**Information session: Queensland’s new Skills Assure Supplier framework and new EOI contracting process**

**Slide 1: Cover slide**

* In the spirit of reconciliation, the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training recognises the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea and community. We pay our respect to their elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.

**Introduction**

* Welcome. This information session provides an update on the new Skills Assure Supplier framework being developed through the Queensland Skills Strategy.

**Slide 2**

**Queensland Skills Strategy**

* In May this year, the Queensland Government released its *Good Jobs. Great Training: Queensland Skills Strategy 2024 – 2028*.
* Informed by our most significant review in almost a decade, the strategy is our five-year plan to make the state’s strong training system even stronger.
* It aims to ensure we grow the skills our economy needs – and that also open doors to good jobs for Queenslanders.
* Queensland has a strong economy and big priorities – a booming health care and support sector, housing and construction, decarbonisation … to name a few.
* Exciting opportunities are combining with critical needs to fuel demand for skilled workers across our economy.
* To stay strong, Queensland needs more and higher skilled workers.

**Slide 3**

**Building on a strong training system**

* During consultation on the strategy, we heard time and again that our training system was not broken – that is was strong – but needed to evolve.
* As you can see in the diagram on screen, a high-performing training system relies on everyone playing a role — governments, training providers, industry and employers, and students themselves.
* We all have a role to play.
* Government’s role includes being a steward of the system – and an investor in priority skills growth as well as access and equity.
* Here in Queensland, we have a healthy mix of training providers – public, private, not-for-profit and dual-sector schools and universities – they all contribute to Queensland’s strong and vibrant training system.
* Within this dynamic system, we fund training in a way that grows the skills our economy needs while supporting Queenslanders to access the lifelong benefits of training for good jobs.
* Our TAFE providers are supported by Skills Assure Suppliers to deliver training that is publicly funded.
* We currently have more than 350 Skills Assure Suppliers approved to deliver training and assessment services funded by the Queensland Government.
* Participation in funded training is at a decade high – with more than 244,000 students undertaking a funded course in 2023-24, which is up 9% on the previous year.

**Slide 4**

**Strategy on a page**

* This slide shows the Queensland Skills Strategy on a page.
* The strategy’s vision is for Queensland to be a ‘job-creating economic powerhouse driven by skilled Queenslanders’.
* The strategy has five focus areas:
  + ‘skills for good jobs’ — this is skills needed by the economy.
  + Our second focus area is ‘training that has the power to change lives’.
  + Thirdly – ‘TAFE for all Queenslanders’ – recognises TAFE at the heart of the training system, delivering for communities.
  + The fourth focus area — ‘A training system backing Queenslanders’ — is about partnerships, promotion and advocacy.
  + The fifth area is about our system being ‘quality and results driven’.
* One of our 22 initial actions is developing a new skills Assure Supplier framework, which is the focus on this session.
* Another is introducing annual plans.
* Each year, a Training Priorities Plan will outline our investment priorities and activities.

**Slide 5**

**Moving forward**

* Implementation of the strategy is underway.
* For example, we’ve started our 12-month Rural and Remote Pilot in areas of Central and North Queensland – partnering with training providers to support more face-to-face training delivery in regional Queensland.
* We’re providing Set for Success grants to Skills Assure Suppliers to develop ways to improve completion outcomes for our funded training students.
* We’ve announced more Free TAFE places and will fund more higher-level qualifications.
* We’ve announced funding for new industry-led skills solutions and we’re expanding our Micro-credentialing Program.
* All this, within context of national reform – and maximising opportunities and outcomes under the National Skills Agreement.

**Slide 6 – transition slide**

**Training Priorities Plan**

* This brings us to our first Training Priorities Plan, which we have just released.

**Slide 7**

**Our first annual plan**

* With a budget reaching $1.5 billion, this plan outlines how we prioritise this significant investment through funded training and other programs.
* It recognises that economic and social imperatives are two sides of the same coin – changing lives and skilling workforces at the same time.
* This annual planning approach ensures our investment remains responsive to skills needs.
* Available now online, our 2024-25 plan leads the way – mapping out Queensland’s skilling priorities and how they inform investment decisions.

**Slide 8**

**Queensland priorities and commitments**

Our Training Priorities Plan considers:

* + our economy
  + our workforce

and

* + our people and the skills they need.
* Looking at our priorities, we can see a number of key drivers – including:   
  + The need to support economic growth through the **supply of skilled workers** aligned to employment opportunities
  + The need for more people with **higher skills** required for future jobs
  + The need to **support apprenticeship and traineeship** participation
  + The need to address skills needs in **rural and remote communities and economies**
  + The need to enable **workforce participation** for diverse Queenslanders
  + The need to address **skills needs in priority and emerging industries** – care and support, clean energy transition, manufacturing, agriculture, construction, digital and technology, hospitality and more

and

* + There are also opportunities and commitments under the **National Skills Agreement**.

