

**Question on Notice**  
**No. 1121**  
**Asked on 29 September 2004**

MR HOBBS asked the Minister for State Development and Innovation (MR McGRADY) —

QUESTION:

With reference to the Immediate Response Plan (IRP) —

1. Will he explain why this plan was implemented in the seven centres outlined on page 13 of the Ministerial Portfolio Statements, including an explanation of how many jobs were lost as a result of business closures?
2. What action did his department take as part of its IRP?
3. How many retrenched workers gained employment as a result of assistance provided by his department?

ANSWER:

The Immediate Response Plan was implemented in the seven centres identified in the Ministerial Portfolio Statement in order to mitigate the adverse impacts of business closures and downsizings on those local communities, and assist the 927 workers retrenched in these centres.

Assistance to retrenched workers is primarily provided through the Worker Assistance Program administered by the Department of Employment and Training. The Department of State Development and Innovation brought together the Immediate Response Group to make decisions to activate the Plan in these seven centres. In two instances, Immediate Response Centres were established to act as a central point for delivering assistance to retrenched workers, their families, local businesses and the community.

As I have said, assistance to retrenched workers is primarily provided through the Worker Assistance Program administered by the Department of Employment and Training. The data relating to the number of workers assisted by the program, and the number of assisted workers who have found alternative employment as a consequence of this program, is collected by the Department of Employment and Training. I would therefore refer requests of this nature to my colleague the Honourable Tom Barton MP, Minister for Employment and Training.