

Question on Notice

No. 154

Asked on 18 March 2014

MR MINNIKIN asked the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice (Mr JARROD BLEIJIE) –

QUESTION:

Will the Attorney-General outline the benefits of the grants under the Workplaces for Wellness program for local businesses in the Chatsworth Electorate?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for Chatsworth for the question.

The Queensland Government's Workplaces for Wellness Grant Funding Program (the Program) is about to distribute a further \$1.4 million to industry, bringing the total to \$2.6 million. This funding will support initiatives that encourage workers to make healthy lifestyle choices, at home and at work.

Recently, I launched this latest round of funding at the *Leading Safer Healthier Workplaces* forum in Brisbane. At the forum, I urged organisations from all industries, private and public, to apply for grants to support health and wellbeing initiatives.

Australia's healthiest workers are three times more productive than their colleagues, so a healthy workplace makes good business sense. A healthy workforce means less time lost to illness and allows businesses to maximise productivity. I am sure everyone here today would agree that smoking, excessive drinking, poor diet and excess body weight are linked to absenteeism, low morale and increased workers' compensation premiums.

Obesity alone is thought to cost the Australian economy around \$6.4 billion every year through loss in productivity. Tackling chronic disease and fostering a positive attitude to healthy lifestyles benefits businesses' bottom line as much as it benefits workers.

Already, more than 500 workplaces are making use of the funding, giving around 33,000 workers the opportunity to improve their health and wellbeing. This latest round of funding will boost those numbers significantly.

We have seen initiatives such as: nutritionists visiting construction sites, physical activity challenges being held at truck depots, and on-campus fitness classes helping school teachers become positive role models for our next generation of workers.

There are numerous funding categories for employers, to establish or build on existing programs. We encourage businesses of all sizes to apply for grants.

I highly recommend the Program to the Member for Chatsworth and urge all businesses in his electorate to apply for funds later in the year. There is funding available to suit every workplace in the Chatsworth Electorate.