

QUEENSLAND TRAINING OMBUDSMAN RECOMMENDATION

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Recommendation 1

DESBT should urgently implement a Train to Retain Strategy 2.0, which as a minimum includes:

- a) a reinvigorated role for DESBT regions to ensure they are effectively regulating the apprenticeship and traineeship system at the local level, and are being proactive with early interventions to address bullying and harassment issues
- b) provision of additional capability in the DESBT Call Centre (such as the previous Senior Training Support Consultants) to provide support and advice to employers, apprentices, trainees, regional staff, and other stakeholders on dealing with bullying and harassment issues
- c) clear communication that bullying and harassment of apprentices and trainees will not be tolerated and employers who are the subject of multiple complaints will be subject to additional scrutiny and intervention, and may be prohibited from employing apprentices in accordance with provisions for prohibiting employers under the FET Act
- d) provision of free online training to all supervisors of apprentices and trainees on minimising the risk of workplace bullying and harassment, and how to effectively deal with issues if they do arise
- e) a fresh approach to co-operation between DESBT and WHSQ to deal with bullying and harassment issues
- f) a strategy to assist small business (who employ the majority of apprentices) to deal with workplace issues such as bullying and harassment, including additional support which may be provided through Small Business Friendly Councils.

Recommendation accepted

DESBT acknowledges the mechanisms considered here as key in the administration of Queensland’s apprenticeship system and will work collaboratively with the QTO and other government agencies in their evaluation and advancement to address the themes identified in the Review.

Responding activity:

- Train and Retain
- Information, support and tools for Queensland businesses
- Cross-government activity

<p>Recommendation 2</p> <p>DESBT should enhance communication with apprentices and trainees through the provision of a Digital Card (similar to that used for Containers for Change) which displays:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the apprentice or trainee’s registration number b) the Apprentice Info Line Number (1800 210 210) as the contact number for all enquiries regarding apprenticeships and traineeships. 	<p>Recommendation accepted</p> <p>DESBT acknowledges the importance and challenges in directly engaging with apprentices and trainees, through digital and other means, and will explore a range of channels to support the intent of this recommendation.</p> <p>Responding activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train and Retain • Enhanced engagement with Queensland apprentices and trainees • Apprenticeship Reference Group
<p>Recommendation 3</p> <p>DESBT should provide a seamless triage service to all callers to the Apprentice Info Line to ensure the required level of support is provided and not just refer callers to other agencies without appropriate assessment of who is best placed to provide support.</p>	<p>Recommendation accepted</p> <p>DESBT will work with training stakeholders including Australian Apprenticeship Network Providers and registered training organisations, who interact directly with employers and apprentices and trainees, to ensure any required interventions occur in a co-ordinated manner and as quickly as possible.</p> <p>Responding activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train and Retain • Enhanced engagement with Queensland apprentices and trainees • Information, support and tools for Queensland businesses

Recommendation 4

DESBT should provide advice to small employers on the benefits of them diversifying their workforce through:

- a) reviewing recruitment strategies
- b) reviewing job advertisements and position descriptions to ensure they are not barriers to accessing a wider pool of applicants
- c) providing linkages to resources available by a range of other organisations.

Recommendation accepted

DESBT accepts and supports the recommendation from the QTO of the need to prioritise stakeholder education and awareness, with a particular focus on small enterprises.

Responding activity:

- Train and Retain
- Information, support and tools for Queensland businesses
- Industry strategies
- Cross-government activity
- Ongoing research and evaluation

Recommendation 5

CSQ should be engaged to develop a Queensland Women in Construction Strategy to include:

- a) focussing on the three themes used in the Victorian Women in Construction Strategy
- b) focussing on the six cohorts identified in the Towards 2025 – An Australian Government Strategy to Boost Workforce Participation
- c) individual strategies aimed at increasing the commencement of female apprentices and trainees and narrowing the gap in completion rates between male and female apprentices.

