



Queensland Skills Plan





Premier's foreword

Skills shortages are a national problem and pose the biggest threat to our great state of Queensland's continued economic prosperity.

The Smart State must get even smarter about how we best equip our workforce with the right mix of skills now and into the future, and attract young people back into the trades. Since its election in 1998, the Beattie Government has given a high priority to skilling of the workforce, with a 60.5 per cent increase in the numbers of apprentices and trainees in training, up from 46 044 in June 1998 to 76 100 in June 2005.

But we must do better. That is why my government is undertaking the most significant reforms to Queensland's skilling and training in more than 40 years.

The *Queensland Skills Plan* delivers on our commitment to create one of the most flexible, modern and innovative education and training systems in Australia. No other state has embarked on such a comprehensive policy reform agenda to its vocational and education training (VET) system.

The *Queensland Skills Plan* is a bold response to the enormous challenges we face in addressing skills shortages in priority industries such as manufacturing and engineering, health care, automotive, and building and construction.

Its 24 actions will transform and modernise the VET system including major changes to TAFE such as improving the way our institutes deliver training. Another feature is that industry and private training providers will be key partners as we reform our current system and make available thousands of new training places.

By 2010, an extra 17 000 trade training places, and an additional 14 000 high level training places to meet the needs of emerging industries, will be available each year.

Partnerships with industry and private training providers will allow us to better forecast and prioritise training investment and delivery.

Queensland's economy is booming, growing an estimated four per cent during 2004-05 – double that of the rest of Australia. With unemployment now around five per cent, it is time to look ahead – to turn our attention to the skills of our state, and build a workforce that can sustain the way of life we enjoy well into the future.

The *Queensland Skills Plan* is not only an investment in skills, it's an investment in Queensland's future.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "P. Beattie". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Peter Beattie MP
Premier of Queensland



Minister's foreword

Today's dynamic labour market demands that workers be more highly skilled than ever. Qualifications often determine an individual's chances of obtaining a job and their earning potential. For industry, skills can mean the difference between struggling to stay afloat and a productive, profitable enterprise.

Queensland boasts a successful vocational education and training system. Without the high standard of training offered by our public and private training providers, the workforce could not have supported the recent economic boom.

Over 900 courses are supplied to more than 230 000 people each year through TAFE Queensland. TAFE institutes have responded to the modern labour market by adapting training to meet the needs of industry – especially in new and emerging fields. Our TAFEs now offer programs in aquaculture, biotechnology, marine engineering, aged care and graphic design.

Queensland's vibrant private training market has complemented TAFE Queensland to meet the state's skills challenges. Through the combined efforts of the public and private training providers, the number of apprentices training in Queensland grew by almost a third between 2002-03 and 2004-05.

Despite all this, Queensland is still facing skills shortages. Queensland's vocational education and training sector must shoulder the responsibility for delivering a skilled workforce

and overcoming the skills deficit. We must build on the strong training system that we have and strive for more.

With unemployment around 5 per cent, we need to make training more accessible to people who are working. This means greater flexibility and more out-of-hours options. We also need to reinvent training for the traditional trades, realising that in a world of technological change, many of these trades jobs are now highly skilled technical positions.

We require highly educated professionals and associate professionals, tradespeople of the highest standard, and managers who are equipped to lead enterprises to success.

The *Queensland Skills Plan* sets out the State Government strategy for achieving this goal. It outlines both a fundamental shift in the way our training system operates and a significant reform to TAFE Queensland.

The major changes proposed in this plan are designed to ensure we have the highly skilled workforce that Queensland needs. The State Government cannot achieve this mission alone. Only in partnership with private training providers, employers, unions and the community can we rise to this challenge and better address our skills shortages.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tom Barton', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Tom Barton MP

**Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations
and Minister for Sport**

The Queensland Skills Plan

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Executive summary

Queensland's labour market has fundamentally changed. Although some changes may be linked to cyclical patterns in worker demands for certain industries, other changes are more permanent, reflecting likely trends in the labour market for decades to come.

This new work environment requires a fresh approach to skills development to meet the current and future needs of the labour market. Some of these needs are critical and require immediate action. Others are long-term issues requiring incremental shifts in training strategies and workplace culture.

The *Queensland Skills Plan* outlines a policy framework that will better match the supply of skilled labour to industry's needs and the economy's demands. It sets out a range of actions the Queensland Government will take to implement these policies.

The new framework has four key elements:

- a training system that works for Queensland
- training that works for industry and employers
- training that works for the trades
- training that works for individuals.

A training system that works for Queensland

There are many reasons for skills shortages, including rapid changes in the population and the labour market. However, these factors will have less impact on the availability of skilled labour if the education and training systems are more closely aligned to the needs of students and industry.

To provide better training packages for learners and employers, we need to move from a supply driven training

system to a system that can respond to rapid changes in skill demands. This means fundamental changes to the government's funding and purchasing of training, a substantial reform of TAFE Queensland institutes, and the development of a more sophisticated approach to managing and supporting the entire Queensland training system.

New vocational and education training (VET) arrangements with industry are expected to stimulate greater demand for vocational education and training. This will drive further innovation while increasing industry's willingness to invest in more training and skills development. It is crucial this training system is supported by quality training providers whose diversity and skills continue to meet the needs of industry, individuals and employers.

The Queensland Government will develop a new training system that is responsive to the changing needs of the labour market. This includes:

- increasing the number and capacity of quality training providers delivering apprenticeship training by making fundamental changes to the User Choice program
- enhancing third party access to TAFE facilities and infrastructure
- developing a comprehensive professional development strategy for Queensland's vocational education and training sector
- developing more innovative purchasing models to maximise the effectiveness of Government's investment in training
- establishing a new state-wide Trade and Technician Skills Institute to lead product development and delivery in key trades areas
- establishing the Southbank Institute of Technology as the designated lead institute responsible for technological and high level skills training and education
- creating an Australian Resources and Infrastructure Institute of Technology to provide whole-of-industry training solutions for the resources and infrastructure sectors
- implementing a more independent commercial governance model for TAFE Queensland institutes
- reorganising TAFE training delivery in the Brisbane metropolitan area
- establishing designated TAFE lead institutes to lead product development and coordination across the state in designated fields
- implementing a major capital works investment program to modernise TAFE

Training that works for industry and employers

Creating the skilled workforce that Queensland employers and industries need is a shared responsibility. Training alone cannot solve skills shortages, and government alone cannot determine our workers' skills needs nor fund all the necessary training.

It is time to build alternative models for industry, training providers and government to work together at the local, regional and state level. Different strategies need to be developed for different industries, recognising that one size does not fit all.

The Queensland Government will take a new approach to working with industry and employers to ensure the training provided by Queensland's vocational education and training system is better targeted to economic demands. This includes:

- creating three additional centres of excellence to promote skills development in the important industries of energy, manufacturing and engineering, and building and construction
- establishing 23 new skills formation strategies to ensure a collaborative approach to meeting the skills needs of industry
- developing a range of industry engagement models to enhance skills and training leadership in key industries
- implementing the Experience Pays Awareness Strategy to assist the recruitment and retention of Queensland's older workers
- developing a range of training products designed specifically to meet the needs of Queensland's small businesses.

Training that works for the trades

One of the most critical challenges facing the training system is the demand for skilled tradespeople. Urgent action is vital to address those factors discouraging Queenslanders from undertaking trades training through apprenticeships. These factors include low wage rates and negative perceptions of trade employment.

Apprentices have to be better supported to ensure they become fully qualified, highly skilled tradespeople. Employers and unions must actively work together to eliminate poor workplace practices and raise apprenticeship completion rates.

The apprenticeship training system must work for both apprentices and employers, while maintaining high quality skills outcomes. This means increased flexibility in the way we structure apprenticeships and fund, regulate and support training.

People already working in the trades must be assisted to move into more skilled occupations. Furthermore, skilled tradespeople must be supported to use technical training pathways to attain higher level employment throughout their careers.

The Queensland Government will introduce a range of training system reforms and initiatives to ensure Queensland has a highly skilled trades workforce. This includes:

- increasing the number of trades training places with 17 000 extra places available in each year by 2010
- fully implementing the competency-based training system to allow earlier completion by apprentices and further address significant trades skills shortages
- introducing shortened expected durations for many apprenticeships to encourage people to become tradespeople more quickly once they have the required competencies
- developing a range of higher level trade qualifications from Certificate III to graduate diploma programs
- commissioning a review of apprentice wages
- establishing an apprentice hotline
- increasing travel allowances for apprentices.



Training that works for individuals

The Queensland Government will develop a new approach to providing skilling services to the workforce, based on customised training services that support individuals to achieve their maximum career potential.

In the past, the vocational education and training system has paid insufficient attention to the link between qualifications and actual jobs. This has resulted in limited opportunities to build on entry-level vocational training as a career foundation.

The Queensland Government will develop a new approach to providing vocational education and training based on a more sophisticated understanding of clients' different needs. This includes:

- increasing the number of Certificate IV and above training places with 14 000 extra places available in each year by 2010
- establishing 10 new sites for Skilling Solutions Queensland from 2006-07 to provide a face-to-face career and training information service. Pending further

evaluation of this new initiative, the Government will consider establishing up to seven more new sites from 2007-08 to ensure the service is available across the whole state

- providing sustainable employment outcomes for Queenslanders who are disadvantaged in the labour market with the new Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative
- introducing a Skills First program to streamline skills assessment processes
- developing a new Indigenous Employment and Training Strategy
- developing a new Skilling Action Plan for people with a disability
- providing tailored training strategies and subsidies for older workers.

Delivering a skills plan for Queensland

The importance of skills

Skills are essential to Queensland's economic success. The proportion of the workforce with higher level skills is an important factor in explaining differences between countries' economic performances. As the main educational source of qualifications for the majority of jobs, the vocational education and training sector must ensure the skills they provide maximise the value of work being performed.

Although many skills can be attained through informal workplace training, formal training complements this experience by providing the theoretical, technical and behavioural skills that workers need to apply technology and innovation.

Skills are also essential for individuals seeking well-paid employment. Qualifications are highly valued by employers making recruitment decisions, and they provide personal rewards such as greater employment access, higher incomes as well as economy-wide benefits.

Today, holding a tertiary qualification (at Certificate III level or higher) is a direct pathway to secure employment. In 2004, over 80 per cent of people aged 15 to 64 years who had a tertiary qualification were employed compared to 70 per cent of people who had completed a Certificate I or II qualification or senior certificate. These days, there is little difference between university graduates and vocational education and training graduates with a Certificate III level or higher who have a job.

There is also a strong correlation between qualifications and incomes. Only relatively small income differences exist between holders of higher level VET qualifications and people with university qualifications working in the same occupational categories.

The emergence of skills shortages

Skills shortages are the inevitable result of a tight labour market. Australia – and Queensland in particular – is experiencing one of the most competitive labour markets in 30 years, with a national unemployment rate of only 5.1 per cent and a Queensland rate of just 4.9 per cent in December 2005¹.

