

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 200

asked on 19 February 2020

DR M ROBINSON ASKED THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND SMALL BUSINESS AND MINISTER FOR TRAINING AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT (HON S FENTIMAN) —

QUESTION:

With reference to the North Stradbroke Island Workers Assistance Scheme —

Will the Minister advise how much money has been expended on workers on North Stradbroke Island since 30 June 2019 until now?

ANSWER:

I am pleased to provide an update on how the North Stradbroke Island Workers Assistance Scheme is assisting workers impacted by the phasing out of sand mining on Minjerribah.

Our Scheme is helping these workers with new employment and training opportunities in a variety of local industry and business areas, such as sustainable tourism or cultural education.

There is a wide range of support available including:

- training and skills support to assist the acquisition of additional skills;
- compensation for workers undertaking training on leave without pay;
- housing assistance (which is mortgage or rent assistance) to support those who live on Minjerribah to continue to reside there; and
- a commuting subsidy for those continuing to live on Minjerribah to seek employment, attend approved training or attend employment on the mainland.

The Worker Assistance Scheme has expended more than \$618,000 to 124 former and current Sibelco workers.

In the 2019-20 financial year to date (as at 29 February 2020), almost \$128,000 has been expended on workers through support tailored to their specific needs and two employer wage subsidies. This is comprised of:

Assistance Type	Funds
Commuting - Ferry	\$225
Commuting – Motor Vehicle Registration	\$792
Dislocation Allowance	\$10,912
Employer Wage Subsidy	\$16,000
Financial Advice	\$940
Housing Assistance	\$50,000
Job Search Support	\$7,079
Tailored Support Services	\$9,575
Training and Skills Support	\$8,926

Training and Skills – Leave Without Pay	\$23,459
Total	\$127,908

To date, 67 individuals have been retrenched with the following current outcomes:

Employed	20
Started their own business	6
Retired or semi-retired	17
Undertaking training / apprenticeship	6
Career break/considering options	16
Moved overseas	1
Preferred not to comment	1

The Scheme was also recently expanded to include workers whose employment commencement date was after 26 May 2016, (the date the Scheme came into effect), as long as they work to the end of their employment contract which spans at least one year.

Assistance under the Scheme is currently available to support workers until May 2021. While the number and dates of future retrenchments are unknown, there are currently multiple workers continuing to work for Sibelco, for example on restoration requirements and decommissioning