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PROJECT GETS IPSWICH DISABLED JOBSEEKERS INTO WORK

The employment prospects of 12 Ipswich jobseekers with mental illnesses will be given a boost with a *Breaking the Unemployment Cycle* project that will provide paid employment and training for 17 weeks.

Member for Ipswich Rachel Nolan said the Mental Health Association of Queensland had received a \$141,650 grant to run the project.

“The Queensland Mental Health Association is very experienced in running these projects, and this will be the seventh of its kind they have conducted in Ipswich,” Ms Nolan said.

“The association has helped over 114 people with mental disabilities, and nearly two-thirds of them have gained employment or undertaken further training.”

“Through their connections and partnerships with various community organisations, the association will give participants of this project hands-on experience and paid work in either landscaping or administration.

“The organisations which host the participants are often understaffed and benefit from an extra pair of hands while the participants gain valuable experience and training.”

Mental Health Association Director Susan Stephenson said the participants working in paid jobs within an ordinary workplace provides a better springboard to employment than training in group or sheltered situations with high levels of support.

“In our experience a large number of participants involved in these projects are offered work in their host organisations after the project has ended,” Ms Stephenson said.

“Participants will each undertake a specific work project nominated by their host employer while gaining experience in a variety of general work duties.

“CRS Australia will undertake recruitment services for the project and will provide pre-placement assessment and ongoing post project support to all participants.”

Ms Stevenson said the projects were vital in educating the community and employers about the capabilities of people with a psychiatric disability and often helped people regain a sense of dignity and worth.

The State Government’s *Breaking the Unemployment Cycle* initiative has helped create more than 100 000 jobs across Queenslanders since 1998.