



Queensland Skills Plan Highlights



A message from the Premier and Minister for Employment and Training

The *Queensland Skills Plan* is the most significant package of reforms to the way Queenslanders access skilling opportunities in more than 40 years.

It delivers on the Queensland Government's commitment to create one of the most flexible, modern and innovative education and training systems in Australia.

Community responses to the discussion paper on the future of vocational education and training in this state show Queenslanders are proud of the system which has produced highly qualified tradespeople working in world-class industries.

More than 1700 employers, industry and union leaders, teachers and apprentices and other Queenslanders participated in our consultation or made a submission about vocational education and training reforms. We thank you for your valuable contributions.

Technological change, globalisation, an ageing population and low unemployment rates have led to dramatic changes in Queensland's labour market, causing skills shortages across a number of key industry areas including the traditional trades and para-professional occupations.

A generation of Queenslanders has been extremely well served by the state's vocational education and training system. We must get smarter about how we best equip our workforce with the right mix of skills for the future and attract young people back into the trades.

We want a system that prepares young Queenslanders for a future workforce that requires flexibility, multi-skilling and adaptability. We also want a system that supports older workers to update their skills, change jobs and prepare for retirement.



Peter Beattie MP

The *Queensland Skills Plan* contains 24 actions to transform and modernise the vocational and education training (VET) system including improving the way our TAFE institutes deliver training and fostering more cohesive partnerships with training providers, industry, communities and unions.

Three new centres of excellence will be established to ensure leading edge skills development in critical industries. In addition, the new Trade and Technician Skills Institute will lead state-wide product development and delivery for automotive, building and construction, manufacturing and engineering, and electrical/electronics studies.

By 2010, an extra 17 000 trade training places and an additional 14 000 high level training places will be available each year.

The competency-based training system will be fully implemented so that our best and brightest apprentices can complete their training earlier.

The *Queensland Skills Plan* is about securing a better future for all Queenslanders by ensuring the Smart State is a Skilled State.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Beattie'.

Peter Beattie MP
Premier of Queensland

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tom Barton'.

Tom Barton MP
Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations
and Minister for Sport



Tom Barton MP

Meeting skills challenges with the Queensland Skills Plan

The *Queensland Skills Plan* outlines a new framework for skills policy to ensure the vocational education and training sector meets the skills challenges of the 21st century.

Queensland's labour market has changed fundamentally. Although some changes may be linked to cyclical alterations in demand for workers in particular industries, other changes are more permanent, reflecting likely trends in the labour market over the coming decades.

In recent years, increased tightness in the labour market has caused skills shortages across a number of key industry areas. Changes across industry, occupations and the nature of work have made it increasingly difficult to predict the skills that will be in highest demand in the future.

Skills shortages are not only about training; they are also about workforce participation, approaches to recruitment, the attractiveness of industries, working conditions and our attitudes toward retirement.

The impact of these changes on the availability of skilled labour will be lessened if the supply of skills through the education and training systems is more closely matched to the needs of industry and students.

This new environment requires a new approach to skills development to ensure we have the highly skilled workforce we need in the future in Queensland.

New approaches must be developed to meet the current and likely future needs of the labour market. Some of these needs are critical and require immediate responses. Others are long-term issues requiring incremental shifts in training strategy and workplace culture.

Queensland needs 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* outlines 24 key State Government commitments to recruit and retain a highly skilled, robust workforce that will meet current and future demands of industry and the economy.



A training system that works for Queensland

There are a range of reasons for skills shortages including rapid changes in the population and the labour market. However these changes 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.

The improved training system is expected to stimulate demand for vocational education and training, driving further innovation, while increasing industry willingness to further invest in its 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, and implementing arrangements to improve the flexibility and capacity of TAFE Queensland staff
- 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
- establishing a new Australian Resources and Infrastructure Institute of Technology to provide innovative 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
- 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
- developing more innovative purchasing models to maximise the effectiveness of government's investment in training



Training that works for industry and employers

Creating the skilled workforce that our employers and industries need is a shared responsibility. Training alone can not solve skills shortages, and government alone can not determine the skills needs of our workforce or fund all the training that is needed.

It is time to develop 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 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 meet the skills needs of industry in areas including indigenous health, biotechnology and emerging industries, manufacturing and sustainable energy
- developing a range of new industry engagement models to enhance skills and training leadership in key industries including tourism and hospitality, community services and health, sport and recreation, automotive and the creative industries
- implementing the Experience Pays Awareness Strategy to assist the recruitment and retention of Queensland's older workers by providing employers with advice about how to 'age proof' their workplace
- developing a range of training products designed specifically to meet the needs of Queensland's small businesses, including a program for new and intending business owners and operators to help them get established, and a program for existing businesses to assist in identifying specific skills requirements.

Training that works for the trades

One of the most critical challenges currently 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.

Queensland's training system has responded to the increasing demand for trades apprenticeships across the state with an increase of 23 per cent during the period 2002-03 to 2003-04. However, much more needs to be done.

People who are already working in the trades need to be supported to move into skilled trade occupations.

The Queensland Government will introduce 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
- fully implementing the competency-based training system to allow earlier completion by apprentices, without losing the quality and integrity of outcomes

- introducing shortened expected durations for many apprenticeships to encourage people to become tradespeople more quickly once they have the required competencies
- developing a new role for master tradespeople or craftspeople through high level vocational graduate certificate and vocational graduate diploma programs to enhance technical expertise through access to the very latest technology
- 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
- increasing travel allowances for apprentices
- establishing a Skills Assessment Service to improve consistency, validity and employer confidence in assessment practices.



Training that works for individuals

The *Queensland Skills Plan* represents a new approach to providing skilling services to the workforce, based on customising training services to support individuals to meet their maximum working potential.

The competitiveness of the Queensland economy will increasingly depend 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 attention to the link between qualifications and actual jobs - which has meant that there is little understanding of opportunities to build on entry-level vocational training as a foundation to a career.

The Queensland Government will develop a new approach to providing vocational education and training based on a more sophisticated understanding of the different needs of 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 training and career information service. Pending a further evaluation of this new initiative, the Government will consider establishing up to a further seven new sites from 2007-08 to ensure this service is available across the whole state
- providing sustainable employment outcomes for groups of Queenslanders who are disadvantaged in the labour market through the new Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative
- introducing a new Skills First program to streamline processes for skills assessment and ensure this assessment is practical, efficient and relevant
- meeting the lifestyle needs of all TAFE Queensland clients by delivering training in different ways, including face-to-face instruction, online, distance education and in the workplace

- continuing to introduce a range of initiatives to better prepare young people for work
- developing a new Indigenous Employment and Training Strategy to enhance educational and employment outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- developing a new Skilling Action Plan for people with a disability to enhance their educational and employment outcomes
- providing tailored training strategies to meet the needs of older workers and training subsidies for eligible low-skilled older workers to undertake approved training delivered by TAFE institutes.



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