

Question on Notice
No. 1047
Asked Thursday 2 September 2004

Mr Horan asked the Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations (**Mr Barton**):

QUESTION:

With reference to the State Sugar Industry Reform Package –

- (1) How much funding from the \$33m State Sugar Industry Reform Package was spent by his department in 2002-03 and 2003-04 (reported separately)?
- (2) What level of funding is budgeted to be spent for each year over the next three years (each year reported separately)?
- (3) Will he provide a detailed description of the programs and/or projects which have received funding under this package to date (reported separately)?

ANSWER:

- (1) The following table details funding that has been spent under the \$33M State Sugar Industry Reform Package by the Department of Employment and Training:

2002/2003	2003/2004
\$1,297,130	\$1,054,570

\$500,000 was made available in 2002/2003 and 2003/2004 through TAFE Institutes in sugar growing regions for priority training places for sugar industry workers looking to reskill or retrain to migrate to other industries.

- (2) An amount of \$1,500,000 has been budgeted to be spent for the 2004/05 financial year. This includes \$500,000 which is made available through TAFE Institutes in sugar growing regions for priority training places for sugar industry workers looking to reskill or retrain to migrate to other industries.

In 2004-2005, the department is also considering making available an additional funding allocation of \$100,000 to provide a skills recognition program for workers across the sugar industry. The public provider is currently working with key stakeholders to determine the demand for skills recognition and how best to meet this demand

Whilst there has been no specific determination on actual budgets for 2005-2006 and 2006-2007, the public provider (TAFE Institutes and Agricultural Colleges) will continue to provide training for the sugar industry where this is a regional training and employment priority. Similarly, additional Community Training Partnership projects targeting the sugar industry will also be developed in areas of identified need.

- (3) Refer Attachment 1

2002/2003

Nambour Community Training Partnership Project – the project was designed to meet local or special training needs within Nambour and surrounding communities as a result of the closure of the Nambour Sugar Mill and the gradual loss of services and businesses.

Mackay Region Employment Enhancement Program – focused on providing training opportunities to a broad range of rural workers primarily from the sugar industry to secure existing employment or transition into alternative employment. Training was committed in the areas of administration, basic mining competencies, welding, chainsaw operation and Certificate IV in Workplace Assessment. Training was also extended to other areas such as: meat processing, transport and distribution, commercial fishing, community services and construction.

Canegrowers Training Initiative – aimed to assist members and employees of Bundaberg Canegrowers to gain further training and attain qualifications in management. Participants were also prepared for future industry needs through the attainment of transferable skills and competencies.

Haul-out Training for the Burdekin Sugar Industry – provided training in cane haul-out to support the sugar industry in the Burdekin Shire. The training program comprised competencies from the Agricultural Training Package which included: first aid; workplace health and safety; harvester and haul-out theory; harvester and haul-out equipment and operation and sugar production.

The training provided by Australian College of Tropical Agriculture (ACTA) targeted existing workers and unemployed people with the aim of up-skilling sugar industry workers and developing a pool of seasonal labour in the local workforce in areas such as cane harvesting and haul-out, soil fertility, harvester operator, plant operator, chemical usage, computer skills and rural business management.

The TAFE Institutes based in the sugar industry regions, (Tropical North, Barrier Reef, Central Queensland, Wide Bay and Cooloola Sunshine Institutes of TAFE) delivered training on an ‘as needs’ basis to individuals affected by changes in the sugar industry who were seeking to further enhance their skills and employability. Training was not limited to sugar industry specific courses. Workers affected by the sugar industry downturn were given priority placement in relevant sugar and non-sugar training programs (e.g. Automotive, Horticulture, Information Technology and Business Administration). Training was also made available to individuals in communities affected by the sugar industry downturn. Although training places were made available on an “as needs” basis, take-up of these places is not guaranteed and may be low.

2003-2004

Training continued under the Community Training Partnership Projects approved in 2002/03, viz *Nambour Community Training Partnership Project, Mackay Region Employment Enhancement Program, Canegrowers Training Initiative, Haul-out Training for the Burdekin Sugar Industry*.

The training provided by Australian College of Tropical Agriculture (ACTA) targeted existing workers and unemployed people with the aim of up-skilling sugar industry workers and developing a pool of seasonal labour in the local workforce in areas such as cane harvesting and haul-out, soil fertility, harvester operator, plant operator, chemical usage, computer skills and rural business management.

The TAFE Institutes based in the sugar industry regions, (Tropical North, Barrier Reef, Central Queensland, Wide Bay and Cooloola Sunshine Institutes of TAFE) delivered training on an ‘as needs’ basis to individuals affected by changes in the sugar industry who sought to further enhance their skills and employability. Training was not limited to sugar industry specific courses. Workers affected by the sugar industry downturn were given priority placement in relevant sugar and non-sugar training programs (e.g. Automotive, Horticulture, Information Technology and Business Administration). Training was also made available to individuals in communities affected by the sugar industry downturn. Although training places were made available on an “as needs” basis, take-up of these places is not guaranteed and may be low.