



**MINISTERIAL REGIONAL COMMUNITY FORUM
WIDE BAY BURNETT
HERVEY BAY – 13 NOVEMBER 2006**

MINISTERS ATTENDING

The Honourable Pat Purcell MP	Minister for Emergency Services Regional Minister for Wide Bay Burnett
Andrew McNamara MP	Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Main Roads Regional Queensland Council member for Wide Bay Burnett

REGIONAL PROPOSAL

Meeting Regional Employment Needs

This Regional Proposal was raised at the Forum held at Kingaroy on 19 June 2006.

FORUM OUTCOME/S ADDRESSED BY THE GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE

The Forum recommended that the State Government:

1. Establish a Skilling Solutions Queensland site (face-to-face training and career information service) with mobile outreach capability, within the Wide Bay Burnett region; and
2. Provide assistance in marketing the region to attract higher level skilled workers and their families to the Wide Bay Burnett. Specific assistance is sought for the upcoming "At Work and Play" Expo to be held in Sydney in August.

MINISTERS CONSULTED ON THE GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE

The Honourable Margaret Keech MP	Minister for Tourism, Fair Trading and Wine Industry Development
The Honourable John Mickel MP	Minister for State Development, Employment and Industrial Relations
The Honourable Tom Barton	Former Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations

BACKGROUND

The topic was identified in November 2005 at a joint planning exercise between Forum members and Wide Bay Burnett Regional Managers' Coordination Network members.

Significant demographic trends occurring in the Wide Bay Burnett region include: rapid population growth and increase in an ageing population; an increasing dependency on services; a regional unemployment rate that is consistently higher than the Queensland rate; and high welfare dependency.

ISSUES RAISED

- The region's ability to match expected strong population growth with equivalent economic and employment growth will be a significant challenge.
- A recent regional study identified that the region needs to significantly increase its number of highly skilled workers and improve skills of current residents.
- Recent regional consultations have identified a number of recurring issues, including a need for:
 - more collaboration and partnerships between neighbouring towns/organisations to attract higher skilled employees;
 - enhanced infrastructure (such as housing and educational facilities) to support new workers and their families; and
 - supporting young people to leave the region for educational or job experience pursuits whilst building opportunities to encourage their return.

RESPONSE TO FORUM

Request 1 - Establish a Skilling Solutions Queensland site (face-to-face training and career information service) with mobile outreach capability, within the Wide Bay Burnett region.

The Queensland Government recognises specific challenges the Wide Bay Burnett community faces in meeting employment needs of the region and values the Wide Bay Burnett Ministerial Forum's consideration of this issue.

To address statewide employment and training challenges, Queensland Government developed the *Queensland Skills Plan* which outlines a policy framework that will better match the supply of skilled labour to industry's needs and the economy's demands.

It sets out 24 actions the Queensland Government will take to implement these policies. The actions contained within the plan were developed through a process of consultation with a broad cross-section of Queenslanders.

Action 22 of the *Queensland Skills Plan* states that the Government will establish ten new sites for Skilling Solutions Queensland from 2006-07 to provide training and career information to Queenslanders.

In June 2006 the former Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations and Minister for Sport announced that a proposed site would be established in Bundaberg to service communities in the Wide Bay Burnett region. There will also be sites established in Ipswich, Toowoomba, Chermshire, Cairns, Capalaba, Gladstone, Southport, Caboolture and Indooroopilly.

Each of these centres will act as a hub servicing smaller towns in the immediate vicinity. Skilling Solutions Queensland services will be delivered in these smaller towns via a mobile consultant servicing communities on a rotational basis.

Pending a further evaluation of the initiative, the Government will consider establishing up to seven more new sites from 2007-08, bringing the total number to twenty-four sites, to ensure the service is available across the whole state.

It is proposed that these further seven sites will be established in Hervey Bay, Strathpine, Carindale, Mt. Isa, Noosa, Robina and Maroochydore. Again each of these centres will act as a hub servicing small towns in the immediate vicinity.

To complement the work already being undertaken as part of the Queensland Skills Plan, on 6 November 2006 the Acting Premier Anna Bligh and Minister for Education and Training and Minister for Arts Rod Welford announced a \$1.1 Billion Skills Plan. This will address professional skills shortages in both the private and public sectors.

Over the next three months the Queensland Government will undertake a major study to gather further detailed information about professions and to identify where significant skill shortages are being experienced.

Strategies to address skill shortages are already being developed in a range of industries including building and construction, child care, engineering and health. Shortages of skilled professionals in regional industries such as tourism, horticulture and mining will also be targeted.

Request 2 – Provide assistance in marketing the region to attract higher level skilled workers and their families to the Wide Bay Burnett. Specific assistance is sought for the upcoming "@ Work and Play" Expo to be held in Sydney in August.

The Queensland Government, along with many regional groups and employers, participated in the "Queensland on Show @ Work and Play" display in Sydney from 11 to 13 August 2006. This event was targeted at attracting skilled workers and their families to Queensland and particularly to regional Queensland, including the Wide Bay Burnett region.

The Queensland Government contributed \$500,000 to the event along with having a Queensland-wide display.

The Department of Tourism, Fair Trading and Wine Industry Development provided promotional information at the display in an effort to attract skilled labour and their families to Queensland.

The Office of Fair Trading provided three print brochure quantities to be displayed at the expo namely:

- *How to be Consumerwise;*
- *The Glovebox Guide;* and
- *Get out there! A survival guide for young adults.*

Under the 'Play' banner, the Wine Industry Development Division provided Queensland Winestate magazines and A1 Queensland Wine Maps to the display.

The "Work Live and Play" website, www.workliveplay.qld.gov.au, was launched to support the Sydney event and to provide on-going information for those seeking employment in Queensland.

Feedback from both contributors and attendees was extremely positive with many Sydney based skilled workers identifying employment opportunities in Queensland. The Queensland Government is reviewing the feedback from the Sydney event to assess the opportunities for similar events in the future.

Tourism Skills Development Guide

To address skills needs within the tourism industry, the Tourism Skills Development Guide has been produced by Tourism Queensland. This project management tool will improve identification of skills gaps in tourism related industries and increase the flexible delivery of skills development programs, especially in regional Queensland, including the Wide Bay Burnett region.

The Department of Employment and Training recommends the guide as a valuable tool in the implementation of its Tourism Skill Formation Strategies. These strategies provide a process whereby industry, community and government stakeholders can work collaboratively to develop tailored industry and community solutions to skills shortages. Tourism Skill Formation Strategies are currently underway in the Bundaberg, Whitsunday and Mackay regions.

<p>Prepared by: Duane Roth A/Principal Service Support Officer Office of Rural and Regional Communities 3008 8689</p> <p>Further Information: Carol Weekes Regional Manager Wide Bay Burnett Department of Communities 4151 7911 0407 581 852</p>	<p>Endorsed by: Mark McConnell A/Executive Director Office of Rural and Regional Communities 3008 8651 0418 881 537</p> <p>I certify that the Ministers consulted on the Government's Response have approved this brief.</p> <p>Signed: _____</p> <p>Date: _____</p>
---	---