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IPSWICH JOBS PROJECT TARGETS MATURE-AGED JOBSEEKERS

The State Government has announced an additional \$10 000 grant for a jobs project in Ipswich so it can help mature-aged jobseekers back to work.

Member for Ipswich Rachel Nolan said the project, coordinated by Centacare, had received an initial \$70 000 from the from *Breaking the Unemployment Cycle* initiative Experience Pays Strategy.

“St Mary’s Employment Group, auspiced by Centacare, is running the project to give 120 people employment assistance, including more than 47 mature-aged people,” Ms Nolan said.

“The additional \$10 000 funding will allow them to promote the project to mature-aged jobseekers through the local community and media.”

Experience Pays was set up by the Beattie Government to provide employment assistance and links to employment opportunity for people over 45 who have been out of the workforce for more than a year.

St Mary’s Employment Group founder and chief executive officer John Kenny said mature-aged workers had a lot to offer employers.

“They have a wealth of life experience to bring to an organisation and are able to use their initiative and communicate in a way a younger person cannot,” Mr Kenny said.

“Participants on the project access a variety of assistance including skills audit, literacy and numeracy workshops, living skills, job-search assistance, job placement and post-placement support.

“The funding has also enabled us to continue to employ a co-ordinator to provide one-on-one help to participants.

“The co-ordinator addresses an individual’s barriers to employment, develops a network of employers and identifies jobs.

“Our co-ordinator, and the St Mary’s team, do a great job recharging participants’ enthusiasm and creating a positive atmosphere.”

The State Government’s *Breaking the Unemployment Cycle* initiative has helped create more than 98 000 jobs across Queensland since 1998.