

Skilled, disadvantaged or in need of training ...

Job-seekers get a one-stop team

A new partnership offers hope to our unemployed, reports JANETTE YOUNG

JOBLESS figures released by the government yesterday showed 700 Queenslanders joined the hunt for work last month, but in Bundaberg a new partnership is gearing up to help our unemployed no matter what their needs.

One Stop Employment, driven by Employment Services Queensland, and Sarina Russo are teaming up to offer training and job-seeker assistance right across the board, each taking on their areas of speciality.

It is a partnership driven in part by necessity after major changes in the federal job search structure were announced in April. But the outcome is one both parties agree is positive.

"The Sarina Russo operation is very good," said Andrew Ewan, chief executive officer of One Stop.

Back in April, One Stop received a government job services contract for Bundaberg while Sarina Russo did not.

"They have got offices already established and staff in place," he said.

One Stop is in the process of setting up its operations.

Now the two organisations will be able to share facilities and draw on each other's strengths.

Sarina Russo chief executive officer Kevin Ayre is delighted that the company is able to maintain its offices — and employee base — in Bundaberg after July 1.

Initially, it had seemed the jobs of up to 30 local staff could go.

"I think the two organisations working together is a great result and we're looking forward to the partnership," said Mr Ayre.

While One Stop focuses on disadvantaged and marginalised people, the Sarina Russo staff will provide more mainstream services.

They will work jointly on some areas of employment-seeking and training.

Mr Ewan said the partnership

would come into force on July 1, in line with the new government job services system.

One Stop, which was setting up operations in a range of regions, had made a point of working with existing providers across the state.

Mr Ayre said that under the new partnership, they also would deliver a new enterprise to the Bundaberg region — offering unemployed people the chance to set up their own business with full training.

"We'll help them set up their business and mentor them for the first 12 months," he said.

The news came as the nation's jobless rose to 5.7% and Queensland's unemployment hit 5.3%.

Around 121,000 people are out of work across the state.





GETTING TO WORK: Sarina Russo Job Access management team Gordon King and Bronwyn Quaille get ready for One Stop. *Photo: MAX FLEET job1106*