

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 149

asked on 26 February 2019

MR J KELLY ASKED THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND SMALL BUSINESS AND MINISTER FOR TRAINING AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT (HON S FENTIMAN) —

QUESTION:

Will the Minister provide an update on developing a social enterprise strategy?

ANSWER:

Social enterprises play an important role in local communities in Queensland. They are operating to address a range of key social and environmental issues and in doing so are benefitting disadvantaged groups in the community by helping to create jobs and increase workforce participation.

The social enterprise sector in Queensland is gaining momentum and is collaborating and working together to build and move the sector forward. This grassroots movement is happening around the world as governments, enterprises and people seek to address issues facing communities, society and the environment while also creating economic growth.

The Queensland Government is committed to creating a *Social Enterprise Strategy* that can help existing businesses grow, foster new and existing ventures and increase the capacity and flow of investment through Queensland's social enterprise sector.

The Queensland Government is already supporting the social enterprise sector in Queensland through training and other programs such as *Skilling Queenslanders for Work*, small business programs and services delivered under the *Advancing Small Business Queensland Strategy* and the commitment to increase government procurement spend with social enterprises.

For example, under *Skilling Queenslanders for Work*, \$247,700 was provided to employ 12 disadvantaged jobseekers across three social enterprise sites operated by Lifeline in Toowoomba. These 12 trainees gained practical experience in a business environment and successfully completed accredited training in the Certificate I in Business, with nine trainees or 75 per cent successfully gaining ongoing employment upon project completion.

In 2018, the Queensland Procurement Policy was also enhanced to include a commitment to increase government spend with genuine, quality social enterprises, providing award-based wages and pathways to mainstream employment for disadvantaged Queenslanders.

Building upon these existing initiatives, the government is currently undertaking research into the social enterprise sector in Queensland through the Jobs Queensland Social Enterprise Project.

Jobs Queensland has been tasked with identifying the extent and role of social enterprises in Queensland and reporting on the economic and social outcomes of social enterprise in Queensland and potential mechanisms for government support. The findings will inform the development of a social enterprise strategy for Queensland.

I have also commenced discussions with the social enterprise sector in Queensland to look at ways the government can work with the sector to provide support. These social enterprise roundtables have comprised a cross-section of the social enterprise sector, including social enterprise operators, industry representatives and leading academics. Through these forums, the sector has indicated strong support for the development of a social enterprise strategy in Queensland.

Implementing a strategy to support the continued development of a strong social enterprise sector in Queensland will benefit local communities and local economies across our state by creating jobs, supporting inclusive and diverse workforce participation and delivering social impact outcomes.