

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 225

asked on 11 March 2021

MR C BOYCE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND SMALL BUSINESS AND MINISTER FOR TRAINING AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT (HON D FARMER) —

QUESTION:

With reference to the recent Courier Mail article (5 March 2021)—

Will the Minister advise what incentives are in place to encourage more school leavers to assist with harvesting crops in Queensland?

ANSWER:

Attracting and training Queenslanders to work in the agribusiness and food sector continues to be the Queensland Government's key focus for meeting the forecasted labour shortages.

Through the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training, the Palaszczuk Government invests in a range of vocational education and training (VET) programs and initiatives, providing access to subsidised training opportunities in a diverse range of industries. This includes subsidised training to eligible participants in primary industries.

Through Free TAFE and free apprenticeships, all young Queenslanders under 25 can access training in courses such as Certificates III in Production Horticulture, Horticulture and Agriculture for free as well as other related courses.

The Palaszczuk Government is committed to maximising opportunities of employment for school leavers and ensuring that they can access the training they need to get into the jobs they want.

The Back to Work program continues to be available throughout regional Queensland. Employer support payments of up to \$20,000 including Youth Boost payments are available to eligible employers.

Since the program commenced in 2016, over 8,500 regional Queensland businesses, including those in agriculture, have provided employment opportunities to over 19,600 previously unemployed Queenslanders.

The program is advertised throughout regional Queensland to encourage more businesses to participate in the program. Employer-targeted advertising designed to raise awareness of the program and encouraging visitation to the Back to Work website is currently running in radio, print, digital and social media channels. Campaign activity

is being supported by on-the-ground regional engagement led by Back to Work employment officers.

The Palaszczuk Government has also launched the Back to Work in Agriculture incentive scheme to provide financial support for eligible workers over the age of 18 years relocating for agricultural work. Payments of up to \$1,500 are available to assist with costs associated with travelling and staying in regional, rural and remote locations.