

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING — ABORIGINAL TRAINEESHIP PROGRAM

**171. Mr P. ABETZ to the Minister for Housing:**

I understand the Department of Housing's Aboriginal traineeship program was used as a case study in the Public Sector Commissioner's "State of the sector report 2013". With that in mind could the minister please inform the house of the importance of this program in getting more Aboriginal trainees into the public sector?

**Mr W.R. MARMION replied:**

I thank the member for Southern River for that very good question. I know he is a strong supporter of increasing our commitment to Aboriginal employment within the state public sector. It is certainly a commitment of the Liberal-National government. Indeed, the Department of Housing is a good example of leadership in this area, and it is not surprising to me that the Public Sector Commissioner has highlighted the Aboriginal training program as a case study in the Public Sector Commissioner's "State of the sector report 2013".

The Department of Housing committed in 2012 to take on six trainees each year, and also pledged that if the trainees completed the trainee program, they would be offered full-time employment within the department. Basically, it is a win-win situation for the department. The department is seeking to diversify its workforce, consistent with its client base—its customers. It is also a win for the department by getting another Aboriginal Australian in their employ, and it is a win for the Aboriginal Australian in terms of employment.

These trainee programs do not work by themselves, which is obviously why the Public Sector Commissioner highlighted the program as a case study for other departments to look at. A lot of initiatives were put around this program to make it was successful. A tailored induction package made sure that trainees are guided and know what they can expect through the program so that there are no surprises during the first six months of their traineeship. There are opportunities for metropolitan-based trainees to go to the country, and, similarly, regionally based trainees to come to the metropolitan area. There was the placement of Aboriginal mentors for each trainee to provide one-on-one guidance on the work-life balance they might expect, and also advocates and positive role models for the trainees. Also, the trainee supervisors were encouraged to go on the Public Sector Commission's supervising Aboriginal staff course, and there was a dedicated traineeship coordinator and a traineeship support officer who guided the trainees through the program.

I am very pleased to report that following the completion of the program last year four graduates took up full-time employment with the Department of Housing. I look forward to more trainees successfully completing the program in 2014 so that the Department of Housing can keep its head above the rest of the public sector in terms of the participation of Aboriginal employees.