parliament. The bill will also abolish the current Queensland VET regulator, the Training and Employment Recognition Council—TERC—and transfer remaining functions, mostly associated with apprenticeships and traineeships, to Skills Queensland. Referring power to the Commonwealth will ensure that Queensland continues to deliver and maintain the highest of quality standards and further supports this government's commitment to reducing regulatory burden on business.

An earlier version of this bill was introduced in the previous parliament. The bill lapsed when parliament was dissolved for a general election. Before the bill lapsed, the former Industry, Education, Training and Industrial Relations Committee issued its final report on the bill on 23 December 2011. The committee unanimously recommended that the bill proceed subject to one amendment, that is, to require amendments to the Commonwealth legislation to be tabled in this parliament. The committee requested that copies of the national VET legislation be tabled in parliament and also raised one issue in

relation to the impact of the bill on school based RTOs. I now table a copy of the national VET legislation: the National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011 and the National Vocational Education and Training Regulator (Transitional Provisions) Act 2011.

*Tabled paper:* National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011.

*Tabled paper:* National Vocational Education and Training Regulator (Transitional Provisions) Act 2011.

017 This government is pleased to support the referral of power and to introduce the bill in this 54th parliament. This version of the bill responds to recommendation 2 of the committee's report to include a clause requiring any amendments to the national VET legislation be tabled before this parliament.

The bill refers power to the Commonwealth parliament in two ways. Firstly, it adopts the national VET legislation—the National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011 and the National Vocational Education and Training Regulator (Transitional Provisions) Act 2011. The adoption of the national VET legislation refers Queensland's legislative power based on the provisions of the national VET legislation. Secondly, it includes an amendment referral, which allows the Commonwealth parliament to amend the national VET legislation with respect to prescribed VET matters in clause 4 of the bill. The prescribed matters are:

- (a) the registration and regulation of VET organisations;
- (b) the accreditation or other recognition of VET courses or programs;
- (c) the issue and cancellation of VET qualifications or statements of attainment;
- (d) the standards to be complied with by the VET regulator;
- (e) the collection, publication, provision and sharing of information about VET; and
- (f) investigative powers, sanctions and enforcement in relation to these matters.

The bill clarifies the scope of the amendment referral in clause 4(2). That clause provides that the Commonwealth cannot make a law that excludes or limits the operation of a state law to the extent that the state law makes provision in relation to:

- (a) primary or secondary education, including the education of children subject to compulsory school education;
- (b) tertiary education that is recognised as higher education and not VET;
- (c) the rights and obligations of persons providing or undertaking apprenticeships or traineeships;
- (d) the qualifications or other requirements to undertake or carry out any business, occupation or other work, other than that of a VET organisation;
- (e) the funding by the state of VET; or
- (f) the establishment or management of any agency of the state that provides VET.

This provision will ensure that the scope of the referral is limited to the regulation of RTOs and accreditation of VET courses. The requirements to enter trades and occupations through apprenticeships and traineeships will remain a state responsibility. If Queensland wishes to withdraw from the national scheme, clause 7 provides for the termination of the amendment reference or the adoption. The termination is achieved by the Governor proclaiming by notice published in the *Government Gazette* that the amendment reference and/or adoption of the amendment reference are terminated. The power to terminate the amendment reference or adoption would not be used lightly. However, if Queensland decided that it was appropriate to terminate the referral, the bill allows for that action to be taken quickly and effectively. In addition to referring power, the bill provides for the abolition of the TERC and the transfer of its remaining functions to Skills Queensland; makes amendments to the Building Act 1975, the Liquor Act 1992, the Gaming Machine Act 1991 and other legislation to remove the potential for an inconsistency between these acts and the national VET legislation after the referral of power.

