



Speech by

Hon. STEVE BREDHAUER

MEMBER FOR COOK

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Queensland Rail, Apprenticeships and Traineeships

Hon. S. D. BREDHAUER (Cook-ALP) (Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads) (10.06 a.m.), by leave: In October 1998, not long after coming into office, the Beattie Labor government launched the Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative as a major element of its commitment to reducing unemployment in Queensland. Through this initiative, Queensland Rail has an active apprenticeship and traineeship program. The intake of apprentices in QR over the past three years totals nearly 270. The majority of these apprentices have been in the engineering and building environments.

For the 2002 year there is an identified need for 35 new apprenticeships throughout the QR organisation. Importantly, about 60 per cent of those will be in regional Queensland. Additionally, QR has employed approximately 280 trainees to date, with a further 80 expected to commence during the current financial year. Funding for those traineeships is made possible by the Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative, which statewide has helped 28,000 Queenslanders find apprenticeships, traineeships and job placements. QR offers traineeships in areas such as office administration, horticulture, information technology, warehousing, cleaning operations, water management and engineering.

Regional development is an important priority of this government. That development is supported by QR's traineeships program, ensuring that positions are available throughout the state. This year placements are expected to be made in Brisbane, Redbank, Maryborough, Rockhampton, Gladstone, Mackay, Townsville, Cairns, Emerald and Toowoomba. As well as the apprenticeship and traineeship programs, it is important to understand that there are many other initiatives being conducted within QR which are designed to further 'unlock the potential of its people'. These include leadership and management development programs, driver simulation training, literacy and numeracy training, and training to enhance QR's skills in customer service and hospitality. The latter is very relevant to Queensland's tourism industry.

The future wellbeing of Queensland will rely heavily on a committed, flexible and skilled work force within all sectors of the economy. One of the best ways to develop such a work force and to get the best response from people is to give them the training they need to do their job well. This government has a number of key priorities for this state. They include providing more jobs for Queenslanders—particularly our young people—skilling Queensland, building Queensland's regions, a better quality of life, and providing strong government leadership.

These commitments are clearly supported by QR's activities associated with providing apprenticeships and traineeships. All the initiatives that I have just described are paying dividends, not just to QR's employees and QR but to the public at large. As a result of QR's and the government's efforts, QR is able to provide a very professional and efficient service to all its customers, whether they be passengers on Citytrain or Traveltrain, or whether they are shipping a small parcel or millions of tonnes of coal. Customers are responding and, as a result, QR's business is growing.

One very clear example of QR's success is provided by its Citytrain activities where, despite worldwide trends against public transport usage, QR has been successful in growing patronage by 5.4 per cent in 2000-01 over the previous year. This represents an extra 2.3 million commuters on public transport and, importantly, commensurate reductions in congestion and pollution and an increase in

transport safety. In addition, the on-time performance of the Citytrain services in the last quarter of the 2000-01 year reached 96.4 per cent.

In QR's Traveltrain business group during the same period, growth of 3.8 per cent over the previous year has been achieved. This represents an additional 39,922 passengers being carried on QR's long distance train services. These outcomes can only improve the high quality of life we Queenslanders already enjoy.

This government will continue to focus on developing a skilled and enthusiastic work force to support the economic growth and development of Queensland. It will do so by providing strong leadership of, and meaningful employment and training programs within, its instrumentalities. This will be done in the context of enhancing economic efficiency, an acute awareness by government of maintaining a sound social fabric, and focusing on a better quality of life for the people of Queensland.
