

Jess Pugh, MP

Address to CCA Conference

Tuesday 19th November, 2019

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- I would like to respectfully acknowledge the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land on which this event is taking place, and Elders past and present.

SPEECH

Good morning and thank you for the opportunity to join you and to open your annual conference, on behalf of the Minister Training and Skills Development, Shannon Fentiman.

On behalf of the Minister and the Queensland Government, I welcome Community Colleges Australia to Queensland and thank you for choosing Brisbane for your annual conference.

The Minister has asked me to pass on her congratulations on the work you are doing in advancing the role of not-for-profit organisations in the education and training sector.

Your theme of Expanding Possibilities aligns with the Queensland Government's continuing commitment to expanding education and training opportunities for Queenslanders.

The not-for-profit sector has a key role to play by offering further choices for a range of learners who may not be able to access education and training through other channels.

This is particularly important for disadvantaged and vulnerable learners, people with disabilities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, migrants and refugees, rural, regional and remote learners and people who face mental health issues.

The community education sector is benefiting students, families and communities and small businesses by building social capital and increasing participation in the education and training sector.

Community support for education and training is a key factor in encouraging lifelong learning.

Skilling Queenslanders for Work

The Queensland Government is extremely proud of the wonderful achievements coming from the Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative.

We have invested in Skilling Queenslanders for Work to give people better opportunities to find meaningful and long-term employment. This is a huge priority of our Government.

A Deloitte report showed an economic return of nearly \$8 for every dollar invested in Skilling Queenslanders for Work over a 10 year period.

We set a target to support 32,000 people over four years and we did this in just three. Since elected in 2015, we've now, together with community organisations, assisted over 45,000 Queenslanders.

73 per cent of these participants will find work, take on further training or return to school after completing a Skilling Queenslanders for Work project.

We also have incentives for employers to take on a Skilling Queenslanders for Work graduate.

As a local member, it's really amazing to attend a graduation and it will often be a small group – because a lot of the participants have already found a work, thanks to the project.

As you all know, Queensland is a unique state, we have some really remote and rural towns. Skilling Queenslanders for Work is something that works for the entire state.

There's currently a Skilling Queenslanders for work project on Thursday Island in the Torres Strait. They have 8 trainees working on a constructing a cycleway around the island. For 7 of those 8 trainees, this is their first ever form of income, their first ever job.

Not only will it provide them with an opportunity to learn new skills, it also helps overcome any uncertainty they might have felt about joining a class and highlighted the positives that come from learning a little more each day.

We could not provide this fantastic program on our own. We are able to do this by funding community-based not-for-profit organisations.

These organisations, like yours, have many hard working, passionate community advocates. We have a huge appreciation for the work you do.

Thank you for your time, I hope you really enjoy the conference over the next two days.

Thank you.