Skills shortages are also caused by structural changes to the labour market. The major shifts that have occurred across industries, occupations and the work culture in recent years have been as profound as those changes forced by the industrial revolution some 200 years ago.

Some of these modern work revolutions include:

- the decline in traditionally important sectors such as agriculture, primary industries and manufacturing as sources of employment
- the substantial growth of service industry sectors
- the resurgence of industries like mining, utilities, construction, transport and storage, and communication services
- the rising demand for skilled tradespeople and technicians as a result of booms in the resources and building sectors
- the higher-than-average growth of professional and associate professional occupations, largely due to our increasingly technological society
- the significant growth in non-standard forms of employment including part-time, casual, contract, seasonal, self-employed consultant and labour hire agreements, with these arrangements comprising about 40 per cent of the workforce by the year 2000
- an ageing workforce combined with many Australians retiring well before the usual age of 65, having a significant impact on the number of workers available to fill labour market vacancies.

These changes have transformed and complicated the labour market, and made it increasingly difficult to predict the skills that will be in highest demand even one or two years into the future.

What is certain, is that skills shortages are no longer simple cyclical phenomena linked to the latest economic upswing or downturn. Rather, they now reflect the joint impact of global changes on the nature of work (with many lower skilled jobs moving to emerging lower-cost economies), the influence of technological evolution and the implications of an ageing population.

¹Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Labour Force, Australia* – December 2005 edition, Cat. No. 6202.0, ABS, Canberra

Responding to the skills needs of a modern economy

The impact of these changes on the availability of skilled labour will be softened if the education and training system is more closely aligned to the needs of students and industry. Some needs are critical and require urgent attention. Others are long-term issues requiring incremental shifts in training strategies and workplace culture.

The Queensland Government has identified two key issues that require an immediate response by the training system:

- a serious shortage of trade skills, with current intakes to trade apprenticeships insufficient to meet the projected growth and turnover in trade occupations, and with only two-thirds of current tradespeople fully qualified
- an underqualified associate professional workforce, with only half of the employees in some of the highest skilled jobs in Queensland holding a vocational education and training or university qualification.

The development of the *Queensland Skills Plan*

The Queensland Government's *Smart Queensland: Smart State Strategy 2005-2015*, released in April 2005, committed to:

- a comprehensive review of Queensland's vocational education and training system
- the development of strategies to make the system more flexible and responsive to the rapidly changing skills needs of the economy
- the delivery of up-to-date training to more Queenslanders.

In June 2005, the Premier and the Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations released a discussion paper for community consultation titled *Queensland's proposed responses to the challenges of skills for jobs and growth: A green paper*. This document contained 24 proposals for responding to Queensland's changing skills needs and was supported by a comprehensive research paper, *Skills for Jobs and Growth*.

The Green Paper was distributed throughout the state and feedback was invited from a broad cross-section of Queenslanders. This consultation process generated significant interest with 1500 people attending community forums and almost 200 people and organisations submitting written responses.

Participants represented a wide range of stakeholder groups including employers, industry associations, unions, training providers, group training organisations, individual teachers, all levels of government and interested community members. Specific consultations were held with current apprentices and people who had cancelled their apprenticeship contracts.

All feedback, including reports from the community consultation sessions and the written submissions, were considered when developing the actions in the *Queensland Skills Plan*.

This plan outlines a new framework for skills policy which will better match the supply of skilled labour to the workforce needs of industry and the economy. It sets out a range of actions that the Queensland Government will take to implement these policies.

These actions provide a comprehensive state-wide response to the skills needs of the Queensland economy through better skills forecasting and planning, a more responsive training system and improved workforce management strategies.



What Queenslanders said...

...about the training system

Consultation feedback revealed wide support for improvements to the training system. Some people indicated that a major overhaul of the entire process was well overdue; while others considered that more effective functioning of the current system could go a long way towards fixing many issues.

There was a mixture of scepticism and support for the proposal to establish new relationships between public and private registered training providers. People generally supported the idea of each sector focussing on its own strengths and collaborating better at a local level. However, fears were raised about how competing training systems could meaningfully cooperate. Concerns were also raised about the regional impact of this proposal – particularly where there were very limited private training markets. Practical implications such as protecting intellectual property were also discussed.

Some private training providers saw enormous benefits arising from increased collaboration across the full range of proposals outlined in the Green Paper. They felt public training providers would not have the resources or the capacity to deliver all the increased training required and saw significant potential for private training providers, with a feeling that business could boom.

There was also widespread support from all community sectors, especially medium to large employers and TAFE staff, for better collaboration between TAFE institutes rather than a competitive environment.

The proposed Trade and Technician Skills Institute was generally supported, particularly for more consistent training delivery and assessment across the state and a single point of contact for employers with apprentices. However, concerns were raised about the impact of the proposed institute on regional training delivery and how smaller businesses might be affected.

Similar worries about state-wide accessibility and responsiveness were expressed on the proposed Southbank Institute of Technology. However, some participants could see enormous scope in a specialist technology centre.

“The Green Paper’s proposal to establish the VET Institute of Technology at Southbank heralds a significant and exciting opportunity to enhance technology oriented skills in Queensland’s workforce as well as sharpening the focus on high level VET qualifications and skills clusters.” (Industry Skills Council representative)

Not surprisingly, upgrading TAFE infrastructure was unanimously supported and seen as “urgent and fundamental” to the success of any reforms. Several commentators noted that the physical environment of TAFE institutes does not compete with the facilities and surrounds of university campuses and this could have a significant impact on young people’s decisions, particularly school leavers. Regional areas requested fair funding allocations that took regional needs into account and they hoped that improvements were not overly focussed on Queensland’s south-east corner.

Other feedback stated that students’ training equipment was often outdated. It was further suggested that acquiring commercial equipment should be kept to a minimum and that simulators and industry facilities should be used wherever possible to avoid upgrades that quickly become obsolete.

Concerns were also expressed about TAFE’s limited capacity to deliver training outside of standard hours on Monday to Friday from 9 am to 5 pm. There was also comment about the need for professional development opportunities to ensure trainers, teachers and assessors in both the public and private training systems were up-to-date with the latest industry developments and teaching techniques.

In addition, consultation suggested that institutes must have access to current information and communication technology to support enhanced online training delivery and better business management.

...about industry and government working together

Many people participating in the consultation process reported that current industry advisory arrangements were not meeting their individual needs. Overwhelmingly, stakeholders agreed on the need to revitalise industry advisory arrangements, particularly to ensure that small, regional and remote location employers could have their say. It was also proposed that future industry arrangements should be regularly monitored and include clear performance criteria.

Skills formation strategies were supported by a range of employers, training providers and other industry players.

“These (skills formation) strategies can overcome the perceived barriers that exist with current industry advisory arrangements and significantly improve the involvement of enterprises, industry and government in planning for future skills and training needs.”
(Skills Council representative)

There was general consensus among industry and regions that skills formation strategies should have a regional focus. Many respondents saw benefits in having a centre of excellence for their industry while others felt that existing organisations could take on centre of excellence responsibilities.

In general, participants saw a need for improved services and training opportunities to provide small businesses with a competitive edge. At the same time, stakeholders raised concerns about duplicating current services offered by the private sector, industry and employer associations.

...about trades training

Reform to trades training attracted significant interest during the consultation process. While participants wholeheartedly supported it happening, there were differing views on the actual reforms required.

“We must achieve the highest quality world-class level of tradesperson if we are to compete in the future for the survival of manufacturing in Australia.” (South-east Queensland employer)

Participants emphasised the need to retain or reinvigorate the role of apprenticeships in providing theoretical knowledge and technical skills across the broad spectrum of trades. It was stressed that this knowledge and skill must be reinforced by sufficient work-based experience so that apprentices could confidently apply their abilities across a wide range of situations. There was a strong sense that current assessment practices may not sufficiently value this last aspect.

There was a firm view that the trend to fast-track apprenticeships should not impact on the quality of training and the integrity of the trades. However, there was high level of support for strategies to accelerate progression through the early (lower paid) stages of an apprenticeship. These strategies included pre-apprenticeship programs, intensive formal training once the apprentice had commenced with an employer, and up-front skills assessment to allow existing skills and knowledge to be taken into account.

Better implementation of competency-based training was widely preferred over shortened apprenticeship durations. Many participants felt that if the competency-based training system was operating properly, nominal durations would be irrelevant.

Employers raised a variety of concerns about current training arrangements including inflexibility, programs not meeting specific requirements, insufficient training vacancies, training delays, difficulties organising workflows around ‘block release’ periods, out-of-date training infrastructure and teachers who have not worked in the industry for some years. The literacy and numeracy standards of many apprentices and those applying for apprenticeships, was also frequently listed as a major issue.



There was widespread acknowledgement that apprentice wage rates were impacting on the numbers of people entering into or completing apprenticeships, especially mature-age apprenticeships. This was supported by results from a survey of 684 apprentices during the consultation process. More than 42 per cent had considered dropping out of their apprenticeship at some stage. Overwhelmingly, 64 per cent cited low wages as the core reason.

There was cautious support for a review of wage rates. Anecdotal and statistical evidence was provided demonstrating that many employers were already paying apprentices above award wages. However, it was suggested that any review must ensure that potential wage increases were linked to competency and productivity improvements, rather than being implemented as a short-term response to the current labour market.

Workplace harassment of apprentices and the work environment itself also emerged as serious matters. Both issues were raised by more than 35 per cent of surveyed apprentices in training who had considered dropping out of their apprenticeship.

The proposed review of group training organisations was supported with frequent acknowledgement that some organisations may need to refocus their present activities to achieve better outcomes.

...about training for individuals

Consultation responses stated that Queenslanders want their learning to be effective and enjoyable. They want to access training when and where it suits them and it must fit around work and family commitments. Training materials must be flexible and should not rely solely on text-based resources which are inaccessible to students with weak literacy skills.

Feedback showed general support for the proposal to combine practical vocational education and training with more theoretical university programs and to integrate courses more closely. However, it was emphasised that new courses must have credibility with students, employers and training providers.

Many people were concerned that Certificate I and II training would be lost in the push for higher level programs.

These programs were seen as providing a valuable pathway back into the learning environment for people who were disengaged from training and employment.

Short courses attracted a mixed reaction. Many people saw them as a valuable opportunity for supplementing existing qualifications and developing specialised skills. Others feared that the greater availability of short courses would result in employer preferences for enterprise-specific, shorter training programs at the expense of full qualifications. The general view was that short courses must maintain portability of skills, preserve the integrity of training outcomes, and be linked with training packages.

The Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) concept was generally valued. However, its implementation drew a range of criticisms, with some respondents describing it as “complicated, convoluted and often requiring more effort on the part of the client than enrolling and undertaking the program in question”.

It was stressed that procedures needed to be rigorous without being onerous, easy to access, easy to implement, financially sustainable and efficient. Respondents also pointed out that RPL assessment processes must not undermine the integrity, quality or industry confidence in qualifications.

