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21 JAN 2015

Mr Marcus Bleechmore

Via Email: [Government.relations@visionaustralia.org](mailto:Government.relations@visionaustralia.org)

*Dear Mr Bleechmore,*  
Dear Mr Bleechmore

Thank you for your correspondence of 14 January 2015 concerning Vision Australia Queensland's election priorities.

### **Funding**

Labor has a long history of supporting not-for-profits and non-government organisations and, if elected, will continue to do so. The LNP Government has cut funding to numerous community organisations forcing them to reduce services and cut staff. Not-for-profit and non-government organisations cannot survive another three years of the LNP.

### **NDIS**

As you indicated, Queensland is the only state that refused to sign up for a National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) trial site. This decision by the Newman Government has resulted in Queenslanders missing out on funding, services, experience and consumer certainty. Without a trial site, Queensland will be disadvantaged when the initial roll out starts in 2016.

Labor is committed to announcing the regions in which the initial roll out of the NDIS will occur to provide certainty for people with a disability, families, caregivers and service providers. A Labor Government will initiate the stakeholder consultation in which the LNP refused to participate.

Labor is also committed to addressing the needs of all Queenslanders and for this reason, Labor in government will appoint a Minister for Seniors. This Minister will oversee the introduction of a 'one-stop-shop' for seniors providing advice, advocacy and access to services for Queenslanders over 65.

### **Transport**

Labor is committed to making public transport more accessible and easy to use for people with a disability. Access to transport is a vital part of ensuring people with a disability can live independently in their communities.

In government, Labor will continue to develop and roll out ticketing options such as the Vision Impairment Travel Pass. As part of that process we will work co-operatively with peak bodies such as Vision Australia.

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Labor will maintain funding for the Taxi Subsidy Scheme (TSS). Unlike the Newman Government, which attempted to cut funding for the TSS, Labor understands that the TSS is vitally important for the people that rely on it. Labor will look to improve and enhance the TSS where funding becomes available.

Labor supports the roll-out of real-time passenger information on the public transport network. As part of that roll-out, Labor will work closely with groups such as Vision Australia to maximise the ways people with vision impairment are able to make use of this new technology.

### **Employment**

In government, Labor will work with Vision Australia to explore opportunities to increase workforce participation of people who are blind or have low vision in the public sector. Labor will advocate for equal opportunities in employment for all Queenslanders.

### **Supporting School Leavers**

Labor will invest \$34 million over four years in TAFE Queensland. Part of this funding will be allocated to subsidise the delivery of courses for disadvantaged learners and expanding the VET in Schools program.

