



Hon. Paul Lucas MP



Queensland
Government

Our ref: MC18019

Your ref: 530-05

Minister for
Transport and Main Roads

17 JAN 2006

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane Qld 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

Re: Petition No. 530-05 Staffing problems in the Department of Main Roads

I refer to a petition lodged with the Legislative Assembly by the Honourable Ken Hayward MP, Member for Kallangur, in relation to the attraction and retention of staff in the Department of Main Roads. The petition also seeks that Main Roads' Enterprise Development Agreement (EDA), under negotiation at the time the petition was lodged, is used to address these concerns.

I am advised that the negotiation process for the EDA was successfully concluded in the Queensland Industrial Commission on 22 December 2005. In a ballot, 83% of Main Roads' employees who participated endorsed the agreement. The agreement has now been forwarded to the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission for certification.

The petition correctly recognises that the unparalleled program of infrastructure development occurring in the state will have implications for the ability of all employers involved with the civil industry to obtain skills in some critical occupations.

Main Roads' response to this issue has been under active consideration and development for a considerable period of time. Fundamental to Main Roads' response is the understanding that the EDA is only one measure, among a number of potential responses that could be taken to successfully address the retention and attraction issue.

Having said this, the EDA, subject to certification by the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission, will play an important role in supporting the wider retention and attraction initiatives that Main Roads is currently implementing.

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Key measures taken in the EDA include:

- provision for existing employees to transition to key roles through assisted study
- enhanced rural and remote provisions
- upgraded training and skill assessment mechanisms (particularly in areas involving critical occupations)
- a range of targeted improvements in conditions and entitlements.

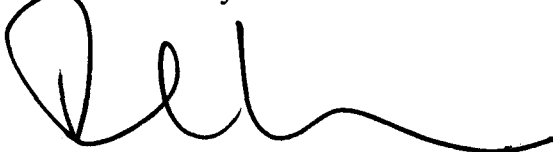
These, coupled with important equity measures such as the introduction of 12 weeks paid maternity leave, are aimed at making Main Roads an employer of choice within the industry.

Main Roads has established a Workforce Capability Program to integrate a range of initiatives, in addition to the EDA, to address the retention and attraction challenges. Staff in Main Roads has been kept informed of these initiatives and many have been involved in their progress to date. Examples of these include:

- 1 WorkOut, an overall review of how Main Roads needs to adjust to deliver its infrastructure program, has now concluded its intensive 12-week planning and consultation phase and is now moving toward implementing fundamental change in the way Main Roads operates.
- 2 A dedicated recruitment team has been established in Human Resources Branch that is bringing about fundamental changes in recruitment practices, particularly as they relate to the key occupations that are difficult to recruit in the prevailing labour market.
- 3 Recognising that recruitment and attraction activities must operate on a global basis if employees with the skills critical to service delivery are to be recruited. The participation of key departmental staff in the Opportunities Australia Expo in London on 29 – 30 October 2005, targeted at people wanting to work and live in Australia, illustrates how seriously Main Roads views this need.

Main Roads is aware that unions, as representatives of the workforce, are ideally placed to be aware of the industry specific issues that may impact on the ability of employers to retain and attract employees. Accordingly, I have directed that Main Roads regularly consults with unions on these issues during the course of the new EDA. I trust this information will address the petitioners concerns.

Yours sincerely



PAUL LUCAS MP

Minister for Transport and Main Roads