**Slide 9**

**Skills for all career stages**

* Queenslanders want and need training for all career stages.
* Our skills strategy delivers through funded training.
* This includes:
  1. Career Ready – skills to get a headstart while at school
  2. Career Start – skills to help with getting a job
  3. Career Boost – skills to take careers to the next level.
* As you can see, we have mapped our current subsidised training programs against these career stages.
* We are supporting a more student-focused training system which is why we will be developing new programs that are more clearly aligned to these important vocational learning stages in people’s lives.

**Slide 10**

**How do we prioritise?**

* Our approach is about investing where it counts – providing Queenslanders with the right skills to support a thriving economy.
* At every career stage, our investment model supports Queenslanders to develop skills for jobs in demand.
* Our priorities plan outlines the settings that inform what courses are funded and who is eligible.
* It shows how we target investment in qualifications to deliver job outcomes – drawing on data, analysis and industry advice.
* As this diagram shows, we look at **skills in demand**. What core skills do we need to meet the needs of our economy now and into the future?
* We take into account industry advice, student outcomes, statewide and regional economic needs, as well as the needs of industry, employers and small businesses.
* We look at the **supply of skills** – we model occupational demand and qualification supply. Do we have enough of the right skills in the skills pipeline, at the right time?
* We also look at our **priority and emerging industries** to explore opportunities to enhance workforce capacity and capability.
* And, very importantly, we support **access and equity** through our eligibility settings and delivery standards.
* You can read more about these settings in the new Training Priorities Plan.

**Slide 11 – transition slide**

**A new SAS framework**

* Implementing a new Skills Assure Supplier framework is central to achieving the strategy’s vision and underpins many of its initiatives.

**Slide 12**

**What is the SAS framework?**

* The SAS framework is how Queensland contracts and quality-assures RTOs that deliver training and assessment services funded by the Queensland Government, known as Skills Assure Suppliers (or SAS).
* The framework gives students, parents and employers confidence that their funded training providers can deliver high-quality, industry-standard training that best meets their learner and job seeker needs.
* This is why the SAS framework is so important.
* Our new framework will update our contracting approach to align with policy directions in the strategy – implementing an enhanced evidence and performance-based investment model.
* In addition to better targeting investment, it will aim to meet the needs of students, including those in rural and remote areas, as well as diverse and disadvantaged learners.
* The new SAS framework is key to shaping the modern, responsive and accessible training system needed to achieve our state priorities and national commitments.
* During the consultation that informed the development of the Queensland Skills Strategy, RTOs told us about challenges, such as the cost of delivery in rural and remote areas, and opportunities, including ways to streamline contracting.
* We heard from providers who wanted an opportunity to partner with us as providers of quality funded training in Queensland.
* We listened to this feedback – and are opening contracting under the new SAS framework as a result.

**Slide 13**

**What will stay the same?**

* While there will be changes in the new SAS framework, some things will stay the same.
* Importantly, Queensland’s funded training will be:
  + aligned to state priorities

and

* + informed by industry advice.
* Funded training will be focused on quality training provision and achieving job outcomes for students. It will be important for providers to maintain currency and have strong links to industry and employers.
* Funded training will continue to support access and equity – breaking down barriers for priority groups, including:  
  + First Nations Queenslanders
  + multicultural communities
  + people with disability
  + young people
  + mature-age Queenslanders
  + long-term unemployed
  + underemployed

and

* + gender equity, including women in non-traditional roles.
* The department‘s quality assurance and monitoring activity will continue to operate under a new SAS Framework

and

* SAS will continue to have dedicated Contract Managers – who they can contact for help to meet their obligations as funded training providers.

**Slide 14**

**What is changing?**

**Streamlined contracts**

* Under the new framework, SAS contracts will change.
* We have listened to SAS and RTOs – and are streamlining arrangements – including:
  + **single agreements**   
    - that means no more multiple agreements for different subsidised training programs
  + **we will introduce multi-year agreements where appropriate**  
    - providing greater year-to-year continuity for students and providers, so that people and providers can make longer-term plans
  + **we are also working towards a single funded course list**   
    - one list identifying what courses are delivered, including apprenticeships and traineeships
  + **we will also be ensuring that funded training is delivered by the SAS that we have a contract with**    
    - this means third-party delivery by exception only and limited changes of ownership.

**Slide 15**

**What is changing?**

**Enhanced focus on quality training that delivers results**

* Moving forward, the new SAS framework will have an enhanced focus on equity, access and outcomes for students, including those in regional, rural and remote Queensland.
* We have piloted our first student survey and will build on this to develop an evidence base to ensure student voices are heard during investment decision-making.
* We will also undertake more outcomes-focused performance monitoring, which will include new reporting requirements for SAS.

**Slide 16**

**What is changing?**

**Actively-managed investment**

* The new SAS framework will see government investment actively managed by the department.
* Evidence and data will inform what qualifications will be delivered, by what providers and where.
* Under the new framework, TAFE will anchor priority delivery, with quality SAS contracted where needed to ensure optimal coverage and outcomes.
* When we assess what providers we need in the SAS network, we will look at:  
  + industry advice
  + current and projected skills needs
  + supply and demand
  + provider performance and job outcomes
  + regional coverage.