### **Accessible Voting**

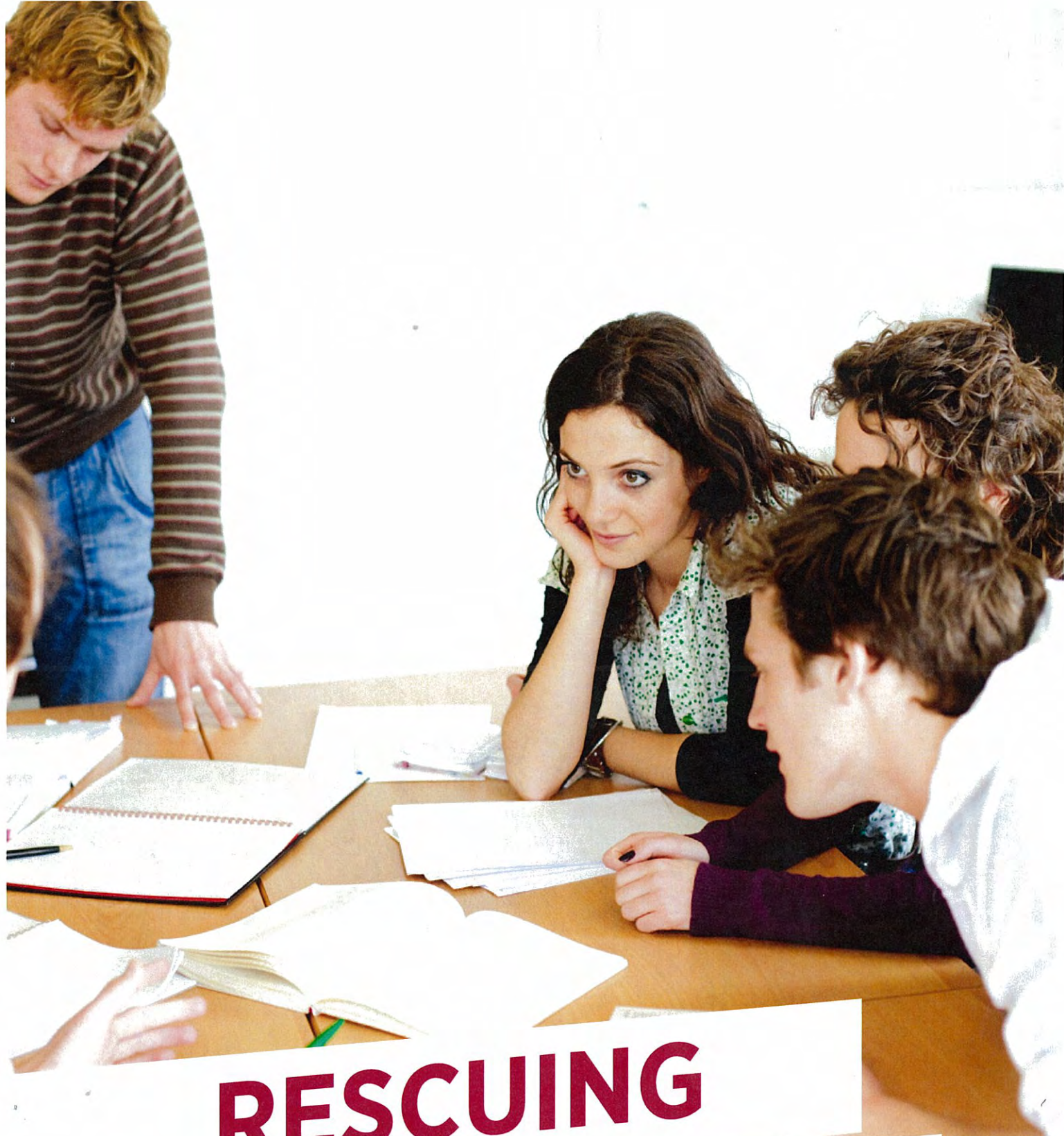
The Electoral Commission Queensland currently has an 'electronically assisted voting process' in place and Labor will be guided by advice from the ECQ regarding the expansion of this program into online voting.

Yours sincerely



Tim Mulherin

**Deputy Leader of the Opposition**



**RESCUING**

**TAFE**

Labor's plan to ensure TAFE's future in Queensland

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# Annastacia **Palaszczuk**

## **Labor for Queensland**

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### **A message from Annastacia**

Labor will rescue TAFE in Queensland and restore its status as the premier provider of vocational education and training (VET) in the state.

Of all the savage cuts made by the Newman Government, its attack on our VET system is perhaps the most widespread and jeopardises the very future of our training sector.

The Newman Government has cut subsidies, cut courses and cut staff and is now preparing to sell off Queensland's training assets through the introduction of the Queensland Training Asset Management Authority.

TAFE Queensland will not survive another term of the LNP Government.

A Labor Government will invest \$34 million in TAFE Queensland to ensure its future.

Only Labor offers a better way for the future of TAFE in Queensland.

