



## TRAINEESHIPS 26 May 1998

**Mrs PENFOLD (Flinders):** I am delighted that the State Government has this year offered a further 1 000 traineeship positions to young people aged under 22, to be filled by the end of April. A total of 500 of these positions are to be allocated in regional areas. This is an excellent scheme, and the Government is to be commended for continuing with the program and its commitment to provide direct assistance for young people in making a successful transition from education to work. In addition, 200 graduates under 25 and 300 non-graduates under 22 are to be placed in Public Service jobs by the end of June this year.

Since the Government's youth training scheme was launched in 1993, more than 4 500 young people have received public sector traineeships. More than 70 per cent of those young people have gone on to full employment in either the public sector or the private sector as a result of their experience as trainees. More than 2 000 applications have already been received for the 1 000 traineeships currently being made available. Obviously, the traineeship scheme has significant appeal for our young people and is perceived, quite rightly, as a potentially successful method of gaining future employment. This initiative is particularly welcome in country areas, where employment opportunities for young people are statistically lower than for their metropolitan counterparts. It provides talented young people seeking employment with the experience that prospective employers value so very highly.

The traineeships provide a training wage of up to \$345 per week and, for many young people, this is their first experience of earning their own income, with a resultant increase in self-esteem. It is common to believe that the younger generation are not motivated to work. However, as one trainee put it when told that the wage was not very much, 'Anything is better than the dole.' This is the heartfelt response from many trainees. All they ask for is a chance: a traineeship provides that chance.

I have employed three trainees in my electorate office to date, and I have been very impressed with the vigour with which these young people have seized the opportunity to gain valuable work experience. They have enthusiastically approached all tasks required of them, even the most menial. Two of these trainees have gone on to find excellent jobs at the end of their traineeship periods. The third trainee has also recently gained full-time permanent employment in private enterprise starting this June. This is a credit to the trainees, to my excellent staff, particularly Angela, who is responsible for turning out these work-ready trainees (and does so with seeming ease), and also to the

Port Lincoln College of TAFE staff, who provide training for two out of the five days each week in work-related knowledge and skills training.

I have been surprised by and impressed with the calibre of young people available through this scheme, and recommend to any of my colleagues who have not yet taken on a trainee that they should consider doing so. Of the four applicants I interviewed for the most recent position, any one would have been suitable. The final choice came down to minor details that we believed would be particularly beneficial in an electorate office—local knowledge and the maturity that comes from a person only an extra few years older. The youth traineeship program is an excellent example of how the State Government is continuing to provide our youth with real opportunities for practical work and training. I am personally grateful for the opportunity to help launch young people into the work force via this very rewarding program.

### **FARM WORKER TRAINEESHIPS 19 October 1995**

**Mrs PENFOLD (Flinders):** Mr Acting Speaker, I wish to bring to your attention and that of the House an exciting new incentive program for youth that was recently launched by the Minister for Employment, Training and Further Education, Dr Bob Such. In recent years the farming population has been ageing, with the average age of farmers now being over 50 years. As you would be aware, this is due to large numbers of young people leaving rural areas and looking for work elsewhere. If this situation is not arrested soon, the average age of farmers could well be above 60 before the decade is out. Without young people, regions such as Eyre Peninsula will not fulfil their future potential. That is why I applaud the rationale behind this new program.

The initiative is called the Australian Vocational Training System Skilled Farm Worker Traineeship, which will provide employment for young people wishing to pursue a career in the agriculture-horticulture industries. It is a pilot program that is being managed by the Agriculture and Horticulture Training Council of South Australia. The program means that for the first time people will be formally trained to work on farms without the need to have prior farming experience or to possess current standard education qualifications. People with an interest in rural matters who do not aspire to tertiary education but who wish to gain useful credentials in this area will find this program ideal for their needs.

The traineeship provides people with the skills and knowledge of farm operations. This includes basic activities such as farm maintenance, chainsaw operation, concreting, vehicle and tractor operation and welding. They will also learn about irrigation systems, pest control, soils, fertilisers, livestock handling, breeding and a range of other related skills. They are thus equipped with the necessary foundation to perform a multitude of farm related tasks. This would make them eminently employable to any farmer and to many other occupations as well. In this way young people can feel confident in themselves, secure in the knowledge that they now possess.

Farmers can also benefit from the knowledge that these trainees will bring to the land. New and up to date techniques that the trainees have learnt will not only serve to improve the quality and consistency of the final product from the land but ultimately

lead to a more profitable farm sector. I am delighted that it has been seen fit to provide funds for a worthwhile cause such as this. The formal studies consist of 10 weeks of formal training at TAFE campuses. Two blocks have just been completed at the Kadina campus. For the remaining time, the students are on the farm putting into practice what they have studied at TAFE. At the end of the year the students should be quite capable of handling almost any farming situation.

I am pleased to say that my electorate of Flinders already has two representatives, both from Wudinna—Craig Barns, who is employed by his father, and Darren Scholz, who is working for his uncle. I wish them both well in their studies and I hope they will remain on Eyre Peninsula once they have completed their year of study to utilise their knowledge in helping this region to prosper. The selection criteria is quite simple. The person must be between the ages of 15 and 64, and the only requirement is that they must have an employment contract with a farmer. The employer may be a parent or relative of the applicant. This is quite important, as many farms are handed down from father to son.

One of the initiatives of this Government in waiving stamp duty on the transfer of the farm between generations has been appreciated. This training program will add further encouragement to keep our young people interested in a career on the land. The employer benefits from this arrangement in receiving a Commonwealth Government grant of up to \$3 000 to help off-set the costs of the trainee. The trainees themselves are paid according to the national training wage award. The program currently has 10 trainees from all over the State and it is hoped that an equal number will participate in the next in-take. Already confirmed are a group of Aboriginal students from Port Augusta. It has been suggested that the students, on completion of their course, face very good employment prospects, and this can only be a benefit to all concerned. It can only but help to reverse the people drain in rural communities, particularly in an area affected as much as is the Eyre Peninsula. Many of our young people are lost to the cities for good and are not tempted to come back.