**Slide 17**

**What is changing?**

**New subsidised training programs**

* Queensland’s subsidised training programs are changing to better meet student needs.
* Under the new SAS framework there will be 3 new programs aligned to career stages.
* The 3 new programs are:  
    
  **1. Career Ready VET in Schools**   
  - this program aims to put school students on a path to employment, with new career tasters led by TAFE and more industry-connected training at school, including school-based apprenticeships and traineeships  
    
  **2. Career Start**   
  - this program provides Queenslanders with access to a first post-school certificate III qualification, so they can enter the workforce and access jobs.   
    
  **3. Career Boost**   
  - funding higher-level training qualifications – from certificate IV and above, and priority industry skill sets – this program promotes lifelong learning by funding opportunities for workers to upskill in high priority areas.

It is important to note that apprenticeships and traineeships will be part of all 3 programs, including the Career Boost stage.

You can learn more about these new programs in the Training Priorities Plan.

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**What is changing?**

**Supporting a stable transition**

* Transitioning to new programs will mean the department’s current Certificate 3 Guarantee, User Choice, Higher Level Skills and VET in Schools programs will be replaced by the 3 new programs.
* Supporting a stable transition for students and training providers is a priority.
* To begin with, eligible SAS contracts have been renewed to 30 June 2025 and, for VET in Schools delivery, they will be extended till the end of the 2025 school year.
  + Career Start and Career Boost programs will start from 1 July 2025
  + Career Ready VET in Schools will begin at the start of the 2026 school year.
* Arrangements for discontinuing programs will be phased out, or grandfathered, so students can continue their funded course and will not be disadvantaged.
* Information about these arrangements can be found online.

**Slide 19 – transition slide**

**New EOI process**

* In this next section, we will run through the new EOI process in more detail.

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**2 different EOI processes**

* It is important to highlight that there will be 2 separate processes.
* We will be opening up contracting via a new EOI process for Career Start and Career Boost to begin with.
* This process does not include VET in Schools delivery.
* The new Career Ready VET in Schools EOI will open later in the year.

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**2-stage EOI process – map**

* This diagram shows how the new EOI process will work.
* For starters, all RTOs must apply – including public providers and current SAS.
* It will be a 2-stage process:
* **Stage 1 will focus on mandatory eligibility.**
* **Stage 2 will be formal assessment against pre-determined criteria.**
* RTOs must meet the mandatory eligibility requirements in stage 1 in order to progress to stage 2.
* Stage 2 assessments will be undertaken by an independent panel.
* Outcomes advice will be issued in writing after both stages.
* Stage 1 will be open for six weeks.
* You will also need a Partner Portal account in order to submit your EOI in stage 1.

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**Stage 1: Mandatory eligibility**

* Stage 1 focuses on mandatory requirements.
* To be eligible, RTOs must:  
  + hold current registration with the Australian Skills Quality Authority (or ASQA) or the relevant jurisdictional regulator, and have done so for at least the last 2 years
  + have relevant scope of registration with ASQA and/or relevant jurisdictional regulator for the qualifications they would like to deliver. These qualifications will be listed in the online form and will be the basis of the new Queensland Subsidised Training List
* RTOs must also:
  + have 12 months delivery history in the full qualification or industry area they are applying for
  + have sufficient delivery history to Queensland students
  + have a place of business in Queensland
  + have RTO compliance history
  + produce an ASIC current and historical extract dated within the last 30 days; and
  + provide employer referees (these cannot be schools or labour hire companies).
* For more on these requirements, visit the website and refer to guidelines and frequently asked questions.

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**Partner Portal**

* EOIs must be submitted through the Purchasing Online (POL) application in Partner Portal.
* The Partner Portal is a secure way eligible organisations can access departmental services.
* **RTOs that do not have a Partner Portal account** will need to create one.
* Steps on how to do this can be found on the SAS contracting webpage, on the DESBT website.
* It can take time, and we recommend you start this process sooner rather than later and please reach out if you have any issues.

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**Help and support**

* Support is available to help EOI respondents access our systems.
* **For Partner Portal help:**
* you can refer to our manuals online – these include information about accessing help for features supported by Australian Government agencies
* you can also email and call the Partner Portal team.

We are also available to answer questions about the process. You can email us at **SAS.EOI@desbt.qld.gov.au**.

We can provide advice on the EOI process, but so that the process is fair and equitable, the department is unable to help compile applications.

**Slide 25 – transition slide**

**Learn more**

* Information and resources are available.

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**Learn more – website and enquiries**

* Visit the department’s website – at **desbt.qld.gov.au** – to learn more:
  + Download and read the Training Priorities Plan
  + Read about the new SAS framework
  + Learn about the EOI process
  + Access detailed guidelines for Stage 1
  + Read frequently asked questions.
* And, of course, email us if you have further questions.

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**THANK YOU**

* Thank you for your interest in working with us to deliver on the vision of the Queensland Skills Strategy.

**ENDS.**