

Question on Notice
No. 749
Asked on Tuesday, 24 May 2005

MR HAYWARD asked the Minister for Police and Corrective Services (MS SPENCE)-

QUESTION:

What is the Department of Corrective Services doing to help prisoners, ready to be released from custody, find employment or training?

ANSWER:

The Department of Corrective Services in partnership with the Department of Employment and Training provides vocational education and training to prisoners whilst in custody. Contracted registered training organisations deliver nationally accredited training which provides prisoners with marketable work skills.

Such training includes obtaining qualifications in engineering, furnishing, horticulture, literacy and numeracy, information technology and hospitality. This training assists offenders in gaining qualifications needed to find employment when released.

In addition, under the *Breaking the Unemployment Cycle Initiative* the Department of Corrective Services in conjunction with the Department of Employment Training offers the Post Release Employment Assistance Program to sentenced prisoners who are within 6 months of release from custody. The program is now available at all correctional centres in Queensland.

This program assists prisoners to gain and maintain employment upon their release through the provision of support and assistance activities, which may include literacy and numeracy assistance, living skills, vocational training, job search, job placement, and post placement support.

Through the program, attempts are made to place offenders with long term jobs including apprenticeships and traineeships or seek employment in fields that they made have had association with, prior to their incarceration.

Assisting offenders in gaining new skills and employment is important and one of three key factors which reduce recidivism after offenders are released from prison. Evidence-based research also indicates that offenders are less likely to re-offend when they have sustainable accommodation, a reliable job and community support on release.