

Skilling Queenslanders for Work

First Start



Introduction

Skilling Queenslanders for Work represents a significant investment of \$240 million over four years to support up to 32,000 Queenslanders into work through a suite of targeted skills and training programs.

The initiative has a new framework that will help ensure an integrated approach to employer engagement strategies, skills development and job creation opportunities.

Skilling Queenslanders for Work is focused on developing skills for individuals and providing direct assistance to those Queenslanders that need the most support to enter and stay in the workforce.

The initiative comprises the following suite of programs:

- Community Work Skills
- Work Skills Traineeships
- Get Set for Work
- Ready for Work
- Youth Skills
- First Start
- Work Start incentives.

Overview and objectives

Skilling Queenslanders for Work plays a critical role in increasing workforce participation and the overall performance of the Queensland economy by improving work opportunities for disadvantaged Queenslanders.

Skilled workers support industry to increase productivity, drive innovation and improve workplace performance.

Skilling Queenslanders for Work represents the Queensland Government's commitment to support strategies that encourage equitable participation by a broad range of groups that generally face barriers or challenges to their participation in skills development and the labour market.

In 2017–18, disadvantaged Queenslanders will benefit from training initiatives that are more targeted, helping to ensure workers gain the skills they need to find new jobs.

The Queensland Government is working to identify current and future sustainable employment and skills needs, aligned to economic and social development and creating relevant training opportunities to meet those needs.

Training that improves an individual's skill level, employment prospects and social inclusion is a priority for the Queensland Government.

First Start

First Start is one of seven programs that make up the *Skilling Queenslanders for Work* initiative. The program aims to provide young people and disadvantaged job seekers with opportunities to gain a nationally recognised qualification and 12 months paid employment by undertaking a subsidised traineeship with a local council.

Funding under First Start is specifically targeted at new employees and will provide local councils with a significant subsidy to boost their traineeship commencements above their normal workforce levels.

Specifically, First Start will:

- provide immediate job opportunities
- encourage people to enter into skills-based training
- keep Queenslanders earning and learning
- guarantee a pool of skilled workers is available as the economy grows.

In 2017–18, \$4.25 million will be available for local councils across Queensland to create 340 new traineeships.

First Start is administered by the Department of Education and Training (DET).

Where will the program be delivered?

First Start will be available throughout Queensland, however, priority will be given to areas of high youth unemployment.

Who can apply for funding?

Local councils, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander local councils, are eligible for funding. Local councils must be registered for GST.

Local councils must be able to demonstrate a commitment to access and equity principles, as well as an ability to provide appropriate support services.

Who will the funds support?

First Start primarily targets young Queensland school leavers and disadvantaged job seekers considered at risk of enduring prolonged periods of unemployment.

To be eligible, disadvantaged Queenslanders must also be:

- aged 15 years or older and no longer at school
- able to meet citizen, residency and visa requirements to undertake a traineeship.

Identified disadvantaged groups

Disadvantaged groups to be targeted include:

- young people (aged 15–24 years)
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- mature-age job seekers (45 years or older)
- migrants and refugees from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- people with disability
- displaced workers
- women re-entering the workforce.

What assistance can be funded?

First Start will provide 12 months paid employment and the opportunity to gain a nationally recognised qualification via a traineeship. The trainee must enter into a training contract for a qualification that is funded by DET.

Upon completion, the trainees will have learnt new and transferable skills and gained experience and confidence by working in a real job.

What are the work conditions?

Local councils offering traineeships are the employer. Traineeships combine paid work with structured training. Trainees complete a nationally recognised qualification while learning valuable skills at work and under the guidance of a training organisation.

Wages and conditions for trainees in Queensland vary however, as a minimum they must be paid a training wage as outlined in the award or agreement for their occupation or industry and the National Employment Standards.

For more information on wages and entitlements, contact the Fair Work Ombudsman on 13 13 94.

What training is involved?

As well as being employed, trainees are training in vocational areas and upon successful completion will receive a qualification.

A registered training organisation (RTO) is a training provider registered to deliver vocational education and training and assessment services. A supervising registered training organisation (SRTO) is an RTO who accepts the role to deliver specified services in regards to an apprenticeship or traineeship and to monitor delivery of training and assessment services required under a training plan. The SRTO must be approved as a pre-qualified supplier (PQS) by DET under the User Choice program.

