

## Question on Notice

No. 1275

Asked on 16 September 2009

**MR PITT ASKED THE TREASURER AND MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (MR FRASER)—**

How will the 'Jobs First' plan assist workers and their families in Far North Queensland, particularly those in Mulgrave?

**ANSWER:**

Jobs First: Delivering Jobs for Queensland reaffirms the Queensland Government's commitment to creating and retaining jobs around:

- Building Infrastructure - keeping Queensland's record building program going
- Developing skills for the future – ensuring we are prepared for recovery
- Supporting new and traditional industries – enabling industries and businesses to emerge, grow and transform
- Developing new job creation programs – assisting unemployed Queenslanders to get back into work

The first part of the plan is our commitment to keep Queensland's record capital works building program going. The Bligh Government has continued our commitment to infrastructure investment into 2009-10 with a capital program of over \$18 billion, estimated to support over 127,000 jobs. This building program is essential to the creation and retention of full-time jobs, particularly in our regional centres.

Projects being delivered in the Mulgrave Electorate include:

- \$36.7 million towards building a number of new buildings and the refurbishment of existing buildings at Innisfail TAFE
- \$15.8 million towards the construction of a new primary health care centre at Yarrabah
- \$5 million towards the construction of new social housing rental units at Yarrabah
- \$1.8 million towards the construction of a replacement ambulance station at Gordonvale

Each project will create and protect jobs to help keep Queensland strong and secure our economic foundations.

The Queensland Government will also invest over \$320 million over the next three years through the *Skilling Queenslanders for Work* initiative to support 63,000 Queenslanders with a mix of training, vocational skills, job preparation and employment opportunities to gain job-ready skills and sustainable employment outcomes.

In the Mulgrave Electorate, \$212,000 was approved for the Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative to assist 45 people in 2008/09 through job preparation, accredited training and paid work placements.

The Queensland Government understands that the impact of the downturn has varied widely across industries and across regions. The new \$10M Jobs Assist Program will support businesses and retrenched workers across Queensland, focusing on those areas most affected including Far North Queensland. Jobs Assist is designed to provide an integrated package of support for workers and businesses impacted by the Global Financial Crisis.

Jobs Assist will provide support for eligible firms to undertake an analysis of their key challenges and develop an action plan as well as to implement that plan to address these challenges. Access will be provided to specialised State and Commonwealth programs to support business resilience and growth in addition to a comprehensive suite of online tools to provide businesses with guidance on surviving and thriving in a tough economic environment.

Through the existing Rapid Response Teams, Jobs Assist will continue to provide strong support for retrenched workers in the transition to new employment or to access relevant training to improve employment prospects. The Rapid Response Team has assisted 278 people in Far North Queensland.

The Government is also committed to supporting new and traditional industries in Far North Queensland and has committed an additional \$36M over three years towards a program of support for the Queensland Tourism industry. This includes regionally focused tourism marketing and product development campaigns, which will protect and help create jobs in electorates such as Mulgrave.

Finally, the Queensland Government will continue to deliver innovative new job creation programs like the Green Army. This program is well underway with 3 projects in Far North Queensland supporting 33 job placements through an investment cost of \$500,000.

This includes Choice Australia Management Inc undertaking a green work placement project in the Cairns area. This project will assist 15 people who are currently disadvantaged in the labour market with the opportunity to undertake horticulture, gardening and landscaping aimed at improving local parks, gardens, bike paths and walking tracks.