

## Question on Notice

No. 317

Asked on Wednesday, 7 March 2007

**MR LANGBROEK MP** asked the Minister for Communities, Minister for Disability Services Queensland, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Minister for Seniors and Youth (**MR PITT**) -

With reference to public recommendations made by the lobby group, Older People Speak Out (OPSO) last week that hospitals should consider hiring mature-aged carers to address the problem of elderly patients not eating properly or becoming depressed whilst in care –

- (1) Does the Government support employment initiatives such as that proposed by OPSO?
- (2) What employment initiatives has the Government implemented to encourage older Queenslanders to remain or re-enter the part-time work force?

### ANSWER:

Mr Speaker, I am pleased to have this opportunity to respond to Mr Langbroek's question regarding the Queensland Government's commitment to mature aged workers' employment initiatives.

The Department of Communities supports, in principle, the suggestions made by Older People Speak Out, that all organisations consider engaging mature-aged workers. I am not able to comment specifically on Queensland Health recruitment processes or strategies that currently deal with the nutritional care of elderly patients in hospitals, as this would be best addressed by the Minister for Health.

In relation to the Government's commitment to mature-aged recruitment and retention, the Office of the Public Service Commissioner has recently partnered with the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations to assist Queensland Public Service agencies to recruit, retrain and retain mature-age workers under the *Experience Pays Awareness Strategy*.

This strategy will also seek to dispel misconceptions about the value of older employees and increase mature workers' awareness of ongoing employment and training options. There are many benefits of employing mature-age workers including, lower absenteeism and turnover rates, strong work ethic and employer loyalty, experience, wisdom, dependability and a healthy and diverse organisational culture spanning all age groups.

The Queensland Government's *Experience Pays Awareness Strategy* will be implemented over three years and will provide Queensland employers with advice on how to 'age proof' their workplace, by providing working environments that allow them to recruit and retain older workers.