

# Expo draws workers

## Employers head south to get staff

NEW local employees are so scarce major employers are heading south on poaching raids with the Queensland on Show jobs expo.

Queensland on Show head Robin Grundon says the expo was touring southern states to promote how a move north can improve a worker's lifestyle.

More than 100 Queensland companies and government authorities are to be at the Sydney expo to be held from October 5-7 at the Sydney Showgrounds.

Mr Grundon says last year's Sydney expo produced more than 1000 job offers. A recent Melbourne show attracted 5000 job seekers with three quarters saying they were likely to move to the Sunshine State in the next 18 months.

"Two of the biggest areas that people said they wanted in surveys were job opportunities and lifestyle," Mr Grundon says.

"It's about the cost of living. At the end of the day, they will have more disposable income left over when they have paid transport fees, school fees, health costs. For example, the city of Mackay has a lower cost of living, it's a boom town and



**On the move:** The laid-back Queensland lifestyle continues to draw more southerners to the Sunshine State.

there are so many opportunities for you and your partner and for your children's long-term future.

"The expo offers an opportunity for people to get to know the regions and why people should come here. Quite frankly, people down south don't know what it's like to live in Mackay or Hervey Bay.

"In Sydney, they think Bundaberg is only a drink. They don't know the city is just 13km to the beach and that the beautiful development of Bargara is not an old fishing shack any more but

is massive with an international golf course and two private hospitals."

Mr Grundon says "bad press" about Queensland's struggling infrastructure, water problems or traffic woes are not slowing interest in moving north.

"The problems we are now experiencing are because the growth was not anticipated on a local level so there has been enormous pressure on services Queenslanders take for granted," he says.

"Southerners arrive here and wonder why we are whingeing

about having to stop at three traffic lights before we get to work or being delayed by 30 minutes. They are used to waiting an hour and a half."

Nurse Janice Labbett says the notorious traffic snarls and desire for a quieter life drew her from Sydney to Rockhampton 12 months ago.

She left her job as the assistant director of nursing for surgery at the Westmead Hospital to take up the assistant director of nursing at the Rockhampton Mater Hospital. She now is the director of nursing.

## ask Kate

with Career One's Kate Southam

I RECENTLY profiled an amazing guy, Ian Blair.

Ian landed a really cool job as a senior consultant with software specialist Prima Consulting.

He also has become the office "sustainability guru" – a cutting edge role made possible via a career spanning 40 plus years.

Ian is 69. He was one of the first people to use computers in the rural sector and was using the internet years before the rest of us.

He first saw many of today's software languages while they were in their development stages.

What a great guy to have in a software consulting company!

Of the emails I've received, some have praised the piece and others say I shouldn't be giving "false hope" to mature candidates.

The truth is, Ian's is not a typical story and no one is claiming otherwise.

Indeed, LINK Recruitment, who placed Ian, admit to some nerves about putting him forward for the job but they truly believed he was the best candidate and managing director of PRC Robert Riegert agreed.

"Age never came into it," he told me. As far as I can tell, when the clarion call first went out to mature age candidates a while back, employers were just not ready.

Things are changing but that change is still slow.

Prejudice and misconceptions still exist. However, I think it is important to tell Ian's story and others like his.

Employers have no choice but to embrace diversity if they want to remain competitive.

Ian was looking for a job for many months and tried different things to perfect his campaign. He has provided a wealth of tips on CareerOne.com.au in the "Job hunting advice" section along with other experts so check it out.



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