



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Main Committee

Consideration in Detail

SPEECH

Wednesday, 15 June 2005

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SPEECH

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Speaker	Plibersek, Tanya, MP	Question No.	

Ms PLIBERSEK (Sydney) (4.48 pm)—I want to respond to put on the record that the parliamentary secretary's comments about the Jobs, Education and Training program are an excellent example of just what this government should be doing when it comes to moving people from welfare to work. It was an excellent program introduced by the last Labor government. But it has been consistently underspent by this government with \$15 million a year allocated to Jobs, Education and Training—consistently underspent—and in this very budget a limit has been put on the JET program so that if you are undertaking a course that lasts for more than a year you do not have access to JET. What an extraordinary situation! If you are undertaking training in an area of skills shortage, for example—if you are going to train to be a hairdresser or you want to train to be nurse—then you are not going to have access to JET funding. Extraordinary!

What Labor has consistently said about helping people move from welfare to work is that it is very important. We accept that most sole parents, most recipients of parenting payment, whether they are on their own or in a relationship, and most disability support pensioners would love to be in the work force if they could be. They would love to be in the work force if they had adequate education and training for the jobs that are out there and if they had adequate child care, and in the case of people on the disability support pension if they can find employers who are prepared to employ someone with a disability.

This government has turned away 20,000 young people from TAFE and 20,000 young people from university every year, and we are wondering why these young people are not moving into the work force. There are many sole parents, many people on parenting payment and many disability support pensioners whose dearest dream is to be in the work force. When this government helps them instead of blaming them for their situation, then I am sure we will see them moving into the work force.