

Question on Notice
No. 251
Asked on Thursday, 22 February 2007

QUESTION:

MR FINN ASKED THE MINISTER FOR STATE DEVELOPMENT, EMPLOYMENT AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS (MR MICKEL)— Will he outline the benefits of the Experience Pays Awareness Strategy to workers living in my electorate of Yeerongpilly?

ANSWER:

The Queensland Government wishes to change attitudes to mature aged people to create increased employment opportunities for those who would otherwise face the prospect of long periods out of the workforce.

The benefits of the strategy will be felt by both employers and employees in the Member's Electorate and throughout the State. It has been developed to ensure employers are aware of the predicted labour supply shortfall of up to 40,000 Queenslanders within five years. In a climate of a global ageing population and workforce, it promotes the benefits of recruiting, retraining and retaining mature aged people.

The "Experience - it's back" media campaign is one component of the *Experience Pays Awareness Strategy*. Advertisements are being run on major television stations in Brisbane and regional areas, key newspapers throughout the State and through radio advertisements on selected regional stations. Advertisements have also been placed in bus shelters and shopping centres around the state.

This advertising will last for a period of six weeks initially and will specifically target employers. However, it is expected that enquiries will also come from unemployed and underemployed mature aged people.

The strategy also provides funding for Liaison Officers to be employed with industry and unions, namely Commerce Queensland, National Retail Association, Local Government Association, Australian Industry Group, Office of the Public Service, Australian Workers' Union, Queensland Council of Unions and Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union. These organisations will work with employers and employees to assist with negotiations that will enable employees to stay in work for as long as they are willing and able.

The Liaison Officers will also work with employers to provide them with information and tools on how to recruit in an age-friendly manner, retrain to keep a skilled workforce, and how to manage a diverse workforce in an age-friendly environment that takes into consideration the benefits and needs of mature aged workers.

Research indicates that many mature aged workers who retire, do so with insufficient superannuation, and often retire because they feel pressured to do so. The *Experience Pays Awareness Strategy* provides information packs to employers (and individuals) and offers some tips on how businesses can better recruit, retrain and retain this valuable sector of the workforce.

Workers throughout the State will benefit from this initiative as workplaces become more diverse, family friendly and are more conscious of the benefits and value of older workers.

Free information sessions are being offered around the State in appropriate locations for employers and employees. The Member's constituents should contact 1800 630 647 and register their interest or visit the *Experience Pays* website at www.experiencepays.qld.gov.au and leave their details.