



Speech by

DIANNE REILLY

MEMBER FOR MUDGEERABA

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GOLD COAST MATURE AGE JOBS AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

Mrs REILLY (Mudgeeraba—ALP) (6.27 p.m.): Tomorrow I will launch the Gold Coast Mature Age Jobs Awareness Campaign, 45-45-45. This exciting initiative aims to provide 45 jobs to job seekers who are aged over 45 within 45 weeks. The campaign will provide mature-aged unemployed people with assistance to develop pathways to employment in the Gold Coast region by addressing barriers to employment, the provision of wage subsidies and proactive marketing initiatives. This project is a partnership between the government's Department of Employment and Training and the King's Christian Centres Community Support Agency at Reedy Creek.

Another vital member of this partnership is the *Gold Coast Sun* newspaper, which has agreed to run a weekly report following the progress of 45-45-45. I want to thank the *Gold Coast Sun's* editor, Feyne Weaver, for agreeing to sponsor this important initiative and for his commitment to supporting the Gold Coast community. I particularly want to thank the Minister for Employment, Matt Foley, Bernie Carlon, the general manager of employment and youth initiatives, and Roxanne Scott, from the Southport office, for their response to my repeated representations to the minister for such a program for the Gold Coast.

But most of the credit must go to the member for Algeester, my partner in the parliamentary chamber, Karen Struthers, who championed the 45-45-45 pilot project in south Brisbane last year. That project was an outstanding success, with the target being met at just 34 weeks. In fact, it was so successful that it is still going and now they are aiming for 100 jobs. The challenge is for the Gold Coast to do better, and I am sure that we are up to the task. With the support of the other Gold Coast Labor MPs—the members for Gaven, Broadwater, Southport and Burleigh—the combined chamber of commerce's support and the support of local business and employer groups, I have no doubt that we can reach our target of 45 jobs well before the 45 weeks.

The Department of Employment has provided \$60,000 to employ a full-time coordinator, John Suttle, who has already started in the job. He will be working through King's community support agency to match job seekers with employers. This project is yet another example of the Beattie government's commitment to jobs, jobs, jobs. This government has developed real programs and innovative schemes to get people into real jobs. We know that people aged over 45 have an abundance of skill, ability and experience and we do not want to see them thrown on the scrap heap of long-term unemployment. This is a real response to a very real crisis, unlike the federal government's response, which is to punish and vilify the unemployed time and time again.

Recently, the federal member for Moncrieff, Steven Ciobo, caring soul that he is, lashed out at the unemployed, labelling 20,000 people dole bludgers because they did not turn up to one of his federal government programs. If I was trying to sell a product to 20,000 targeted customers and they said no thanks, I would think that there was something wrong with the product, not with the customers. But the federal government's approach is to typically kick them when they are down. That is not our approach. The Beattie government cares for Queenslanders. We do constructive, positive things to get the unemployed back on their feet and give them back the dignity of employment with all its rewards. The 45-45-45 jobs project on the Gold Coast is going to do just that.