

Question on Notice
No. 219
Asked on Thursday, 22 February 2007

MS LEE LONG ASKED THE MINISTER FOR STATE DEVELOPMENT,
EMPLOYMENT AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS (MR MICKEL)—

QUESTION:

With reference to his department's discontinued funding of the 'Breaking the Unemployment Cycle Training Initiative' and given that this initiative created many opportunities for unskilled and unemployed Queenslanders to find work after completing their traineeships with organisations, such as local councils, aged persons homes and so on—

- (1) Will this program be reintroduced?
- (2) Are there any other similar programs available for organisations who wish to put on trainees?

ANSWER:

The Member for Tablelands is correct when she says that the *Breaking the Unemployment Cycle* initiative created many opportunities for unskilled and unemployed Queenslanders to find work. This initiative was implemented in 1998 and was designed to assist long term unemployed people back into the workforce through Community Jobs Plan activities such as work placements and a broad range of employment assistance measures. The other major component of the initiative was structured traineeship programs. Since 1998, both programs have been very successful in creating over 117,000 jobs, with over 20,000 additional apprenticeships and traineeships have been created under the *First Start* program.

With respect to the Member's Electorate of Tablelands, between 1998 and 2006, 2,416 people have been assisted, 1,618 jobs have been created and funding approved totalled \$12.6 million. This year, the initiative helped 82 people secure jobs; and funding for the Electorate totalled \$993,430.

The *Breaking the Unemployment Cycle* initiative will cease in June 2007 and will be replaced by *Skilling Queenslanders for Work* as part of the ongoing changes under the *Queensland Skills Plan*. With the changing Queensland labour market, the type of skills and assistance jobseekers require has changed dramatically and a new initiative was necessary to provide the best results for Queensland jobseekers.

Under *Skilling Queenslanders for Work*, skilling opportunities will be created for 16,780 Queenslanders disadvantaged in the labour market through an annual investment of \$80.75 million.

In 2007/08, *Skilling Queenslanders for Work* will continue to subsidise 1,100 traineeships. All agencies that have been eligible to receive traineeship subsidies under *Breaking the Unemployment cycle* initiative will continue to be eligible under *Skilling Queenslanders for Work* — that is State Government departments, state statutory

authorities, local governments and not-for-profit community organisations – including eligible not-for-profit aged care facilities.

The primary focus of the subsidised traineeships will be on assisting young people and disadvantaged job seekers whilst targeting areas of high needs (areas facing high unemployment and poverty levels).