

Question on Notice

No. 223

Asked on 10 March 2011

Mrs Attwood asked the Minister for Employment, Skills and Mining (Mr Hinchliffe) —

QUESTION: Will the Minister advise the benefits that Mount Ommaney constituents can expect to receive from the recently announced \$83m Disasters Jobs and Skills Package?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for her question and I note that the Mount Ommaney Electorate was particularly hard hit by major flooding in Brisbane between 11 and 13 January 2011. I understand most suburbs within the electorate experienced some flooding, particularly Jindalee, Corinda, Oxley, River Hills, Westlake and Seventeen Mile Rocks.

As you know, the recent natural disasters also saw most of Queensland declared a disaster zone. Resultant widespread damage to communities and infrastructure is likely to significantly effect economic and labour markets, reducing the ability of businesses to retain employees and hastening the re-emergence of critical skills shortages.

The Bligh Government, through Skills Queensland, is responding to this challenge in partnership with the Gillard Government and I was pleased to announce the Queensland Natural Disasters Jobs and Skills Package on Sunday, 6 March 2011.

The \$83 million Jobs and Skills Package aims to assist up to 10,000 Queenslanders and focuses on four key strategies:

- priority skills development activities in affected communities and industries;
- implementing paid work placements and work experience opportunities to assist with rebuilding essential public and community infrastructure and to help with environmental restoration;
- providing a raft of assistance measures to help in keep Queensland apprentices and trainees earning and learning; and
- rebuilding community capacity in affected communities to support local industry, coordinate skills and employment assistance and maximise funding opportunities for Queensland towns that still need assistance.

The benefits to the Mount Ommaney community, and to all affected communities in Queensland, may include paid work, gaining new skills and qualifications, employment retention, and the chance to participate in restoring damaged community and environmental infrastructure within their own backyards.

A Jobs and Skills Package Hotline - 1800 773 048, has been established and I encourage you to provide this number to interested constituents and local organisations as a first point of contact for further information or assistance in relation to these initiatives. Information about the package can also be found on the Skills Queensland website at <http://www.skills.qld.gov.au/>.

I look forward to working in partnership with you, the community and all levels of Government to continue rebuilding Queensland, with the Jobs and Skills Package just one demonstration of the Bligh Government's commitment to help Queensland get back to business in difficult times.