The local council and their First Start trainee will select their SRTO, as part of the signing and registration of the training contract. The SRTO will work with the local council and the trainee to develop a training plan, deliver training, assess the achievement of skills, and issue the qualification stated in the training plan upon completion.

As RTOs offer different ways of training, local councils and their First Start trainees should 'shop around' for the appropriate SRTO that best suits their needs.

Are there any special requirements?

First Start trainees must be additional to the existing workforce. The priority is for new employees, however, an existing worker identified as being able to benefit from the traineeship opportunity can be employed in the traineeship. It is expected that the existing worker's position would be backfilled.

First Start trainees should be employed on a full-time basis, however a more flexible work pattern may be available to people whose personal circumstances impact on their employment arrangements. Approval for part-time work arrangements must be sought from DET prior to any amendments to the training contract.

Funding will only be provided once for each individual undertaking a First Start traineeship and is not available for existing trainees.

Local councils are able to sub-contract group training organisations for the employment of their First Start trainees and act as host employers.

Post-participation support

Post-participation support refers to assistance or support that the trainee may require either nearing or following the completion of the traineeship to retain employment or obtain further employment. The level of support will vary for each individual trainee and may include:

- assistance with resume and job application writing
- interview techniques
- allowing time for job search activities.

It is expected that all local councils funded under First Start will provide post-participation support to trainees employed under the program.

What outcomes are expected?

Local councils will be required to identify what employment, further education and/or training targets will be achieved throughout First Start.

First Start has standard key performance indicators (KPIs) that local councils are expected to meet or exceed:

KPIs:

- Completion rate – 65 per cent of trainees successfully gain the required outcome of a qualification or statement of attainment
- Employment outcome – 70 per cent of trainees successfully gain ongoing employment.

What is the application process?

The Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ) is the peak body for local government in Queensland. Funding under First Start is via a bidding process conducted by LGAQ. Local councils submit an annual bid for traineeship positions. This process involves councils requesting the number of traineeship positions required for the following financial year.

These bids are assessed by DET, based on government priorities and past performance including:

- ability of the council to employ, train and supervise trainees
- ability of the council to fulfil their allocations

- commitment to securing ongoing employment and/or training/further education opportunities
- meeting all contractual and reporting obligations of the funding agreement
- commitment to the provision of post participation support.

DET will allocate traineeship positions on a financial year basis and notify local councils of their successful bids.

The allocation process may be varied or discontinued by DET as required.

What level of funding is available?

The funding available under First Start is for a maximum 12 month term.

First Start provides a subsidy of \$12,500 per trainee for 12 months of employment. While the funding level remains capped at \$12,500 for a maximum 12 months of employment, DET will allow local councils the discretion to elect to employ a trainee in a traineeship that is longer than 12 months duration or even an apprentice in an apprenticeship.

What are the funding conditions?

Successful local councils must enter into a formal Services Agreement with DET, which will include standard key performance indicators.

A first payment will be paid once the Services Agreement has been executed. Trainees must have commenced by 31 May 2018. Funding under First Start will be provided on the basis that the training contract for each trainee under the program is successfully registered with DET.

Second payments for local councils (if required) will be made following a reconciliation process to confirm all trainee commencements, completions, and cancellations and periods of employment for previous contracts.

Monthly reports are required throughout the life of the Services Agreement.

All Services Agreement funding must be fully acquitted by the funded local council after completion and any unexpended or surplus funds returned to DET for any trainees who terminate their employment prior to

completion of the training contract and 12 months of employment.

Appeals process

Local councils may request a review of a decision made by DET in relation to the provision of funding under First Start. The appeals process has been established to help identify any problems in the application process, ensuring these processes continue to improve, and to assist with future applications.

Appeals must be lodged in writing to:

Appeals Officer
 Training and Skills
 Department of Education and Training
 PO Box 15033
 CITY EAST QLD 4002

Local councils will be notified in writing of the outcome of the appeal within 21 business days from receipt of the appeal.

More information

For more information about First Start contact DET on 1300 369 935 or LGAQ on 1300 542 700 or visit the DET website at www.training.qld.gov.au/firststart.

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