The Department of Education, Training and Employment is working in close consultation with the national regulator—the Australian Skills Quality Authority, ASQA—to ensure a smooth transition from state to national regulation. When the committee considered an earlier version of this bill it requested advice about what Queensland could do to support schools to minimise the impact of registered training organisation fees and to ensure that vocational education and training services in the school sector are not adversely affected. I can assure the honourable members of this House that the Newman government will ensure that schools are not adversely affected by the move to national regulation of VET. This government is committed to ensuring that Queensland school students continue to have access to high quality vocational education and training.

Currently, school RTOs have their RTO registration managed by the Queensland Studies Authority, QSA, through a delegation from the TERC under the Vocational Education, Training and Employment Act 2000. This delegation means that effectively school RTOs do not pay RTO registration fees. ASQA will, after the Queensland parliament refers its power to the Commonwealth, issue a similar delegation, which will remain in force for at least 12 months. During this time school RTOs will not pay RTO fees. ASQA will review the delegation during the 12-month period to determine whether it will

continue. During the 12-month delegation, the department will work with schools to develop strategies to minimise the impact of fees if the delegation is terminated. Firstly, the department will review existing funding arrangements for the delivery of VET in schools to ensure that schools receive sufficient funding to meet the cost of RTO fees. Secondly, the department will work with school sectors to develop alternative registration models that reduce the RTO fees payable to ASQA. These strategies can then be implemented if ASQA does not continue the delegation to the QSA.

Referring power to the Commonwealth to regulate Queensland RTOs will ensure that Queensland continues to maintain its reputation as a high-quality provider of training and will deliver substantial benefits to the training industry, including the very tangible benefits associated with a reduction of regulatory burden on business.

### First Reading

 **Hon. JH LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Minister for Education, Training and Employment) (12.15 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

Question put—That the bill be now read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

### Referral to the Education and Innovation Committee

 **Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Dr Robinson): Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Education and Innovation Committee.

## ~~ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION (GREENTAPE REDUCTION) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL~~

### Introduction

 **Hon. AC POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection) (12.15 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003, the Coastal Protection and Management Act 1995, the Environmental Protection Act 1994, the Geothermal Energy Act 2010, the Greenhouse Gas Storage Act 2009, the Mineral Resources Act 1989, the North Stradbroke Island Protection and Sustainability Act 2011, the Petroleum Act 1923, the Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Act 2004, the State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971, the Sustainable Planning Act 2009, the Torres Strait Islander Cultural Heritage Act 2003, the Transport Infrastructure Act 1994, the Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011, the Water Act 2000 and the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008 for particular purposes. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee to consider the bill.

*Tabled paper:* Environmental Protection (Greentape Reduction) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill.

*Tabled paper:* Environmental Protection (Greentape Reduction) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, explanatory notes.

The green-tape reduction project commenced in 2010 with the aim to reform the licensing application and assessment processes under the Environmental Protection Act 1994 to reduce costs for industry and government while upholding environmental standards for the community. The project rebuilds the approval processes for environmental licensing under the act to reduce costs, improve business investment certainty and allow front line environmental regulation to be delivered more efficiently. It is a coordinated package of legislation, business processes and information systems reform that has been developed in close consultation with industry. The changes proposed in this bill will reduce the burden in Queensland of slow approvals for industry and government and bring the environmental approvals process in line with international best practice.

I am very pleased to put on record that the Environmental Protection (Greentape Reduction) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012 offers a substantial contribution to the LNP government's commitment to cut red tape and regulation by 20 per cent. The bill redrafts the provisions of the act that relate to licensing environmentally relevant activities, making it easier and cheaper for businesses to obtain certain environmental approvals, and will save Queensland businesses an estimated \$11.7 million each year. By deleting the three repetitive chapters that currently deal with licensing environmental authorities and replacing them with a single process, 90 pages of regulation more than 12 per cent of the Environmental Protection Act will be removed. The main objective of the bill is to introduce a transparent and simplified regulatory system focused on four major areas of reform: a licensing approach that is proportionate to the environmental risk; streamlined approvals for resource