



Electorate Office
125 Brisbane Road

Telephone
07 3202 3452

Email
ipswich@parliament.qld.gov.au

Postal Address
PO Box 98, Booval Q 4304

Facsimile
07 3202 4778

Web
www.rachelnolanmp.com

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Ipswich receives \$500,000 for multicultural skill boost

One hundred multicultural Ipswich jobseekers will boost their chances of joining the workforce with the help of case management, paid work and vocational training on a *Skilling Queenslanders for Work* project

Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations John Mickel and Member for Ipswich Rachel Nolan said Bridgeworks Employment and Training would run the \$507,880 project thanks to Queensland State Government funding.

“Our economy is booming and jobs are plentiful but some people, particularly newly arrived Australians, still need a helping hand to make the leap into work,” Mr Mickel said.

“With skills shortages threatening the continued growth of our economy it’s vital that we get as many people as we can participating in the labour market.”

Member for Ipswich Rachel Nolan said one of the greatest barriers to integration for refugees and migrants is a lack of work experience and a limited understanding of Australian work culture.

“To gain exposure to the Australian workplace, 30 participants will undertake a 13-week paid work placement with a community organisation,” Ms Nolan said.

“These placements will align with the participants’ needs, skillbase, experience and employment aspirations.”

Bridgeworks General Manager Kris McCue said training and work placements will offer experience and skills in local industries with high levels of labour demand.

“The training and experience will equip participants for work in industries including health and community services, retail, hospitality and business – all key local shortage areas,” Mr McCue said.

“Participants will work with case managers to determine their individual needs then benefit from a combination of work experience or accredited training in areas where local businesses are crying out for skilled staff.”

During 2007/08 the Queensland Government will invest \$80 million in the *Skilling Queenslanders for Work* initiative to give an estimated 17,000 long-term unemployed and underemployed people job related assistance and skills training to maximise labour force participation and increase Queensland's prosperity.

Twelve months after receiving employment and training assistance 67 per cent of participants are in employment.

Skilling Queenslanders for Work is part of the State Government’s \$1 billion *Queensland Skills Plan* which aims to provide individuals and industry with the skills and workforce for the 21st Century.

For more information on the *Skilling Queenslanders for Work* initiative visit www.employment.qld.gov.au or call **1300 369 925**