



ABORIGINAL APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

7 August 2002

Member for Flinders Liz Penfold has been assured of the continuation of the Aboriginal Apprenticeship Program that has been running for two years. Mrs Penfold was given this assurance by the Hon J. Lomax-Smith, Minister for Employment, Training and Further Education in answer to a specific question from Mrs Penfold relating to the 2002-03 Budget.

Mrs Penfold said the program, started by the former Liberal Government, was specifically aimed at the most disadvantaged job seekers in the labour market.

"I am relieved and delighted that the program will continue, although it will no doubt be assessed and refined as it goes along," she said.

Ms Lomax-Smith said trade apprenticeships funding through the Aboriginal Apprenticeship Program would be more strategically targeted at skills shortages and areas of high indigenous unemployment particularly in regional South Australia.

She said the Government is keen to develop placement opportunities to ensure that once apprentices complete their training contracts, they will be well placed to obtain on-going employment.

Mrs Penfold approved the provision of mentors, an approach that has been particularly successful in other unrelated programs at Ceduna.

"Well chosen mentors lift retention rates and contribute to successful outcomes through their encouragement, support and willingness to listen and share as problems are worked through.

"I look forward to young people in the scheme completing their apprenticeships in the next year or two and then taking their place in the working life of our communities," she said.