

**CHALLENGER INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY —
EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE — EDUCATION SUPPORT**

Statement by Minister for Training and Workforce Development

MRS L.M. HARVEY (Scarborough — Minister for Training and Workforce Development) [9.04 am]: I am very pleased to inform the house of an innovative program at the Peel campus of Challenger Institute of Technology. Students are now offered a simulated environment to develop work-ready skills in the area of early childhood education and care and education support courses. Challenger Institute will operate a creche and an after-school-care program along with a playgroup, which will be fully supervised by qualified staff and operated by students. The creche will operate for the young children of students and staff who are located on the campus. The creche will have a positive impact on Peel campus students, who will be able to access child care located at the place of study, which can assist in better study results and an increase in qualification completion rates leading to better employment outcomes. The playgroup will run one day a week. Children in the playgroup will each be accompanied by a parent. The children and parents who take part will have access to experienced staff and students with knowledge of child development. The playgroup will provide a networking and support system to mothers and parents in the Peel region and could also promote early intervention for children at risk of developmental delays. The out-of-school-hours care will start with two or three afternoons a week from 2.30 to 5.30 and will be staffed by students and lecturers. This will allow the early childhood and education support students to gain additional qualifications in after-school care, increasing their employment opportunities on graduation. This program will also meet Challenger's staff and students' after-school-care requirements.

Many individuals will benefit from these childcare arrangements in the Peel region, including young and disengaged mothers who are in need of support. It was highlighted in the latest Australian Early Development Census that children in the Peel region are at risk of poor developmental outcomes. The childcare arrangements outlined will assist by providing developmentally appropriate programs for children that can also educate parents of the developmental progress of their children. The lecturing staff participating in the creche, playgroup and after-school care can also provide links to other services in the Peel region, providing a wider network of support as identified and required. I am very pleased that this initiative has been implemented by the Challenger Institute of Technology and am sure this will have positive outcomes for students, Challenger and the local Peel community.