Consultations revealed significant support for a new approach to those individuals most disadvantaged by Queensland’s labour market. The *Breaking the Unemployment Cycle* initiative was acknowledged as being highly successful and had obviously attracted a wide range of supporters state-wide. But the Queensland community could see the need for a program that provided individuals with a more customised response to gain formal skills and sustainable employment.

“The current climate of skills shortages is seen as an ideal opportunity to help the disadvantaged and under-skilled in the community. There is still a significant need for funding for these groups, despite the improvement in the employment rate.”
(TAFE Council representative)

There was healthy support for training older workers and improving workplace cultures to value older workers much more highly. Consultation participants also warned that the value and benefits of training would need to be sold to older workers.



A training system that works for Queensland



A training system that works for Queensland

To ensure we are addressing the skills shortages brought on by major shifts in the labour market, the supply of skills through the education and training system must closely match the needs of industry and the aspirations of students. Significant reforms to the publicly funded vocational education and training system will ensure it is better equipped to respond to what Queenslanders, industry and the workforce wants.

The Queensland Government is committed to moving from a supply driven training model to a system capable of responding to rapid changes in skill demands. This includes developing a more sophisticated approach to managing and supporting the entire training system – especially the growing private training sector.

New VET arrangements with industry are expected to stimulate greater demand for vocational education and training. This will drive further innovation while increasing industry's willingness to invest in more training and skills development. It is crucial this training system is supported by quality training providers whose diversity and skills continue to meet the demands of industry, individuals and employers.

While TAFE institutes have largely met the growing market, the system is near capacity. To meet the forecasted growth in future skills needs, particularly in trades, Queensland must do more to ensure its training network can deliver. TAFE system reforms will ensure their capacity to meet the larger apprenticeship training needs that lie ahead.



The *Queensland Skills Plan* sets out the most significant reforms to the VET system and the structure of TAFE Queensland in more than 40 years, including:

- increasing the number and capacity of quality training providers delivering apprenticeship training by making fundamental changes to the User Choice program
- enhancing third party access to TAFE facilities and infrastructure
- developing more innovative purchasing models to maximise the effectiveness of Government's investment in training
- developing a comprehensive professional development strategy for Queensland's vocational education and training sector
- establishing a state-wide Trade and Technician Skills Institute to lead product development and delivery for automotive, building and construction, manufacturing and engineering, and electrical/electronics studies
- establishing the Southbank Institute of Technology as the designated lead institute responsible for technological and high level skills training and education
- creating an Australian Resources and Infrastructure Institute of Technology to provide whole-of-industry training solutions to support the resources and infrastructure sectors
- implementing a new independent commercial governance model for TAFE Queensland institutes
- reorganising TAFE training delivery in the Brisbane metropolitan area to increase collaboration, efficiency and outcomes for students
- establishing designated TAFE lead institutes with a clear mandate for leading product development and coordination across the state in designated fields
- forming strategic alliances between regional TAFE institutes to increase the efficiency of their training delivery
- supporting TAFE staff to deliver world-class educational outcomes for students
- implementing a major capital works investment program to modernise existing TAFE infrastructure and construct new leading edge training facilities.



Action 1: Growing the Queensland VET sector

Queensland will introduce a range of reforms to enhance the VET system's training capacity while better meeting industrial demands for more flexibility and timeliness.

Increasing the number of quality training providers

Queensland will increase the number and capacity of quality training providers delivering apprenticeship training by making fundamental changes to the User Choice program – improving the VET market's responsiveness to changes in demand.

Enhancing third party access to TAFE infrastructure

Queensland will also commit to greater access to key Government owned infrastructure by implementing an open third party access regime to TAFE facilities and infrastructure.

Formalising relationships with the private training sector

Throughout Queensland, there are many opportunities for public and private training providers to work together to provide better skilling outcomes for users.

The Queensland Government will identify opportunities for collaborative partnerships, in consultation with industry and private providers, to ensure access to the best possible training services for clients using publicly funded training.

New relationships based on business partnerships between private and public training providers will remove the barriers that limit private training providers from delivering priority industry apprenticeship training.

Developing new approaches to training investment

Government will sharpen its training investment by developing more innovative purchasing models to complement new industry engagement strategies.

Queensland will progressively improve the way it invests in training by getting better value for that investment.

It will ensure that training funds are genuinely targeted to improving employment opportunities and to priority industry sectors, including areas of skills shortages. Training provider agreements will be established over a longer period of time to enable them to develop the capacity to meet existing and emerging training trends.

Government will also review the price it pays for training – considering the type of training and its delivery location. In addition, there will be an absolute focus on holding providers accountable for the quality of training that Queensland funds them to deliver.

Within User Choice, contractual arrangements and payment methods will be streamlined, and a more efficient tender process will be implemented, contributing to more cost-effective arrangements for training providers.

Improving the skills of training sector staff

A training system can only be as successful as the people who develop and deliver the courses. Effective, contemporary training relies on teachers, trainers and assessors being familiar with the latest technology and combining this with current teaching and learning techniques.

The Queensland Government will develop a comprehensive professional development strategy for the state's vocational education and training sector to support and maintain a highly capable, responsive and flexible workforce.

This strategy will be developed and conducted in partnership with the Australian Council for Private Education and Training and will be shaped around seven key dimensions:

- teaching, learning and assessment
- industry and technical currency
- working with clients
- working in Queensland's vocational education and training system, including meeting compliance requirements
- business planning and development
- developing leadership
- supporting major vocational education and training policy initiatives.

The professional development strategy will draw from good practice in teaching, learning and professional development. It will include action learning, facilitation, mentoring, communication networks, workshops, conferences and forums.

Reframing regulation to support flexibility and improvement

The Queensland Government is committed to best practice training delivery, and to supporting this with best practice approaches to regulation.

The Department of Employment and Training will work with industry, training providers and other stakeholders to review its approach to training regulations and support continued innovations in training delivery.



Review outcomes will ensure that obligations placed on training providers strike the right balance between reducing risks to students and relieving administrative burdens. The review will examine:

- Australia-wide approaches to training regulation
- worldwide best practice approaches to regulation
- opportunities to simplify regulations by reducing duplication and minimising administrative requirements
- the possibility of enhancing the role of regional officers in training regulation.

This review will also help the Minister ensure the effectiveness of the powers and functions of the Training and Employment Recognition Council in relation to apprenticeships administration.

Action 2: Reforming the Queensland TAFE system

The TAFE system has served the state well for many years. However, it is important to recognise the training environment is changing and posing real challenges for our current delivery model.

The demand pattern for skill development from both industry and potential students is highly volatile. This volatility can leave some teachers and facilities underutilised, while shortages emerge in other areas.

Technology is changing rapidly as well. This means that some TAFE teaching skills and equipment can date very quickly, creating challenges keeping teaching skills relevant to industry needs.

The shifting demographics of potential trainees also forces changes to TAFE's delivery model. With very low levels of unemployment and an ageing workforce, it is clear that skills shortages need to be met by upskilling existing workers. This entails more employer cooperation and more flexible training. It also requires more employer partnerships and course offerings heavily customised to employers and trainees.

The Queensland Government is determined that TAFE institutes continue making major contributions to Queensland's skilling requirements, alongside the thriving private sector. To achieve this, some key aspects of the TAFE Queensland system need to be changed.

Redirecting resources to TAFE institutes

For TAFE institutes to be responsive to a fast-changing training environment, they need increasing flexibility and adaptability, and more capability and resources at a local level.

The Department of Employment and Training will review the activities of its central office functions to reprioritise resources for service delivery and training within TAFE institutes.

This will result in better quality and more customised training delivery from individual institutes that meets the constantly changing demands of employers and trainees.

Moving to a more commercial governance model

Effectively responding to the ever-changing requirements of employers, trainees and Government requires increasingly sophisticated management of TAFE institutes.

The changing training environment and the need for greater employer and industry engagement creates a strong case for a more commercial governance model for TAFE institutes.

At present, TAFE institutes function in a halfway position between individual autonomy and central control from the Department of Employment and Training. This has created confused accountability for Institute Councils and management and led to conflicting priorities and poor objectives on occasion.

TAFE institutes will compete against private training providers using vastly different governance structures. More commercially structured TAFE institutes will better handle complex business contracts with employers and better manage funds coming from multiple sources, including employers, trainees and government.

This governance change will occur through a phased transition. Institutes will be supported to develop the systems, staffing and infrastructure they need to move to commercial governance arrangements.

It is expected that the first few institutes may meet this criteria within the next two years, and the remainder will follow over time. The precise commercial governance model for TAFE institutes will be determined by the Queensland Government during 2006. However, TAFE institutes will not become Government Owned Corporations. They will remain public service entities under an Act administered by the Minister for Employment and Training.

The most defining character of the new model will be statutory responsibilities entrusted to new Institute Boards. For this model to succeed, Institute Boards will be downsized and will have a distinctly commercial focus.

Each institute will ultimately be accountable to the Minister through the Department of Employment and Training, and stringent performance targets and performance monitoring arrangements will be established.

Moving to a new model for industry engagement

Industry involvement is critical to ensuring the quality of VET graduates and increasing the numbers of current employees accessing further training. It is also a significant potential source of fee-for-service revenue – a likely important component of TAFE sector growth.

Queensland's TAFE institutes will be actively encouraged to increase their industry-funded training.

To support more industry funded training, TAFE institutes will be allowed to leverage public funding, provided the training meets purchasing guidelines. In addition to 100 per cent government funded training and 100 per cent industry funded training, TAFE institutes will also offer training that is jointly funded by industry and government.

Action 3: Restructuring TAFE across Queensland and creating new specialised institutes

TAFE Queensland will be restructured and reorganised to better meet the current and future needs of industry, employers, workers and learners. A suite of structural changes will help TAFE lift its performance across the state, with new independent institutes established to focus on specialised training for key industry sectors.

Coordinating trade training through a Trade and Technical Skills Institute

With trade skills shortages hampering the Queensland economy, there is an urgent need for leadership and training expertise to better upskill the trades workforce.

The Queensland Government will establish a state-wide Trade and Technician Skills Institute to lead product development and delivery throughout Queensland for automotive, building and construction, manufacturing and engineering, and electrical/electronics studies.

A key role of the Trade and Technician Skills Institute will be developing close links with industry and centres of excellence to ensure that vocational education and training qualifications address employer needs. The institute will also ensure that an appropriate mix of entry-level training, technician and para-professional training, and specialist courses including vocational graduate certificates and diplomas is available throughout TAFE Queensland.

The Institute will deliver training in a range of ways to meet the needs of regional and metropolitan Queenslanders at all stages of life. This includes face-to-face instruction, workplace-based learning, texts, videoconferencing and e-learning. Training will be available 50 weeks of the year to allow employers greater flexibility.

