

Question on Notice
No. 639
Asked on 30 April 2008

MR CHOI asked the Minister for Tourism, Regional Development and Industry (MS BOYLE) —

QUESTION:

With reference to the proposed closure of the Fisher & Paykel plant in the Redlands—

Will she advise what is planned to render assistance to re-train and re-skill workers at the plant?

ANSWER:

I would like to thank the Honourable Member for his question, and I am happy to advise that the government is working cooperatively with the AMWU and Fisher and Paykel to maximise positive outcomes for workers affected by the company's announcement that it would be closing its Cleveland facility in March 2009.

On 17 April 2008 I activated my Department's Worker Assistance Program to commence monitoring the impact on workers. As a first stage of support, my Department has implemented a "Displaced Workers Support Strategy" to meet the needs of affected workers in an informed fashion and support workers during the transition to new employment. It will optimise the ability of affected workers to move into new employment while minimising the negative impacts on all parties and the Queensland economy.

The Strategy will be managed through a Taskforce that will include representatives from the company, the Queensland and Commonwealth governments, and the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union. The Taskforce members will work together to monitor the situation over the next year and ensure the smoothest possible transition for the workers.

Fisher and Paykel has already indicated that as part of their own transition process the company will be maximising opportunities for workers to upskill and to organise formal documentation of workers' existing skills through Recognition of Prior Learning certification.

The Queensland government also recognises that there may be some workers who are not interested in transitioning to similar employment but may prefer to consider starting their own small business, or even retire. In such cases my Department will organise provision of appropriate workshops and financial management programs.