

**Question on Notice  
No. 258  
Asked on 7 March 2006**

MS NELSON-CARR asked the Minister for Public Works, Housing and Racing (MR SCHWARTEN)-

**QUESTION:**

With reference to the five new trade apprenticeships with QBuild that have been awarded to young people in the north Queensland region -

What is the history of this training program and how are past and present QBuild apprentices and trainees acquitting themselves in the Government and private building sectors?

**ANSWER:**

The Department of Public Works, through its maintenance and construction arm QBuild is one of the largest construction industry employer of apprentices and trainees in Queensland. During the term of the Beattie Labor Government, 848 apprentices and trainees have been employed under a training contract with QBuild.

Annually, QBuild recruits approximately 100 construction-related apprentices and trainees. This includes school-based apprentices, mature aged apprentices and construction worker trainees.

The 2006 intake saw QBuild inducting 101 apprentices and trainees bringing QBuild's current employment numbers to 348 apprentices, three construction worker trainees and three new horticultural trainees.

In the Cape York region, seven new apprentices have been employed as part of the 2006 intake with an additional two apprentices to be sourced by the end of April 2006.

The QBuild apprentice program consists of a number of sub programs which provide training opportunities for both young and mature aged people including QBuild's:

- general apprenticeship program
- school based apprenticeship program
- Indigenous school based apprenticeship program
- mature aged apprenticeship program
- wage maintained apprenticeship program
- construction worker traineeship program
- horticultural traineeship program.

QBuild also has in place a number of additional training and development opportunities that are available to all apprentices and trainees during their training contract.

- **Host Employer Program**  
Apprentices are given the opportunity to work in the private sector for a period of up to three months.

- **Business Management Course (QMBA)**  
Apprentices participate in the QMBA Business Management Course to gain a qualification towards their trade licensing arrangements.
- **Regional and inter business unit work experience programs**  
Apprentices are given the opportunity to participate in their regional office environment as well as Project Services, gaining skills and knowledge in estimating, site inspections / supervision and office administration.
- **Plumbing Interim Licence period**  
New plumbers are employed by QBuild for an additional period of 12 months to enable them to work under an interim licence arrangement and be fully licensed and work-ready upon completion of their employment with QBuild.
- **Inter regional experiential exchange**  
When necessary, apprentices in Far North Queensland or remote areas are given the opportunity to undertake training in Brisbane or large regional centres to ensure all aspects of their apprentice training are fully completed.

QBuild is committed to the competency based training format and actively supports apprentices to achieve both on and off the job competencies. In doing so, QBuild achieves a successful completion rate for apprenticeships of around 90% which is well above industry standards.

QBuild is supportive of the Government's new initiatives tabled in the recent release of the Queensland Skills Plan and actively promotes the early completion of apprenticeships. On average a QBuild apprentice successfully completes the apprenticeship within three and a half years, enabling the new tradesperson to venture into the wider industry and effectively reduce the shortage of qualified tradespeople.

The structured training that apprentices receive while working at QBuild has equipped them well for industry. The skills and knowledge obtained from being exposed to QBuild's wide scope of works has also increased their employability.

Apprentices trained under the QBuild Apprentice Training Program are making a major contribution to their trade and the building and construction industry overall in both the public and private sector.