The Trade and Technician Skills Institute will provide training in the Brisbane metropolitan area from major campuses at Acacia Ridge on the southside and Eagle Farm on the northside. It will also provide trade training through major trade training centres in regional TAFE institutes at Cairns, Bundaberg, Gladstone, the Gold Coast, Ipswich, Mackay, Maryborough, Mount Isa, Rockhampton, the Sunshine Coast, Toowoomba and Townsville/Thuringowa, and from other sites throughout Queensland. Pre-vocational training and some initial elements of trade apprenticeships, where appropriate, will continue to be offered from local sites.



The automotive, building and construction, manufacturing and engineering, and electrical/electronics training currently delivered at the Yeronga, Moreton, Logan, Southbank, Brisbane North and Open Learning institutes of TAFE will be progressively transferred to the Institute's Brisbane South and Brisbane North campuses.

Establishing the Southbank Institute of Technology

In April 2005, the government announced the Southbank Institute of TAFE site would be redeveloped into a leading multi-sectoral campus. Due for completion in 2008-09, the redevelopment will provide a modern, learner-focused environment for local and international students.

In recognition of its technological and high level skills focus, the Southbank Institute of TAFE will be renamed the Southbank Institute of Technology. It will be the designated lead institute responsible for a range of associate degrees, university pathways and articulation arrangements.

This focus will ensure that TAFE graduates have greater access to university courses and to specific vocational programs for university graduates. Southbank's programs will be accessible to people across Queensland through the regional TAFE network.

Southbank will be one of the Government's first priorities when establishing an independent governance model. The aim is to firmly entrench Southbank as Australia's leading provider of high level vocational and technical education and will operate as a bridge between technical education and university.

Establishing the Central Queensland Institute as the Australian Resources and Infrastructure Institute of Technology

Queensland's mining and resource companies continue to underpin the state's economic growth, and the training system is changing to support them. TAFE Queensland Mining Services (TQMS) was established to deliver training where and how the mining industry requires it. It is supported by a number of TAFE institutes providing a single point of contact for the industry.

The Mining Industry Skills Centre was established by industry and government in June 2005 as a centre of excellence. It drives skilling strategies for the mining and resource sector using public and private training providers.

The Queensland Government will establish an Australian Resources and Infrastructure Institute of Technology to recognise the resource industry's skills requirements and their long-term value to the state.

The Institute will establish innovative, whole-of-industry training solutions to support the resources and infrastructure sectors (mining, electricity, gas, water, the environment, road, rail, ports and other major civil construction).

The Australian Resources and Infrastructure Institute of Technology will have a base in central Queensland, building on the excellent work of the Central Queensland Institute of TAFE. However, it will be active wherever there is major resources activity. It will also be the point of contact for the industry's training requirements and the focal point for all TAFE Queensland services to this industry.

Queensland's future growth and liveability depends on significant infrastructure expenditure over the next 20 years. The provision of this infrastructure is hindered by our ability to provide a skilled workforce and this new entity will strongly address this core issue.

To ensure accessibility to the current range of courses offered by the Central Queensland Institute of TAFE to the region, courses with a community education focus will continue to be provided by the Wide Bay Institute of TAFE in the central Queensland area.

Reorganising Brisbane metropolitan TAFE delivery

Six of TAFE Queensland's 15 institutes currently service the Brisbane metropolitan area. The Yeronga, Logan,

Moreton, Southbank, Brisbane North, and Open Learning institutes offer a similar range of products from their 26 metropolitan campuses and compete for market share within a relatively close catchment area.

Therefore, Brisbane's metropolitan trade training will be progressively transferred to the new northside and southside campuses of the Trade and Technician Skills Institute. The redeveloped Southbank Institute of Technology, with its emphasis on high level training, will also impact on Brisbane metropolitan training delivery.

The Queensland Government will reorganise TAFE training delivery in the Brisbane metropolitan area to improve collaboration, efficiency and outcomes for students.

The Brisbane South Institute of TAFE will be created, and will amalgamate the non-trade segments of the Yeronga, Moreton and Logan institutes of TAFE. The Brisbane North Institute of TAFE will continue delivering training services on the northside. The Open Learning Institute will become part of the Brisbane North Institute of TAFE.

The reorganised Brisbane metropolitan institutes will provide much more flexible TAFE training delivery, more effective program scheduling and better use of resources.

Realigning the structures of regional TAFE institutes

To respond quickly to changing training demands, TAFE will move away from a traditional bricks and mortar infrastructure. Instead, it will employ innovative training delivery systems such as blended learning models, improved Information and Communication Technology (ICT) platforms and utilise more community and industry resources. Training demand will determine where and when TAFE infrastructure is established.

Regional TAFE institutes will work together to form strategic alliances and develop formal agreements around the efficient delivery of training packages.

The Cooloola Sunshine Institute's Gympie campus will become part of the Wide Bay Institute as Gympie's demographics are better aligned with the Wide Bay region. This realignment will allow Cooloola Sunshine Institute to better respond to its core demands and future growth strategies. With this change, the Cooloola Sunshine Institute will be renamed the Sunshine Coast Institute of TAFE.



Action 4: Nominating TAFE lead institutes for key industries

The evolving needs of industry will be the catalyst for reorganising TAFE products and services across the state – particularly in the Brisbane metropolitan area.

Currently, each TAFE institute operates separately, developing its own training programs across a broad range of curriculum areas. By coordinating these efforts across the state, Queensland students and industries can gain better training outcomes and a more consistent, higher quality product.

The Queensland Government will reform TAFE by establishing designated 'lead institutes' with a clear mandate for leading product development and coordination across the state in designated fields.

Institutes assigned a 'lead institute' status will have a state-wide responsibility for the curriculum management, development and distribution of training support materials. They will also be responsible for coordinating product quality and consistency. These institutes will become the primary point of contact for industry to engage in TAFE training and qualifications, and they will work with private training providers to achieve best practice across the Queensland training system.

Action 5: Improving coordination of TAFE's product development

Coordinated product development will form an integral part of the new look TAFE Queensland. All TAFE products will support learner needs and employment outcomes, and be complemented by quality training materials. Good product development relies on quality processes, collaboration across the TAFE network, individual customisation, appropriate packaging and flexibility.

A new TAFE Queensland Product Services Unit will be developed to support TAFE Queensland, the Trade and Technician Skills Institute, and the Southbank Institute of Technology.

This unit will assist TAFE institutes by:

- ensuring accreditation requirements are met and supporting the achievement of registration requirements
- providing expertise and support for teachers and product development activities
- advising and assisting to prioritise and negotiate product development plans and resources
- developing policies, guidelines and benchmarks to support quality products
- developing and maintaining a Learning Management System to extend course availability throughout the state.

Lead Institute	Designated Industries
Brisbane North Institute of TAFE	Business, Finance and Information Technology (IT) (including Property Services) Government (excluding Local Government) Horticulture Open learning and Blended learning models (with Barrier Reef)
Wide Bay Institute of TAFE and Central Queensland Institute of TAFE	Security Marine Transport
Brisbane South Institute of TAFE	Aged Care Small Business Fashion, Textile, Clothing and Footwear Vocational Trainer Training
Sunshine Coast Institute of TAFE	Child Care
The Bremer Institute of TAFE	Community Services (excluding Aged Care and Child Care) Transport, Distribution and Logistics (with Southern Queensland)
Southern Queensland Institute of TAFE	Local Government Transport, Distribution and Logistics (with The Bremer)
Southbank Institute of Technology	Health Biotechnology Sport and Recreation Arts and Entertainment Post-graduate vocational programs for professionals and para-professionals
Gold Coast Institute of TAFE	Tourism and Hospitality Marine Construction
Tropical North Queensland Institute of TAFE	Aquaculture and Marine Indigenous Training
Barrier Reef Institute of TAFE	Blended learning models (with Brisbane North) TAFE-school partnerships
Australian Resources and Infrastructure Institute of Technology	Energy and Water Minerals Processing TAFE Queensland Mining Services Civil Construction for rail, road and port infrastructure
Trade and Technician Skills Institute	Automotive Building and Construction Engineering and Manufacturing Utilities Electrical and Electrotechnology
Australian Agricultural College Corporation	Agriculture Land Management

* Mount Isa Institute of TAFE will be a key partner in mining, trade training and a range of other training delivery to the North West.

Action 6: Supporting TAFE Queensland staff

To ensure the training delivered throughout the TAFE system is of a universally high standard, TAFE staff must be supported to deliver world-class educational outcomes for their students.

TAFE Queensland will work toward new employment conditions that remove restrictive and unnecessarily complex arrangements, and build an environment that fosters increased trust between managers and staff. More flexible working arrangements will encourage more productive relationships with industry and provide the basis for an effective staff attraction and retention strategy.

Engagement with industry will include partnering activities on an operational level, including the co-delivery of services. Reciprocal industry arrangements will provide opportunities to engage in mutual mentoring and knowledge exchanges.

TAFE Queensland will aim to recruit industry professionals to their teaching ranks by marketing its stable employment, the variety and depth of career paths available and the flexible working arrangements on offer.

The State Government will also continue its commitment to the public service by protecting the rights and conditions of employees.

Action 7: Investing in TAFE infrastructure and ICT

TAFE Queensland campuses must provide a learning environment that is attractive to students – nurturing their interests and maximising their learning outcomes. Infrastructure must also be adaptive to industry's constantly changing needs and population flows.

The Queensland Government will implement a major seven-year capital works investment program to modernise existing infrastructure and construct new leading-edge training facilities.

This will involve refurbishing many existing facilities, acquiring new facilities and disposing of land and buildings not required for training delivery. TAFE Queensland will

identify and implement opportunities to share facilities and equipment. This will include third party access arrangements where private training providers can use TAFE facilities, as well as more flexible approaches like workplace-based training.

More effective use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) will strengthen every element of the TAFE system – from more flexible student access and accelerated skills acquisition, to greater resource sharing between trainers, and better intellectual property management. It will also make administrative processes easier for students and staff, improve customer relationships management and maximise training delivery funds.

The Queensland Government will provide additional funding to upgrade TAFE's ICT environment.

A major component of the ICT investment will be directed towards the Learning Management System. This system will have enormous benefits for TAFE Queensland by enabling a wider range of higher quality programs to be delivered to more learners across the state. Students will have access to more up-to-date technology and more flexibility in the way they undertake their training.

Building on our success: Ready apprentices thanks to Redding Motors

The successful partnership between the Tropical North Queensland Institute of TAFE and Redding Motors at Atherton provides just one example of how links with industry can provide better training solutions. The institute and Redding Motors are working together to address a shortage of apprentices in the automotive industry on the Atherton Tableland, and everyone is benefiting.

Redding Motors is providing rent-free workshop and classroom space at its Atherton dealership for the Tropical North Queensland TAFE to deliver a pre-apprenticeship automotive program. The program provides participants with training, skills and knowledge to enter automotive apprenticeships, and is producing excellent results. Many participants have entered into apprenticeships before completing their training.