**Annastacia Palaszczuk MP**  
**Leader of the Opposition**

A better way for Queensland **Labor**

Queensland



**A Labor Government will invest \$34 million over three years in TAFE Queensland to restore its status as Queensland's premier provider of vocational education and training (VET).**

**To do this, Labor will:**

- **create up to 100 new full-time equivalent teaching and support positions**
- **invest \$5 million to establish a fully independent Training Ombudsman**
- **invest \$3.1 million in student support services**
- **provide up to \$3 million to subsidise foundation skills courses for disadvantaged learners**
- **invest \$5 million to increase the number of courses available through VET in schools**
- **provide \$5 million to expand and improve regional support programs**
- **make \$5 million available to subsidise second-chance education**
- **repeal the Queensland Training Asset Management Authority (QTAMA) legislation**
- **provide \$4 million for training in emerging innovative industries as designated by Jobs Queensland**
- **reverse the LNP's decision to make public training funds 100 per cent contestable.**

## **The challenge**

When the LNP came to power in 2012, it immediately started to attack TAFE in Queensland, reducing its ability to compete with private training providers. This move was intended to price TAFE out of the market. The Newman LNP Government cut staff, cut funding, cut independent oversight, cut courses and sold many of Queensland's training assets.

The LNP Government's cuts to TAFE funding and subsidies have resulted in TAFE Queensland reducing the number of courses it delivers and closing down campuses as it is simply too expensive for students to enrol.

The LNP Government abolished the independent Training Ombudsman, reducing accountability in the training sector. This has allowed disreputable training providers to claim government subsidies whilst delivering an inferior training product, often not meeting national standards.

The LNP Government believes its only role in quality control and dispute resolution in the training sector is to refer the offending training providers to the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA). This is not good enough as ASQA has no ability to mediate disputes between apprentices and employers.

Making public training funding 100% contestable will not work.

Unscrupulous training providers are setting up shop all over Queensland and accepting precious training dollars without delivering students the services they claim to provide.

In 2014, the government introduced and passed the *Queensland Training Assets Management Authority (QTAMA) Bill 2014*, claiming that QTAMA will 'provide for the efficient and effective management' of state-owned training assets. In reality, these changes are a part of the government's plan to prepare for the efficient and effective disposal of state-owned training assets.

Under QTAMA, TAFEs are required to pay to hire their own facilities at the same rate as private training providers, despite the fact that much of the equipment within the buildings is the property of the campus. The LNP Government is intentionally creating an environment in which TAFE cannot compete with private providers and this will inevitably lead to the disappearance of TAFE in Queensland.

As TAFE enrolments plummet, QTAMA will start the gradual sell-off of Queensland's training assets and the government will relinquish all responsibility for the delivery of vocational education and training in Queensland.

The LNP Government has chosen to ignore its community service obligations to some of the most disadvantaged individuals in Queensland. It has refused to subsidise courses in foundation skills, claiming that if a course does not lead directly to a job it is not essential.

Disadvantaged students are dependent on foundation courses to bridge the gap to further studies. Students with disabilities rely on these courses to further their education in mainstream environments.

What the LNP does not understand is that there is a vast array of benefits gained by individuals participating in education beyond attaining employment.

Participation in education allows individuals to improve social and communication skills as well as providing an opportunity to interact with other students.

While it is important to train people to enter the workforce, this is not the only reason people wish to participate in vocational education and training.

The LNP Government has chosen to disregard the needs of these people.





## Our solution

A Labor Government will rescue the VET sector in Queensland, and restore Queensland's reputation as a quality training provider. Labor will invest \$34 million over three years to reinvigorate TAFE Queensland.

These funds will go towards subsidising foundation courses and regional support programs, increasing the qualifications available through VET in schools, delivering second-chance education courses and creating up to 100 FTE positions, including teaching and support staff.

A Labor Government will work to create a TAFE environment where innovation, flexibility and industry focus are paramount.

### Rescuing TAFE

A Labor Government will abolish the LNP's flawed 'full contestability' model of training funding and target a more sustainable level of contestability, which will be identified through Jobs Queensland.

Jobs Queensland will be established under Labor as an independent statutory body to improve job matching across the economy and lift productivity by developing workforce planning by industry sector and economic catchment.

