

Question on Notice
No. 307
Asked Wednesday, 8 March 2006

MRS MILLER asked the Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations
(Mr Barton):

QUESTION:

Will he advise of any skills shortages within the Ipswich and surrounding areas and how people can access the training system in order to become skilled workers and tradesmen?

ANSWER:

Ipswich and the South West has had a number of skill shortages, particularly in trade areas, over a long period of time. However, due to a large number of project developments both in the South East corner (Ipswich) and the Darling Downs, these skill shortages are growing in both the construction and manufacturing industries.

Other industries experiencing skill shortages include: health & community services, transport and logistics and the agricultural and horticultural sectors.

Trade occupations currently in skills shortage in the South West Region include: mechanical engineering, structural steel and welding trades, automotive electricians, electricians, construction trades and food trades.

Associate professional occupations currently in skills shortage include: project administrators, chefs, catering managers, and customer service managers.

The launch of a billion dollar skills blueprint is the Government's response to the skills shortages being experienced in Ipswich and the South West Queensland region.

The aim of the blueprint - Queensland Skills Plan: A White Paper is to provide several initiatives that address specific needs.

The *Queensland Skills Plan* provides a number of actions that will have substantial benefits for the South West Queensland region and will increase people's access to training. These include:

- increased access to trades training places. The South West Queensland region will receive approximately 1,100 of the additional 17,000 trades training places available across the state each year by 2010, depending on demand;
- increased access to higher level training in Certificate IV and above programs. The South West Queensland region will receive approximately 700 of the 14,000 extra high level training places available across the state each year by 2010;
- improved access to training and career information and services through new Skilling Solutions Queensland centres ;

- the full implementation of a competency-based training system to allow earlier completion by apprentices;
- modernised TAFE facilities and equipment provided through a seven year capital works program. This will include an investment of approximately \$18M in the Bremer Institute of TAFE to modernise the Bundamba campus, approximately \$3M in the Southern Queensland Institute of TAFE for automotive training in Toowoomba, and consolidation of the Toowoomba campus;
- support for disadvantaged job seekers to gain sustainable employment through the new Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative that will assist 15,919 clients annually across the State. Based on recent trends, the region's share of the 2006-07 budget of \$79.5M will be approximately \$8.20M;
- a specific skills formation strategy for the South West Queensland region to ensure a collaborative approach to meeting local skills needs;
- skills formation strategies- across the state - in the building and construction, health and enrolled nursing, manufacturing, primary and rural and transport and logistics industries; and
- new improved industry engagement models. For example, as lead agencies in their fields, the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries and Queensland Transport's industry forums will provide critical advice on future skilling priorities.

More information on the Queensland Skills Plan and on how people can access the training system in order to become skilled workers and tradesmen is available at www.trainandemploy.qld.gov.au.