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POWERFULL PARTNERSHIP FOR TOWNSVILLE'S HYDROGEN INDUSTRY

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Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development

The Honourable Di Farmer

POWERFULL PARTNERSHIP FOR TOWNSVILLE'S HYDROGEN INDUSTRY

Townsville's future as a renewable hydrogen powerhouse has been further strengthened with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between TAFE Queensland and Ark Energy Corporation Pty Ltd today to deliver training for one of Australia's fastest growing industry workforces.

The Minister for Training and Skills Development Di Farmer is in Townsville to witness the signing today and said TAFE Queensland will deliver training to upskill and reskill Ark Energy's workforce along with its affiliated companies, including Sun Metals and Townsville Logistics.

"Workforce development goes hand in hand with industry development so it's vital our future workforce has the right training to take up new and exciting opportunities in the growing hydrogen industry, and support Queensland's position as an industry leader," Minister Farmer said.

"That's why the Palaszczuk Government is investing \$50 million in state-of-the-art infrastructure to support training in renewables and hydrogen, which includes a new \$10.6 million Hydrogen and Renewable Energy Training facility at TAFE Queensland's Townsville Trade Training Centre at Bohle, as part of the Equipping TAFE for our Future initiative.

"This training will ensure the safe production, handling and use of hydrogen across various applications in the energy transition and in particular ultra-heavy transport to reduce CO2 emissions.

The signing of the MoU follows the announcement of the development of Ark Energy's SunHQ Hydrogen Hub - a renewable hydrogen facility focussed on decarbonising the ultra-heavy transport sector - at Sun Metals' zinc refinery in Townsville.

"Queensland's resources and export infrastructure means that we are well-placed to support a prosperous hydrogen industry and we're already accelerating towards our ambitious target of 50 per cent renewable energy by 2030," Minister Farmer said.

"The Queensland Government is committed to working with the private sector to grow the industry, create jobs and keep the economy strong and I'd like to thank TAFE Queensland and Ark Energy for being part of this journey."

Member for Townsville and Resources Minister Scott Stewart said the city was well placed to take advantage of the opportunities green hydrogen offered.

"There's potentially thousands of jobs in this new industry and that's why we're investing in the Hydrogen and Renewable Energy Training facility at Bohle TAFE," Minister Stewart said.

“Working with industry partners like Ark Energy is a key part of tapping into Townsville’s potential as a hydrogen hub which is why this announcement is so exciting.

“As a government we will continue to invest in new industries like green hydrogen as they will offer job opportunities for the kids sitting in our classrooms today.”

Ark Energy Chief Executive Officer Daniel Kim said he is excited to be working with Queensland’s largest and most trusted provider of Vocational Education and Training (VET), TAFE Queensland.

“Ark Energy is proud to be one of the first movers in the hydrogen industry and partnering with the market leading provider of VET in Queensland will ensure we stay ahead of the curve,” Mr Kim said.

“In order to build a world-class hydrogen industry, we need world-class training for our current and future workforces, and our partnership with TAFE Queensland is central to achieving our goal of building North Queensland’s domestic hydrogen economy.

“We believe that Townsville has the potential to take a leading role in decarbonising Australia’s ultra-heavy transport sector and ultimately become a major global hub for hydrogen exports. This MoU is another important milestone for our project and also for the region in creating sustainable long-term jobs in the hydrogen industry.”

TAFE Queensland Chief Executive Officer Mary Campbell said the training provider is proud to support Ark Energy in strengthening the domestic hydrogen economy.

“TAFE Queensland works best when we are working hand-in-hand with industry and we are proud to be able to play such an important role in shaping Queensland’s future in hydrogen with vital training and skills delivery,” Mrs Campbell said.

“Ark Energy believe Townsville can grow a strong domestic and globally competitive hydrogen industry and TAFE Queensland is ready to support them with quality, innovative and progressive training and facilities.”

The State Budget 2022-23 includes more than \$1.2 billion for skills and training to continue delivering high quality education so Queenslanders can reskill or upskill to advance their career and pursue new opportunities like those in the growing hydrogen sector.

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