A Labor Government will abolish restrictions on eligibility to training subsidies in targeted industries for individuals who have completed prior study.

There are significant growth industries in Queensland that need trained staff now, and into the future, and a Labor Government will subsidise individuals interested in entering these fields whether they have had prior training or not.

### Quality

A Labor Government will bring accountability back to the training sector in Queensland.

We will establish an independent Training Ombudsman with the power to investigate complaints made about training organisations by students, trainees and apprentices and enforce sanctions, where necessary.

The Ombudsman will also act as a complaints umpire for apprentices and trainees for issues regarding the termination of work contracts.

## **Foundation courses**

Labor believes that all Queenslanders have the right to an affordable education, including individuals with disabilities and people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

A Labor Government will meet its community service obligations and provide up to \$3 million over three years to assist TAFEs in covering the costs of delivering courses in foundation skills such as literacy and numeracy.

This will give individuals on low incomes or receiving government assistance the opportunity to access affordable education.

## **Queensland Training Assets Management Authority**

A Labor Government will repeal the *Queensland Training Assets Management Authority Act 2014* and return the control of Queensland's training assets to the relevant State Government department. Once the assets have been returned to the department, an audit of all training assets, including buildings, fixtures and equipment, will be conducted to assess the physical condition of the assets, as well as their use.

From here, the department will formulate an asset plan for the next 10 years. Industry, training providers, unions and TAFEs from across the state will be invited to contribute to the development of a comprehensive asset management plan to increase the use of publicly owned facilities.

The plan will involve identifying where maintenance works are necessary, arrangements to allow for the sharing of resources between different TAFE campuses, and ideas for diversifying the uses of training assets.

The leasing of training assets will be managed by the department, and will enable public and private training providers, schools and community groups to access training assets. TAFEs will receive priority access to all facilities at a subsidised rate.

A Labor Government will continue the commitment to allocate 10% of total labour hours on eligible government-funded infrastructure projects to apprentices and trainees.

A further 10% will be committed to Indigenous apprentices and trainees for projects in Indigenous communities. A Labor Government will also extend this commitment to projects funded by government-owned corporations and public private partnerships.



## **LNP fails VET sector**

The LNP does not believe that the State Government should play a role in quality assurance in the delivery of training in Queensland and has enabled unscrupulous training providers to set up shop and claim state training dollars to deliver substandard training.

The LNP Government believes that the only important courses in vocational education and training are those that lead directly to a job. While these are extremely important, government also has a community service obligation to deliver foundation courses.

The arrogant LNP believes that it can covertly sell off Queensland's training assets by relinquishing control to an external authority and allowing it to carry the blame for any decisions made to privatise TAFE.

## **Benefits**

A Labor Government will rescue TAFE and return it to its former status as a high-quality training provider. We will restore Queensland's reputation as a provider of superior training to the local, national and international markets.

A Labor Government will introduce a Training Ombudsman to oversee training providers and reduce the number of dodgy providers in Queensland, resulting in a stronger training system.

A Labor Government will subsidise the delivery of foundation courses to assist in raising the average level of education obtained by Queenslanders.

A Labor Government will repeal QTAMA and return Queensland's training assets to Queenslanders to prevent the sell off of training assets and the privatisation of TAFE.

# Labor's commitment

## A Labor Government will:

- **invest \$34 million in TAFE Queensland to employ up to 100 new full-time equivalent roles including both teaching and support positions**
- **subsidise courses to increase the number of courses available through VET in schools**
- **enable TAFE campuses around the state to deliver foundation skills courses for disadvantaged learners**
- **repeal the QTAMA legislation and complete a review of all of Queensland's training assets, including their usage**
- **establish and fund an independent Training Ombudsman to investigate complaints made about training organisations in Queensland**
- **scrap the LNP's flawed plans for 'full contestability' in the VET sector.**

Queensland  
**Labor**



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