

**Question on Notice
No. 485
Asked on Tuesday, 23 March 2010**

MS Johnstone asked the Minister for Public Works and Information and Communication Technology (MR SCHWARTEN)-

QUESTION:

Will the Minister advise what QBuild is doing this year, and what it has done previously, to increase employment opportunities for Indigenous Queenslanders?

ANSWER:

QBuild is a significant employer of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Of its 2,759 workforce, 118 identify as being Indigenous. This is over 4% of its workforce.

Specifically in the Cape York region, 30% (57 out of 190) of QBuild's permanent staff identify as being from Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent.

QBuild actively supports the training and development of young Indigenous men and women through the annual apprenticeship program.

Since the late 1990s, QBuild has employed 207 Indigenous youth in apprenticeships and traineeships; 169 of those apprentices and trainees were employed in regional Queensland. The majority of these apprentices and trainees were employed in the Far West, Burdekin, Cape York and Capricornia regions.

From 2005 to 2010, QBuild has seen a significant growth (from 5.5% to 11.9%) in the number of applications received from Indigenous youth for its annual apprenticeship intake. The total number of applications received for the 2010 intake was 4,358, of which 521 were from Indigenous youth. QBuild allocated 27 of the 100 apprenticeships and traineeships on offer to Indigenous Queenslanders.

QBuild is currently working in conjunction with the Department of Communities to attract more Indigenous women into non traditional careers specifically in the Townsville area. This year, in addition to QBuild's regular intake of apprentices, 10 Indigenous women will be provided with traineeships, apprenticeships or support to complete grade 12 to assist them to find careers in the construction industry.

QBuild has a strong record of delivering on the Government's objective of increasing opportunities for Indigenous employment, training and enterprise development. In particular, QBuild is a key agency in supporting the Government's 20% Indigenous Employment Policy and has been at the forefront in providing opportunities for those who live in remote Indigenous communities where the chance of securing meaningful paid employment is limited.

In most Indigenous communities, QBuild has an established arrangement with the Aboriginal councils to undertake routine maintenance work on community housing. Wherever possible, the community is given first right of refusal on all repair and maintenance work opportunities. During the 2008-2009 financial year, 84% of responsive and planned maintenance work on community owned housing in the Cape York region was undertaken by the local community on behalf of QBuild. This high level of engagement with the local councils is continuing in the 2009-2010 financial year.

Where capacity exists in communities, QBuild also uses the councils' Indigenous building teams to undertake maintenance and other works on other Queensland Government properties, such as schools and staff accommodation. For example, QBuild recently contracted the Kowanyama Aboriginal Shire Council to undertake the replacement of a roof at the Kowanyama State School. This provided employment for four local Indigenous workers, including two apprentice plumbers, under the guidance of a tradesperson.