Recommendation accepted

DESBT acknowledges the need for industry-led activity in driving improvements in workplace culture and will provide support as required noting the unique needs of each industry.

Responding activity:

- Industry strategies
- Cross-government activity
- Ongoing research and evaluation

Recommendation 6

DESBT should engage the recently announced Manufacturing Skills Queensland (once operational) to develop a Queensland Women in Engineering Strategy, similar to the construction strategy to be developed by CSQ.

Recommendation accepted

DESBT acknowledges the need for industry-led activity in driving improvements in workplace culture and will provide support as required noting the unique needs of each industry.

Responding activity:

- Industry strategies
- Cross-government activity
- Ongoing research and evaluation

Recommendation 7

DESBT should engage Motor Trades Association Queensland to develop strategies to:

- a) narrow the gap between completion rates for male and female apprentices in the automotive industry
- b) increase the uptake and completion rates for trainees in the Automotive industry (noting this industry is currently not an industry covered by the Gateway to Industry Schools program).

Recommendation accepted

DESBT acknowledges the need for industry-led activity in driving improvements in workplace culture and will provide support as required noting the unique needs of each industry.

Responding activity:

- Industry strategies
- Cross-government activity
- Ongoing research and evaluation

<p>Recommendation 8</p> <p>DESBT should engage with the Furnishing industry to develop strategies to increase the commencement of female apprentices and trainees and to narrow the gap in completion rates between male and female apprentices.</p>	<p>Recommendation accepted</p> <p>DESBT acknowledges the need for industry-led activity in driving improvements in workplace culture and will provide support as required noting the unique needs of each industry.</p> <p>Responding activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industry strategies • Cross-government activity • Ongoing research and evaluation
<p>Recommendation 9</p> <p>DESBT should engage with Energy Skills Queensland to develop strategies to increase commencements of female apprentices and trainees in the Utilities industry (noting this industry is currently not an industry covered by the Gateway to Industry Schools program).</p>	<p>Recommendation accepted</p> <p>DESBT acknowledges the need for industry-led activity in driving improvements in workplace culture and will provide support as required noting the unique needs of each industry.</p> <p>Responding activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industry strategies • Cross-government activity • Ongoing research and evaluation

<p>Recommendation 10</p> <p>DESBT should work with the Queensland Public Service Commission and the Local Government Association of Queensland to promote the uptake of female traineeships in the Government sector.</p>	<p>Recommendation accepted</p> <p>DESBT acknowledges the need to consider the public sector contribution towards employment of apprentices and trainees, with a particular focus on the employment of women in these roles to improve participation and completions rates of women in male-dominated occupations.</p> <p>Responding activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Sector contribution • Industry strategies • Cross-government activity • Ongoing research and evaluation
<p>Recommendation 11</p> <p>Consideration should be given to creating an Apprenticeship Advisory Committee to identify the reasons for low completion rates for apprentices in the Community Services, Food Processing, Hospitality and Retail sectors (noting that over 85% of commencements in Community Services and Retail are females), and to develop strategies to increase completion rates or the use of complementary models to deliver the skills required by those industries.</p>	<p>Recommendation accepted</p> <p>DESBT supports the establishment of a group as an operational mechanism to support improved apprenticeship participation and completion rates supporting the intent of this recommendation. Membership is to include a current or former apprentice and a TAFE or private provider trade teacher.</p> <p>Responding activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apprenticeship Reference Group • Industry strategies • Cross-government activity • Ongoing research and evaluation

Recommendation 12

DESBT should review administrative arrangements (including Employer Resource Assessment requirements where appropriate) to ensure they are not an enabler of real or perceived conflict in the workplace.

Recommendation accepted

DESBT will continue the ongoing evaluation of the administration of Queensland's apprenticeship system to ensure legislative provisions and other mechanisms including related policies do not adversely effect participation of any population cohorts.

Responding activity:

- Train and Retain
- Cross-government activity
- Ongoing research and evaluation