

Estimates Hearing 2017 – Finance and Administration Committee

Question on Notice No. 2

THE FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS, MINISTER FOR RACING AND MINISTER FOR MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS (HON G GRACE)—

QUESTION:

With reference to page 3 of the Treasury SDS, could the Minister provide information on the Government's package to assist workers affected by the closure of sandmining on North Stradbroke Island?

ANSWER:

The *North Stradbroke Island Protection and Sustainability and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2015* to end sand mining on North Stradbroke Island by 2019 was passed in the Queensland Parliament on 26 May 2016.

To support the continuing economic viability of the Island, the Queensland Government has committed more than \$23 million for the North Stradbroke Island Economic Transition Strategy (ETS) to assist North Stradbroke Island (NSI) transition to an eco-tourism hub with a revitalised diverse economy.

In addition \$5 million has been committed for the North Stradbroke Island Workers Assistance Scheme (WAS) to assist workers affected by the cessation of sand mining on the island. The scheme was developed in consultation with key stakeholders, including Sibelco, unions and the community.

Under the WAS, workers affected by the closure of Sibelco's mining operations on NSI have access to a range of financial, employment and training support services, including job search support, training and skills support, housing and commuting assistance, and dislocation assistance.

The Queensland Government has established a permanent office on NSI to support the worker transition and implementation of the ETS. The office is located at 7 Stradbroke Place, Dunwich. The office is staffed with an Employment Services Manager (ESM) who is dedicated to working with affected workers to identify individual needs and support available under the WAS.

As at 30 June 2017, the ESM has met with all 23 workers and one long term casual who have been made redundant and has discussed assistance options with a further 23 workers currently employed by Sibelco.

A total of \$98,689.19 (GST exclusive) has been paid to 27 individuals over 76 payments.

The 27 individuals have been assisted with a range of support, including:

- 7 individuals have been provided with job search support;
- 13 individuals have accessed training and skills support to assist with the costs of training certificates, university courses and tickets;
- 8 individuals have been reimbursed for leave without pay they have taken from Sibelco in order to attend training;
- 9 individuals have been assisted with rent or mortgage repayments;
- 13 individuals have been reimbursed for the cost of ferry travel to and from North Stradbroke Island; and
- 11 individuals have been assisted with motor vehicle registration costs.

The WAS will continue to support workers as redundancies occur and will continue to be available until 2021, approximately two years post the cessation of sand mining on NSI.