The community is benefiting from a supply of future apprentices, and Redding Motors is being recognised as a supporter of the local community.



Training that works for industry and employers





Training that works for industry and employers

Creating the skilled workforce that Queensland employers and industries need is a shared responsibility. Training alone cannot solve skills shortages, and government alone cannot determine our workers' skills needs nor fund all the necessary training. Effective responses to skills shortages require genuine communication, openness to change and fresh ideas from employers, industry groups, unions, training providers and government.

It is time to develop new strategies for expanding collaboration between employers, unions, training providers and government at the local, regional and state level.

The Queensland Government will take a fresh approach to working with industry and employers to ensure the vocational education and training system is better targeted to economic needs. This includes:

- creating three additional centres of excellence to ensure leading-edge skills development in the vital industries of energy, manufacturing and engineering, and building and construction
- establishing 23 new skills formation strategies to ensure a collaborative solution to industry's skilling needs
- developing fresh industry engagement models to enhance skills and training leadership in key industries
- implementing the Experience Pay Awareness Strategy to assist the recruitment and retention of Queensland's older workers
- developing a range of training products designed specifically to meet the needs of Queensland's small businesses.



Action 8: Giving industry ownership of skills development through new customised skills strategies

The Queensland Government will introduce a range of engagement strategies to better partner with industries on their skilling needs.

Establishing new centres of excellence for key industries

Three centres of excellence will be established to lead and influence targeted industries in skill-related matters – from industry strategy and business process to smarter workforce management. Drawing on the experiences of Queensland's existing aviation and mining centres of excellence, further centres will be established for energy, manufacturing and engineering, and building and construction.

These centres of excellence will be established by July 2007, and will play a key role in leading industry and government engagement on vocational education and training, skills development and labour market issues.

They will ensure that skill needs are identified at local, regional and state levels, and ascertain training priorities, suitable training products and ideal training delivery methods.

Building on our success: The Mining Industry Centre of Excellence

The mining industry employs approximately 25 000 Queenslanders and in 2003-04, it constituted 6.7 per cent of the economy.

In June 2005, a centre of excellence was established to provide a 'one-stop-shop' for coordinating the mining industry's vocational education and training. The Centre provides strategic leadership for the industry's skilling and training, ensures a coordinated approach to skills formation, and supplies crucial information to government on the mining sector's training needs.

Centre staff undertake workforce development planning with major firms, and the centre is investigating the viability of a mining industry training facility at Mount Isa.

The Centre is also helping Government direct its investment in training to areas of greatest need. While the Mining Industry Centre of Excellence is still young, its beneficial impacts are already being felt.

Existing centres of excellence

- Aviation
- Mining

New centres of excellence

- energy
- manufacturing and engineering
- building and construction



Developing more skills formation strategies

Skills formation strategies are already operating in 13 key areas:

- Aged Care
- Child Care
- Electrotechnology
- Lower Gulf
- Marine Cairns
- Marine Boatbuilding
- Pharmaceuticals
- Tourism Regional Bundaberg
- Tourism Regional Mackay
- Tourism Regional Whitsundays
- Townsville
- Western Downs
- Wine

New skills formation strategies will now be established to support industry and regional stakeholders to work together on identifying and addressing the factors which impact on skills development.

Over the next three years, 23 new skills formation strategies will be developed, adding to the 13 already operating with Queensland's industries and communities.

Skills formation strategies encourage businesses, registered training providers, organisations and all government levels to work collaboratively on finding skilling solutions. This may include new training approaches, revised training products, new qualifications, or better career planning and marketing campaigns.

New skills formation strategies will be developed for the following industries:

- aviation
 - biotechnology and emerging industries
 - building and construction, with a specific strategy for civil construction
 - creative industries
 - energy, with a specific strategy for sustainable energy
 - food processing
 - health and enrolled nursing
 - heavy vehicle repairs
 - indigenous health
 - IT and business services
 - local government
 - manufacturing
 - mining
 - primary and rural
 - regional tourism
 - sport and recreation
 - tourism and hospitality
 - transport and logistics, with specialist strategies for road transport, ports and marine transport and logistics
- Through the Department of Employment and Training's regional offices, the Queensland Government will also establish five new skills formation strategies for the following regions:
- Central Queensland
 - North Queensland
 - South West Queensland
 - Western Corridor
 - Wide Bay

Building on our success: The aged care skills formation strategy

As our population grows older, the aged care sector becomes ever more important to Queensland. Using the innovative skills formation strategy process, the aged care sector has taken major steps towards ensuring an ongoing supply of skilled workers.

This strategy has united a range of health and aged care companies to determine their industry's skill needs as a group, and consider how these needs can be met. Some of these outcomes include:

- research into the characteristics of the current and future aged care workforce
- identification of the skills sets needed across the aged care workforce, including both residential and community care, as well as unpaid workers and carers
- partnership development between schools, industry and registered training providers to establish health and aged care vocational training programs in schools
- the trial and evaluation of a training and skills recognition program for carers
- a state-wide process of active engagement between industry and training/education providers to work together on training and skills development issues.

Establishing new models for industry engagement

The Queensland Government will implement a range of new models for engaging with individual industries to help solve their skills issues.

Government is conscious that leading industry representatives already work closely with a number of government agencies. To this end, many agencies have established independent industry engagement mechanisms. The Department of Employment and Training will engage with rural and transport industries via existing consultative forums through the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries (DPI&F) and Queensland Transport (QT).

As lead agencies in their fields, the DPI&F and QT's industry forums will provide critical advice on future skilling priorities. This model will create further efficiencies when enabling these multi-sector, geographically-spread industries to engage with Government collectively.

Skills alliances will be established for industries that require an ongoing, structured approach to industry engagement and skills formation, and will provide a 'one-stop-shop' for skills and training leadership.

Skills alliances will be developed for tourism and hospitality, community services and health, sport and recreation, automotive, and the creative industries.

These arrangements will be established between June 2006 and June 2008. Their role will involve building strategic and local partnerships with industry and employers, engaging with all relevant stakeholders, and ensuring these stakeholders can access the best possible skilling and employment solutions when they need them. Their role will also include coordinating skills formation strategies for their industry, leveraging industry investment, gathering and sharing, labour market intelligence and brokering training delivery.

The Department of Employment and Training will also engage directly with certain other industries such as retail, racing, security, and water to develop collaborative strategies for addressing their skills needs.

Holding annual industry forums to discuss skills issues

The Queensland Government will hold annual industry skills forums to further expand opportunities for industry and government to work together on skills shortages.

An annual industry forum hosted by the Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations will bring together peak industry body representatives to engage at the highest levels. A series of industry skills forums will also be held across the state. These forums will bring together local and regional employers, industry bodies and stakeholders to evaluate skilling and workforce management strategies and collaborate on skilling and training solutions.

Action 9: Supporting skills development for small business

Small businesses account for almost 97 per cent of Queensland enterprises and employ a significant proportion of the state's workforce. Despite the diversity of training programs available in Queensland, many supervisors and managers do not access them, citing reasons such as training times, location, cost, and/or perceived and actual relevance.

The Queensland Government will establish a Small Business Solutions unit within TAFE Queensland to deliver a range of training services for current and prospective small business owners and operators, in close collaboration with industry and employer organisations.

This unit will develop and offer high quality, flexible programs that meet small business needs for 'anytime, anywhere' training delivery. Its first priority will be developing two programs that will be available from mid 2006 across the TAFE network:

- a program for new and intending business owners and operators providing skills in researching a business idea, understanding the legal side of business, and developing approaches to financing a business
- a program for existing businesses, assisting them to identify their specific skill needs, assess their existing skills and then tailor programs to meet their individual situations.



Action 10: Age proofing our workplaces through the new Experience Pays Awareness Strategy

Older workers are frequently undervalued in the workplace. They are more likely to be made redundant and less likely to receive training. In addition, they are more likely to face systemic and overt discrimination, often on the basis of ill-founded misconceptions.

Employers cannot afford to continue down this path. Queensland's workforce is ageing and there are fewer younger workers to take the place of retiring older workers. Unless employers learn to recruit, retrain and support older staff, they are going to experience substantial challenges in meeting staffing requirements, maintaining competitiveness and maximising productivity.

The Queensland Government's Experience Pays Awareness Strategy will provide Queensland employers with advice on how to 'age proof' their workplace, by providing working environments that allow them to recruit and retain older workers.

This strategy will also seek to dispel current negative misconceptions about the value of older employees, and increase mature workers' awareness of ongoing employment and training options.

The Experience Pays Awareness Strategy, which will be implemented over three years, will include:

- forming partnerships with peak industry bodies, unions, government agencies, registered training organisations and community based organisations to maximise opportunities for older workers
- providing information and referral services for older workers seeking employment and training assistance
- raising awareness and encouraging the adoption of age-friendly recruitment and workplace practices by businesses
- highlighting the benefits of adopting age-friendly recruitment and workplace practices through a state-wide campaign.



Training that works for the trades





Training that works for the trades

One of the most critical challenges facing the training system is the serious shortfall in skilled tradespeople. The Queensland Government recognises that the majority of future tradespeople will require qualifications provided by the vocational education and training system. Queensland's training system has responded to the growing demand for trades apprenticeships across the state with a 23 per cent increase during the period 2002-03 to 2003-04. However, much more needs to be done.

Action needs to be taken now to address those factors discouraging Queenslanders from undertaking trades training through apprenticeships. In addition, people already working in the trades need to be supported to move into skilled trade occupations.

The *Queensland Skills Plan* sets out a range of strategies for working with industry to ensure Queensland has a highly skilled trades workforce. This includes:

- increasing the number of trades training places with 17 000 extra places available in each year by 2010
- establishing a state-wide Trade and Technician Skills Institute to lead product development and delivery for automotive, building and construction, manufacturing and engineering, and electrical/electronics studies (see Action 3)
- fully implementing the competency-based training system to allow earlier course completions by apprentices
- introducing shortened expected durations for many apprenticeships to encourage people to become tradespeople more quickly once they have the required competencies
- developing master tradespeople through high level vocational graduate certificate and vocational graduate diploma programs
- commissioning a review of apprentice wages
- giving young people a chance to try different trades through pre-vocational programs and a 'Try a Trade' facility
- establishing an apprentice hotline to respond to questions from apprentices and prospective apprentices
- increasing travel allowances for apprentices
- establishing a Skills Assessment Service to improve consistency, validity and employer confidence in assessment practices
- commissioning a review of group training organisations to identify and address issues, policies or practices that are inhibiting their performance.

Action 11: Dealing with the demand for skilled tradespeople

Queensland must make sufficient training places available to meet the demand and supply of skilled tradespeople to the economy. The vast majority of off-the-job apprentice training is provided by TAFE institutes, but TAFE alone cannot meet all the expected growth. While the new state-wide Trade and Technician Skills Institute will play a key role in the future of trades training, further reforms are necessary.

The Queensland Government will implement a growth strategy for the training market that will encourage a much larger role for private training providers in delivering priority apprenticeship and traineeship training.

The Queensland Government will meet the increased demand for trades apprenticeships by increasing the number of trades training places, with 17 000 extra places available in each year by 2010.

In addition, the Queensland Government will support the private training sector to build its capacity to deliver apprenticeship training, to relieve the pressure on TAFE institutes.

Funding arrangements will be simplified, while training providers will still be accountable for the training they are funded to deliver. Provider agreements will be established over a longer period of time to enable them to develop the capabilities they need to meet emerging, longer-term priorities.

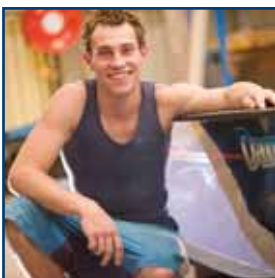
The price paid for apprenticeship courses will be revised to ensure it offers real incentives for training providers to deliver training in high-cost priority areas and in remote locations. The revised funding arrangements will support more flexible training delivery so providers can tailor their training to industry needs.

Where appropriate, private providers will also gain access to TAFE facilities and resources to help them break into new training areas. To enable this further investment in apprenticeship training, the funding provided to some traineeships will be rationalised. In a range of other traineeships, government and employers will share the training cost.

The capacity of TAFE institutes to respond to apprenticeship training demands will also increase – through improved efficiency, new and enhanced infrastructure, and by developing a pool of additional part-time or casual trades teachers.

The Queensland Government will boost support for work-based training with flexible training options and by providing fully subsidised training qualifications for 1000 workers in enterprises, so they can assist in supervising apprentices.

Experienced workers will have their skills assessed before they start their training so they only need to enrol in programs that fill their skills gap.



Action 12: Reinventing the trades through new occupational pathways

The nature of work in trades industries has changed dramatically over the last decade. So the Queensland Government will work with industry to fundamentally reinvent the trades by redefining trades training and establishing clear pathways into different trades occupations.

The Department of Employment and Training will do this by working with employers and unions at the state and national level to identify the occupational pathways in each industry, and develop training opportunities to meet these occupational needs.

Providing access to technical training, including cadetships

The Queensland Government will provide tradespeople with access to a range of tailored training pathways to support them to upgrade their skills. For some, this will mean access to specialised technical training to allow them to move into higher level roles – for example, as master technicians in the automotive industry.

Some of this training will be made available through a cadetship model to fast-track training and offer higher level qualifications for students wishing to enter key industries facing skills shortages. For example, students will be able to earn a Certificate IV level qualification in just one year, followed by work-based training for one to two years. During this time, they complete more advanced diploma-level subjects which require on-the-job industry experience to achieve competency.

Technology cadetships will be piloted in 2006, with 40 cadetships to be offered by the Trade and Technical Skills Institute.

Delivering business and management training

Enhanced business courses will be developed to help tradespeople gain the skills that could enable them to start their own business. Tailored trainer and frontline management courses will also be assembled to help tradespeople supervise and train apprentices and other workers.

Providing training for master tradespeople

A new role will be created for master tradespeople or craftspeople using high level vocational graduate certificate and vocational graduate diploma programs. These courses will acknowledge and enhance the high level of technical skills that enrollees have gained through their substantial trades experience. The qualifications will be equivalent to post-graduate university qualifications, and be designed for those tradespeople who wish to enhance their technical expertise with the latest technology.

Action 13: Attracting more people into apprenticeships

The Queensland Government will adopt a range of strategies to make apprenticeships a more attractive career option. These actions are based on research into those factors inhibiting the take-up and completion of apprenticeships.

Reviewing apprentice wages

To attract apprentices to trades and financially sustain them during their training, the apprentice wage system must be comparable to other forms of employment. It has to be sufficiently competitive to attract suitable applicants and yet be sustainable for employers.

The Queensland Government acknowledges industry's costs and contribution to training through other means. However, it also recognises that if too few apprentices are attracted to trades jobs, there will be serious long-term consequences for businesses and industry.

A review of the apprentice training wage has been commissioned to identify what changes are necessary to apprentice wages.

Using links with industry to market apprenticeships

Despite excellent employment outcomes, highly paid jobs and enormous business ownership potential, trades are frequently overlooked by young people making career decisions. Parents and teachers frequently encourage school leavers to consider more academic career choices, irrespective of the young person's talents or interests.

The Queensland Government will utilise the industry partnerships identified in the *Queensland Skills Plan* to develop targeted, industry-specific marketing strategies promoting careers in skilled trades. While young people will be a major focus of these campaigns, they will also be used to attract mature apprentices.

Giving young people a taste of the trades

While some young people can learn about trades through school-based apprenticeships, other prospective apprentices have limited exposure to the array of options available.

The Trade and Technician Skills Institute will feature a 'Try a Trade' facility to expose people to trades activities in an informal setting.

The Institute will encourage schools to organise group excursions to the facility to support students in making their career choices.

The Queensland Government will also develop a broad pre-vocational program to enable prospective apprentices to have more formal exposure to a trade prior to signing an apprenticeship contract. The program will expose participants to one or more industries, giving them a better understanding of the work involved, and whether it suits their interests.

Better informed career choices will increase participants' chances of completing their qualification and the program may enable credit towards the apprenticeship itself.

Developing new brokerage arrangements to link apprentices and employers

The Queensland Government will work with Australian Government apprentice service providers such as new apprenticeships centres and job network providers to help prospective apprentices locate suitable employers, and to help employers locate suitable apprentices.

The state's Skilling Solutions Queensland centres will provide face-to-face information and referrals to job network providers who specialise in assisting individuals to gain employment. These providers will actively interact with employers to encourage apprenticeship uptakes. This service will be available to new and existing apprentices from July 2006.

Action 14: Providing improved support to apprentices during their training

The Queensland Government will improve apprentice support arrangements to increase the number of apprentices who complete their full trade qualification.

Increasing travel allowances for apprentices

Current travel and accommodation allowances for apprentices attending block release training are not sufficient to meet their living expenses.

The Department of Employment and Training conducted a recent review of the travel and accommodation subsidy scheme for apprentices and trainees. As a result, the accommodation subsidy for apprentices and trainees will be doubled to \$22.00 per night, and the travel subsidy will be increased by three cents per kilometre, as follows:

- Zone 1 (up to 100 km return) – no subsidy
- Zone 2 (between 100 km and 650 km return) – 15c per km
- Zone 3 (between 650 km and 1400 km return) – 19c per km.

A new apprentice hotline

The Queensland Government will establish an apprentice hotline to respond to all the training and employment questions apprentices and prospective apprentices might ask.

The hotline will answer questions and link callers to regional offices and other services as appropriate. The service will also be open to employers, training providers and even parents of apprentices, and will be available from 1 July 2006.

Stamping out workplace harassment

In a survey by the Department of Employment and Training, over 35 per cent of apprentices who considered dropping out of their apprenticeship said it was due to the workplace environment or workplace harassment.

Employers and unions must take active steps to eliminate the poor workplace practices that reduce apprenticeship completions. The Department of Employment and Training will work with employer and union representatives to identify the prevalence of poor workplace apprentice treatment and develop strategies to eradicate these behaviours.

The Training Ombudsman will provide a report on the steps the Queensland Government should take to protect apprentices from workplace harassment, including changes to current sanction powers and support services.

Action 15: Making apprenticeships work better for apprentices and employers

The Queensland Government will implement a range of strategies to improve current apprenticeship arrangements to better satisfy industry's training needs. The Department of Employment and Training will improve collaboration between the employer, apprentice and trainer to address concerns about training quality and assessment.

The nature of training required will be examined on an industry-to-industry basis to ensure the average length of apprenticeships is shortened where appropriate. The Department will also restructure off-the-job training and improve the current mechanisms for recognition of competence.

Fully implementing competency-based training

Competency based training allows for a trade qualification completion once the registered training provider, employer and apprentice determine the apprentice is fully competent – irrespective of the time served.

While competency-based completion is gradually being accepted in some areas, it is not common practice. For example, an analysis of the automotive, construction, process manufacturing and engineering industries found that 30 per cent of their trade apprentices were completing their apprenticeships and becoming fully qualified in less than the standard four-year indenture term.

The Queensland Government will fully implement the competency-based training system, allowing earlier completion by those apprentices who can prove competence without any reduction in the quality of their skills.

Building on our success: On the fast track

Juan Berry is proof that early apprenticeship completions do not mean reduced quality.

After working at a Noosa restaurant for 15 months, Juan decided to quit his job, citing a lack of long-term career prospects. Instead of accepting his resignation, Juan's employer offered him an apprenticeship. Juan accepted this offer and commenced a cookery apprenticeship in January 2005.

His employer allowed him to complete two stages of his apprenticeship in 2005 to recognise Juan's previous experience. Juan is now on track to complete his apprenticeship in June 2006 – just 18 months after starting.

Juan's fast-tracked apprenticeship has enabled him to accept added responsibilities in the kitchen that use his skills and abilities, challenging him to develop to the next level. The wage increases have been extremely useful as well.

Completing apprenticeships quicker

The Vocational Education, Training and Employment Act 2000 currently empowers the Training and Employment Recognition Council (TERC), to set a 'nominal term' for all apprenticeships and traineeships. The Green Paper recognised the need to develop new options to enable people to complete apprenticeships more quickly if they gain the required competencies. It proposed a number of shortened apprenticeship durations based on an assessment of the range of nominal hours allowed for the qualification supporting the apprenticeship.

Feedback indicated some opposition to the proposed adjustments. However, some industry stakeholders stated there may be scope for an adjustment to the expected durations given proper investigation and consideration.

In October 2005, the Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations requested that the TERC consult with key stakeholders with a view to revising nominal terms for apprenticeships in Queensland where appropriate. The TERC has undertaken a review and has recommended that a new concept, 'expected duration' be introduced for all apprenticeships in Queensland.

The expected duration will complement the existing nominal duration but will be the benchmark timeframe used for the development of training plans and to establish expected progression points or stages. In the majority of apprenticeships the expected duration, operating in concert with other reforms in Actions 15 and 16, will set a target for earlier completion by those apprentices who can achieve competency within the period.

Should personal or other circumstances delay the progress of the apprentice, the period between the expected and nominal durations will be used to extend the training without the need for additional administrative approval processes. In some cases, the expected duration will remain at 4 years, even though these new arrangements will allow every apprenticeship to be completed ahead of the expected duration, if the required competencies have been gained.

Any strategy to allow accelerated apprenticeship training will require new and improved enhanced training opportunities, and strategies to achieve this will be discussed with industry.

Reviewing workplace time for school-based apprentices

Queensland leads the nation in successful school-based training, providing around half of Australia's school-based apprentices and trainees. Despite this, some employers are questioning the vocational value of school-based apprenticeships.

A major concern that employers hold is that having one day per week allowed on-site generally does not provide apprentices with enough work-based experience to consolidate their skills.

Therefore the Department of Employment and Training will work with the Department of Education and the Arts to ensure that school-based apprentices have sufficient workplace access to develop their skills. The review will aim to give school-based apprentices and their employers the option of increasing the number of days spent on-the-job from the current average of one day per week.

Improving assessment arrangements

Reliable, consistent, high quality assessment is critical to the integrity of any qualification. As in other education and training sectors, vocational education and training assessment processes frequently include an element of subjectivity and differing standards. The Queensland Government is committed to strengthening assessment processes to achieve better quality training outcomes that inspire employers with greater confidence.

A Skills Assessment Service will be established to work with industry and training providers to improve the consistency, validity and employer confidence in assessment practices.

This will include developing new assessment tools, promoting best practice and an independent skills assessment service. This service will resolve disputes between students, training providers and employers (for apprentices) during the course of the training or on completion. It will also create a precedent bank to assist in resolving future disputes objectively and efficiently.

Action 16: Introducing up-front training options

Apprentices' productivity and value to employers increases with formal training and experience. So to support apprentices during the less productive and lower paid stages of their apprenticeship, the Queensland Government will provide two up-front training options that satisfies both apprentices and employers.

Pre-trade training

Since 1993, the number of apprentices doing pre-trade training has steadily declined. The number of apprentices receiving credit for completing pre-vocational or pre-trade training fell around 20 per cent over this time to just one per cent in 2005. Many employers are seeking apprentices with a basic level of trade understanding and general employability skills prior to commencement.

Pre-trade training will be revitalised to better meet the needs of the modern trade workplace, and equip apprentices with the opportunity to fast-track their program.

The Queensland Government will review the situation and develop a range of relevant, specific, pre-trade programs in liaison with industry. These courses will provide a potential apprentice with the skills to enter an apprenticeship and be more productive sooner in the workplace. Apprentices who have completed a pre-trade program may receive credit towards their apprenticeship. This will be negotiated on an industry-by-industry basis.

Delivering intensive up-front training for apprentices

The Queensland Government will work with industries to develop and deliver intensive up-front training programs that give apprentices and their employers the option to concentrate a significant amount of the formal training component at the beginning of the apprenticeship.



Apprentices will be given a more complete set of basic skills earlier in their apprenticeship. This will allow them to be more productive in their workplace sooner, and provide a better return for their employer's investment.

Apprentices can practice their skills and perform more meaningful and challenging work at an earlier stage, and may achieve competence and their qualification faster.

Building on our success: Xstrata Coal gives apprentices a head start

Xstrata Coal is using intensive up-front skilling to its advantage with 12 apprentices who commenced work with the company in 2005.

In conjunction with the Central Queensland Institute of TAFE, Xstrata Coal has significantly extended the off-the-job training of its first year apprentices. The apprentices spend the first twelve months of their apprenticeship learning at a purpose-built, simulated workplace.

During this time, apprentices complete a combination of first and second year competency units, along with additional training that is important to the company like workplace health and safety, machinery operator tickets and first aid. The apprentices are further supported by the availability of mentoring and pastoral care.

Xstrata Coal is pleased with the results: a highly skilled cohort of apprentices who are entering the full-time work component of their apprenticeship better prepared for the workplace.

To help employers provide quality on-the-job training to apprentices, qualified tradespeople who are supervising apprentices will be offered subsidised Certificate IV in Training and Assessment.

These programs will equip tradespeople with the formal skills and knowledge they need to train apprentices effectively, and improve the on-the-job experience for apprentices.

Action 18: Reviewing the role of group training organisations

With an annual investment of \$5.7 million from the State and Federal governments at stake, it is important that group training is effectively meeting its objectives.

The Queensland Government has commissioned a review of group training organisations to identify and address issues, policies or practices that are inhibiting their performance.

This review will consider group training providers' system-wide environment and the performance of individual operators to identify and extrapolate the keys to success. The review will be conducted by an external consultant under the auspices of the Training and Employment Recognition Council, in conjunction with a wide range of stakeholder organisations and agencies.

Action 17: Subsidising workplace trainer and assessor training for tradespeople

On-the-job learning is a vital component of apprenticeships. It is the experience and skills gained through time at the workplace that differentiates apprenticeships and traineeships from general vocational education and training. Therefore, it is important to help enterprises support apprentices to obtain on-the-job skills efficiently and effectively.



Training that works for individuals





Training that works for individuals

The *Queensland Skills Plan* represents a new approach to workforce skilling services based on customising training to help individuals meet their maximum working potential. The state economy will also depend more heavily on the proportion of the working age population participating in the labour market, and the productivity of these workers.

In the past, the vocational education and training system has paid insufficient notice to the link between qualifications and actual jobs. This has led to a limited understanding of the opportunities to build on entry-level vocational training as a career foundation.

The Queensland Government is committed to a new vocational education and training approach that better understands the different labour market needs of the system's clients. This includes:

- increasing the number of Certificate IV and above training places with 14 000 extra places available in each year by 2010
- establishing 10 new sites for Skilling Solutions Queensland from 2006-07 to provide a face-to-face career and training information service. Pending further evaluation of this new initiative, the Government will consider establishing up to seven more new sites from 2007-08 to ensure the service is available across the whole state
- introducing a new Skills First program to streamline skills assessment processes and ensure this assessment is practical, efficient and relevant
- meeting the lifestyle needs of all TAFE Queensland clients by delivering training in different ways, such as face-to-face instruction, online, distance education and in the workplace
- supplying sustainable employment outcomes to Queenslanders who are disadvantaged in the labour market through the new Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative
- developing a new Indigenous Employment and Training Strategy to enhance educational and employment outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- creating a new Skilling Action Plan for people with a disability to enhance their educational and employment outcomes
- providing tailored training strategies for older workers, and training subsidies for eligible low-skilled older workers to undertake approved training via TAFE institutes.

Action 19: Customising training to meet the needs of our workforce

The Queensland Government is committed to ensuring vocational education and training providers offer more responsive training options and more streamlined, customer focused services that provide for the diverse needs of clients.

Recognising skills and experience through the new Skills First program

Many people develop a wide range of skills and experiences throughout their working lives that could count towards a qualification, even though they have not undertaken any formal training. Skills assessment lets people have their professional abilities properly evaluated. It also identifies any specific areas where extra training is required to meet a qualification.

A new Skills First program will streamline skills assessment processes and ensure this assessment is practical, efficient and relevant.

Training providers will work with clients to develop individualised learning plans that identify learning goals and an achievable action plan. This will maintain the quality and integrity of the qualifications achieved.

Skills First will supersede previous skills assessment approaches by using superior information, processes and funding arrangements. Models and assessment tools will be developed in conjunction with industry to provide practical, work-based skills assessment.

Skills First will be implemented across public and private training providers through: improved skills match mechanisms; referral arrangements; an expanded list of preferred skills assessment suppliers; improved assessment processes; and training provider quality audit requirements

that support best practice. Subsidies will also be provided to Skilling Solutions Queensland clients who undertake skills assessment through contracted private and public training organisations.

TAFE institutes and other public training providers will have to offer Skills First assessment services to all students with industry experience before they commence their course. That way, their customised training program will reflect their existing skills.

Developing a new 'customer of one' approach to training

To ensure TAFE Queensland can respond rapidly to the labour market and the needs of industries, enterprises and communities, it will build a 'customer of one' focus through personalised training – anywhere, anytime. Each customer will be managed using a 'whole-of-life' approach that is personalised and targeted to their requirements.

To meet the lifestyle needs of all TAFE Queensland clients, training will be deliverable in different ways including face-to-face instruction, online, distance education and in the workplace.

The Queensland Government will also support course providers to design customised training that meets the specific needs of individuals. This may include a mix of skills recognition, skills gap training, blended training delivery (including workplace training) and online programs.

TAFE Queensland lead institutes will progress the development of training support materials in their specialist areas. These materials will be created in various formats that support delivery methods such as face-to-face classroom delivery, online or distance delivery, and workplace based delivery.

Case managers will be available at all TAFE institutes to assist potential students to negotiate the complex range of training choices and establish an individual training plan.





Building on our success: Fostering remote communities of practice in information, technology and training

In response to the community's need for affordable, relevant and realistic computer training, Hanson Training Services travels throughout south-west Queensland to remote communities such as Mungallala, Eulo, Thargomindah, Bollon and Hungerford.

More than 300 people, who would normally have little access to registered training organisations, have been trained over the past year with many more before that. Hanson Training Services recognised the self-sufficient nature of many remote communities and developed a range of teaching resources that built on this culture.

'How to' books written in plain language were provided on CD-ROM, allowing learners to print out content they were interested in and perform self-assessments at their own pace. The materials also allowed customers to experience the Internet without actually being connected.

Hanson Training Services' approach has been very effective, highlighting the importance of tailoring training delivery to the needs of local communities and individual clients.

Providing disadvantaged Queenslanders with training that leads to decent work

Changing social and business environments mean that different solutions are also required for Queenslanders who experience the greatest hurdles accessing decent work. Unemployment levels are at their lowest in 30 years, but many Queenslanders still need a high level of assistance to overcome major barriers to attaining sustainable employment.

The Queensland Government will implement a holistic response to disadvantaged Queenslanders, providing them with support to achieve educational outcomes that will lead to decent employment.

This includes:

- developing a new Indigenous Employment and Training Strategy to enhance educational and employment outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The Strategy is a direct response to the extreme labour market disadvantages faced by Indigenous people. It will provide a comprehensive framework through which employment and training initiatives can be more effectively integrated and delivered.

- developing a new Skilling Action Plan to improve educational and employment outcomes for Queenslanders with a disability
- introducing new concession arrangements and additional learning support to boost access to mainstream training services
- increasing the emphasis on higher level qualifications and sustainable employment outcomes for clients who are disadvantaged in the labour market.

Providing training tailored to the needs of older workers

Queensland's older workers are an important labour market resource. They possess extensive skills and knowledge which can only be gained through many years on-the-job. Despite this, older workers are less likely to hold a high level qualification than younger staff, and generally have not undertaken any formal learning for a long time.

To ensure skilling opportunities are targeted to older workers, the Queensland Government will develop training strategies to meet their specific needs.

This includes up-front skills assessment at TAFE institutes. This will ensure that older workers receive training access tailored to their existing skills and experience, and will link them to any 'add on' literacy, numeracy and information technology training.

Through Skilling Solutions Queensland, low skilled workers aged 45 years or older may qualify for a new subsidy to offset the costs of approved vocational training from TAFE institutes.



Action 20: Preparing young people for work

Our economy faces major challenges over the coming decades remaining competitive in an increasingly technological and global environment while responding to its ageing population. Strategies aimed at increasing the skills and job readiness of young people will be vital to solving these problems.

Queensland leads Australia in providing opportunities for young people to undertake part-time apprenticeships and traineeships as part of their school program. The Queensland Government is building on this success with a range of new initiatives designed to prepare young people for work.

The new Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE) will provide young people with more opportunities to select programs that include a broader range of education and training options - particularly vocational education and training pathways. Under these arrangements, a QCE will be issued if a student has gained 20 points of credits during their senior phase of learning. There is no limit to the amount of vocational education and training that would count towards the achievement of a QCE.

Schools will be encouraged to continue delivering enhanced school-based programs that will allow young people to earn credit towards VET qualifications. The training system will complement these school-based programs by giving young people access to higher level qualifications at the Certificate III level and above. This ensures young people have the best possible chance to move into the economy's highest priority jobs.

TAFE will grant entry to Certificate I and II training that offers pathways to higher level training, and to disadvantaged youth who need greater opportunities to engage with education and training. Schools will also gain access to TAFE facilities and resources where possible, to support them in delivering a broader range of training to their students.

From 2006, young people enrolling at TAFE institutes full-time will have access to concession arrangements. School students or other young people who undertake a nationally recognised VET qualification at TAFE as part of their senior studies will pay no tuition fees where the qualification is part of or progresses towards a Certificate III or higher level qualification.

Regardless of whether a young person is studying nationally recognised VET competencies at school, at TAFE or combining arrangements, access will be on equal terms and in as broad a range of offerings as possible. Funding will be utilised to address training and employment priorities, particularly local priorities.

Action 21: Maximising our workforce through the Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative

Despite Queensland's strong economic growth and low unemployment, there are many people struggling to obtain casual, part-time or full-time employment. Around 102 000 Queenslanders are currently jobless and looking for work. These unemployed face multiple barriers in the job market, and experience shows – that without help – most will remain uncompetitive.

The Queensland Government will continue helping the most disadvantaged jobseekers to fully participate in the paid workforce and share in the state's prosperity.

Skilling Queenslanders for Work is a new initiative providing assistance to enable eligible groups of Queenslanders who are disadvantaged in the labour market to secure sustainable employment outcomes.

This initiative will support clients to develop the skills and experience they need to compete in the labour market. It will provide a 'toolbox' of mix and match strategies that can be customised to the individual, including:

- work placement (including traineeships)
- job preparation training
- accredited vocational education and training
- formal recognition of skills through Recognition of Prior Learning
- post-participation support for up to six months
- employer wage subsidies
- cadetships
- mentoring
- contribution to transport and child care costs for eligible parents and carers.

Skilling Queenslanders for Work strategies will be developed for the following groups:

- *people who are employed 20 hours per week or less and who are unable to secure a full-time job because they lack the necessary skills* will be provided with skills to compete for jobs offering more hours
- *the long-term unemployed* will be offered customised assistance packages to help them overcome a lack of skills and recent work experience
- *people with a disability* will be assisted by a Work Ability strategy to overcome the formidable barriers they face getting a job
- *parents and carers* will be aided by specific measures customised to each situation
- *Indigenous people* will be helped through a suite of Indigenous employment and skilling programs
- *mature age people* will be assisted through an Experience Pays Awareness Strategy designed to give them the skills to re-enter the workforce
- *young people aged 15-24* will be the focus of a Get Set for Work strategy designed to help tackle youth unemployment
- *migrants from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds* will be assisted to become competitive in the job market through a new multicultural strategy
- *Queenslanders living in rural and remote areas* will be provided with skilling and employment opportunities through a new Bush Works strategy, including a focus on retaining young people in their communities
- *ex-offenders* will be given a chance to re-assimilate into the workforce through a Prisoner Post Release program and a Youth Justice program.



In addition, Skilling Queenslanders for Work will retain the government's commitment to parents and carers and the following existing employment and skilling programs:

- Get Set for Work Program – locally-based organisations will be funded to deliver employment and training assistance to 15 to 17 year olds who are either early school leavers or at risk of disengaging from education, as part of the Queensland Government's *Education and Training Reforms for the Future*
- *Indigenous Employment Policy for Queensland Government Building and Civil Construction Projects (20 per cent Policy)*; Indigenous Employment and Training Support Officers; Indigenous Training and Employment Managers; and Wal Meta public sector employment and advancement programs – a complementary suite of programs helping Indigenous Queenslanders gain skills, qualifications and jobs
- *State Government Building and Construction Contracts – Structured Training Policy (10 per cent Policy)* – providing skilling opportunities including apprenticeships and traineeships in building and construction
- The Workers Assistance Program which provides assistance for workers affected by large scale retrenchments arising from firm closures or industry restructuring.

An important new partnership will link with Skilling Solutions Queensland as both a referral service for clients to Skilling Queenslanders for Work and to people who exit Skilling Queenslanders for Work and want to pursue further education or training.

Building on our success: Manufacturing employment at Logan

The Greater Logan Manufacturing Jobs Strategy is an innovative collaboration between the Department of Employment and Training, job network agencies, the Logan Institute of TAFE and Logan's manufacturing employers.

Under a government-funded jobs project, unemployed 19 to 30 year olds were recruited by Boys Town through a group of job network providers for four weeks of preparatory job training. Participants were fast-tracked to a second year apprenticeship using specialised training at Logan TAFE before completing an additional 13 weeks of industry and Job Network sponsored work placements.

This training provided participants with the skills and experience to work on-the-job as third year apprentices, receiving full adult wages.

The program was individualised for each participant to get the right mix of industry training, work placement and guidance to maximise their employment opportunities. By early October 2005, five of the participants had secured apprenticeships, twelve were working in the manufacturing industry, and seven had gained secure jobs.

Action 22: Introducing Skilling Solutions Queensland services throughout the state

In March 2005, the Queensland Government introduced Skilling Solutions Queensland (SSQ) to provide people of all ages with face-to-face service on training and career opportunities. The service informs clients of their individual career options, Recognition of Prior Learning opportunities, gap training plans, registered training organisation details, and related service information.

The pilot program proved highly popular with a 97 per cent client satisfaction rate. In its first six months it assisted more than 2000 Queenslanders to attain their career goals. Based on this success, the Queensland Government will roll out SSQ across the state.

The Government will establish 10 new sites for Skilling Solutions Queensland from 2006-07 to provide training and career information to Queenslanders.

Pending a further evaluation of this new initiative, the Government will consider establishing up to seven more new sites from 2007-08, bringing the total number to 24 sites, to ensure the service is available across the whole state.

The further roll out of the service will build on the success of the Skilling Solutions Queensland sites already established or being established at South Brisbane, Shailer Park, Logan Central, Meadowbrook, Rockhampton, Townsville and Mackay.

Expanding the service will provide more Queenslanders with access to accurate and relevant information about training or career options that match their interests, skills and experience. SSQ will also provide clients with information on employment opportunities, thereby improving employment outcomes.

Building on our success: Achieving career success through Skilling Solutions Queensland

Pam Kelly, a Child Care worker with eight years experience, has achieved a Certificate III and is on her way to attaining a Diploma. This follows a skills recognition process carried out by the Queensland Government's new specialist training and employment information service – Skilling Solutions Queensland.

Pam wanted to gain formal qualifications after years of working in the Children's Services industry so she attended Skilling Solutions Queensland's Logan Hyperdome customer service centre. They referred Pam to Australian Child Care Career Options – a registered training organisation, where she undertook a skills recognition process. Pam received credit for 11 competencies toward her Certificate III in Children's Services, and completed gap training to achieve the qualification.

The skills she acquired during her training have enabled her to further her career and have tempted her to continue learning. Pam is currently studying for her Diploma in Children's Services.



Action 23: Embedding employability skills in training programs

Many employers now consider that communication, teamwork and problem solving skills are just as important as technical skills in the workplace.

The Queensland Government will work with industry organisations to ensure that employability skills, including workplace literacy and numeracy, are incorporated within all training delivery.

This will ensure that the training and reporting of these skills explicitly meets the needs of Queensland industry. Training product developers (training packages and accredited courses) will have to clearly identify the way that employability skills will be taught, assessed and recorded.

This work will reflect the Employability Skills Framework developed by the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Business Council of Australia. It will also build on work being undertaken nationally.

Action 24: Delivering training for the highest skilled jobs

To ensure the workforce holds the appropriate skills level for economic growth and 21st century industries, Queensland must increase the number of individuals holding vocational education and training qualifications at Certificate III level and above. In particular, we need to refocus training efforts onto skills for people working in skilled trades and associate professional occupations.

The Queensland Government believes the state's labour force needs an additional 25 000 associate professionals. It is estimated that around 65 per cent of these people would benefit from qualifications provided through the vocational education and training system.

The Queensland Government will refocus training planning and funding onto higher level qualifications, introduce new high level vocational graduate certificates and diplomas, and encourage links with university qualifications.

To meet skills shortages in high level occupations, the Queensland Government will increase the number of Certificate IV and above training places, with 14 000 extra places available in each year by 2010.

The Queensland Government will also expand learning choices by increasing the number, range and availability of higher level vocational education and training qualifications, including new vocational graduate diplomas and certificates. Expanding these programs will be made possible through improved efficiency, fee-for-service arrangements and some redirection of public funding from lower priority training areas.

Certificate I and II programs will continue being supported where they provide genuine pathways to higher level vocational education and training qualifications, and superior employability, security and earnings.

The Queensland Government will support the introduction of vocational graduate certificate and diploma courses across a diverse range of occupations and industries.

The Southbank Institute of Technology will develop resources and delivery strategies in conjunction with associated industries to ensure the qualifications are relevant, practical and useful. Vocational graduate qualifications will be provided by private and public training providers, with progress towards some qualifications already well underway.

Programs are currently being developed by the Southbank Institute of Technology across a wide range of fields including homeopathic medicine, adult literacy teaching, computer aided drafting, waste water management and architectural digital illustration.



Building on our success: *Royal Brisbane International College – a Queensland first*

The Royal Brisbane International College recently became the first Queensland training provider to gain approval for vocational graduate certificate and diploma courses.

The college will soon be offering vocational graduate training in business management, including general management, project management and tourism management.

The graduate certificate will take six months to complete full-time or one year part-time, while the vocational graduate diploma will take about one year full-time or two years part-time. Students with existing work-related skills will have the opportunity to earn credit towards the qualification through Recognition of Prior Learning, reducing the time required to complete the qualification.

Increasing access to integrated degree and diploma programs

Queensland TAFE institutes have been working with universities to develop a sophisticated range of integrated vocational education and training/university degree and diploma programs. They are designed for people seeking to enter a profession and people already working as professionals who are looking to strengthen their skills.

Across the state, there are more than 85 TAFE study options that provide the option to gain credit towards university study.

The Queensland Government will expand this approach across a range of professional skills areas to enable students to undertake combined bachelor-diploma/advanced diploma/Certificate IV programs and gain both university and vocational education and training qualifications in much the same time it would take to complete a bachelor program.

These programs will be available state-wide throughout the TAFE Queensland network.

Contact details:

www.trainandemploy.qld.gov.au
www.tafe.qld.gov.au

Training Line	1300 369 935
Employment Line	1300 369 925
TAFE Queensland	1300 308 233

