

2019–2020
ANNUAL
REPORT



About this report

This annual report provides information about the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training (DESBT) financial and non-financial performance for 2019–20. The annual report plays an important role in fulfilling the department's commitment to accountability and transparency. It has been prepared in accordance with the *Financial Accountability Act 2009*.

This report details our achievements, performance and financial position for the 2019–20 financial year. It aligns with the department's *Strategic Plan 2019–23* as well as the *DESBT 2019–20 Service Delivery Statements*. It also provides information on our future direction, people management and governance.

View our report online

This report and the information on DESBT government bodies is available online: desbt.qld.gov.au/annual-report

More information on the Queensland Government Open Data website

Several annual reporting requirements for this year are addressed by publishing information on the Queensland Government Open Data website. These are:

- consultancies
- overseas travel
- Queensland Language Services Policy.

For further information, please visit data.qld.gov.au

Interpreter services



DESBT is committed to providing accessible services to Queenslanders from all culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. If you have difficulty understanding the annual report, you can contact us on 131 450 and we will arrange an interpreter to effectively communicate the report to you.

Providing feedback

We continually strive to meet best practice reporting standards and value the views of our readers. We invite you to provide feedback on this report by completing a survey on the *Get Involved* website qld.gov.au/annualreportfeedback

For enquiries about this Annual Report, contact the Director, Governance and Strategy, Corporate Services, DESBT by phoning +61 7 3025 6042 or email corporate.stratgov@desbt.qld.gov.au or post to PO Box 15483, City East Qld 4002.

ISSN 2209–7902

© The State of Queensland (Department of Employment, Small Business and Training) 2020.

Published by the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training, September 2020, 1 William Street, Brisbane Qld 4000.

Licence

This Annual Report is licensed by the State of Queensland (Department of Employment, Small Business and Training) under a Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) 4.0 Australia licence.

CC BY Licence Summary Statement

In essence, you are free to copy, communicate and adapt this annual report, as long as you attribute the work to the State of Queensland (Department of Employment, Small Business and Training). To view a copy of this licence, visit creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/



Attribution

Content from this Annual Report should be attributed as:

The State of Queensland (Department of Employment, Small Business and Training) Annual Report 2019–20.

Contents

Our department	2
Our Strategic Plan 2019–23	4
Unite and recover from COVID-19	7
Our service performance	10
Our governance	30
Our people, our strength	41
Financial summary	45
Financial statements	49
Appendices	99
Appendix 1: Compliance checklist	99
Appendix 2: Our locations	101
Appendix 3: Glossary of terms	102

Letter of compliance

25 September 2020

The Honourable Shannon Fentiman MP
Minister for Employment and Small Business and
Minister for Training and Skills Development
PO Box 15483
City East Qld 4002

Dear Minister Fentiman

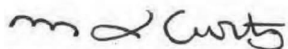
I am pleased to submit for presentation to the Parliament the *Annual Report 2019–20* and financial statements for the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training.

I certify that this Annual Report complies with:

- the prescribed requirements of the *Financial Accountability Act 2009* and the *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2019*
- the detailed requirements set out in the *Annual report requirements for Queensland Government agencies*.

A checklist outlining the annual reporting requirements can be found at Appendix 1 of this annual report.

Yours sincerely



Mary-Anne Curtis
Director-General
Department of Employment, Small Business and Training

Message from the Director-General

I am pleased to present the 2019–20 Annual Report for the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training, which outlines the work undertaken by the department throughout the year. Our focus in the second half of the financial year shifted to the COVID-19 pandemic response and recovery, with the department playing a pivotal role in supporting small businesses, employers, training providers, employees and jobseekers.

Assisting with recovery

Throughout the year, the department demonstrated its agility, implementing recovery measures and providing trusted advice and support. Our Small Business Recovery Centre in Townsville provided face-to-face advice to local businesses continuing to feel the effects of the monsoon event of January 2019. Staff helped deliver Disaster Recovery Grants, while the Back on Track Roadshow visited impacted towns and assisted small businesses. Again after the bushfires in Southern and Eastern Queensland in late 2019, staff helped small businesses access much-needed assistance. Then in early 2020, the department adapted swiftly in response to COVID-19, moving services online, utilising flexible remote working arrangements to continue to deliver key services, and reassigning staff within the department and across government to assist with delivering key government priorities.

Helping small businesses

To assist impacted small businesses, the department delivered the first round of the Small Business COVID-19 Adaption Grant program. The department also established a dedicated Small Business Helpline and updated the Business Queensland website, which became the ‘go to’ portal for affected small businesses.

Our free Mentoring for Growth sessions moved online and small businesses were provided access to online training courses. In May 2020, the Queensland Small Business Commissioner, Maree Adshead, was appointed to assist small businesses with lease disputes and steps to recovery.

The department also worked with employers and impacted apprentices and trainees regarding options available to assist with the continuation of training contracts.

Jobs and skills for Queenslanders

Our targeted training and employment programs were key to keeping Queenslanders connected to the world of work. We managed economic relief measures to support jobs and businesses affected by COVID-19, which included free online training in micro-credentials and skills sets. Throughout the year there was significant investment to support training providers, students and employers with high-quality training and skills. The new *Queensland Government: Skills for Queensland – Great training for quality jobs* strategy was released and included Free apprenticeships for under 21s initiative which, combined with the Free tafe for Year 12 graduates, provided free training for young Queenslanders. During 2019–20 the department also continued to deliver the Skilling Queenslanders for Work program and Back to Work program.

I acknowledge the efforts of staff in supporting those impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, while maintaining high-quality services. I thank all staff for their dedication during 2019–20.

Mary-Anne Curtis
Director-General

Our department

Our vision

All Queenslanders have the skills and opportunities to participate and prosper in the economy.

Our purpose

To increase economic readiness, so Queenslanders can take full advantage of opportunities. Economic readiness means more Queenslanders are: ready to invest in themselves and their future; engage and participate in the economy; employ; and respond to change.

Our services and initiatives played a key role in the Queensland Government’s objectives for the community as outlined in *Our Future State: Advancing Queensland’s Priorities*. This was achieved by supporting small businesses to start, grow and employ, and by providing individuals with training and employment opportunities aligned with Queensland’s employment, skilling and economic priorities.

Our values

Our values are the Queensland Public Service values, which guided our behaviours and the way we connected and delivered better outcomes for Queensland.

Our operating environment

The department administered various Acts of Parliament and complied with a number of statutory obligations, with progress reported throughout this report.

The department performed a broad range of operations, with a particular focus on supporting businesses especially to reopen and recover from COVID-19, and by providing individuals with training and employment opportunities aligned with Queensland’s employment, skilling and economic priorities.

The department’s operations also included a range of significant initiatives as part of the government’s commitments. The department’s income and controlled expenses are reported in this report in the financial summary and the financial statements.

The major environmental factors impacting the department involved financial and global economic volatility, particularly in the last half of the financial year in response to COVID-19.

The department proactively monitors and manages strategic risks, which may reduce our ability to:

- deliver on our purpose defined by the government
- develop and maintain relationships with key stakeholders and partnerships
- maintain reliable governance and strong controls to prevent fraud and corruption.



Figure 1: Queensland Public Service values.

The department also pursues opportunities for advancing our strategic objectives by:

- embracing opportunities as they arise, and in responding to COVID-19, that will better equip DESBT to meet the needs of Queenslanders
- leveraging our regional networks to tailor our services to meet customer needs.

Our legislation

Our functions and powers are derived from administering the Acts of Parliament in accordance with *Administrative Arrangements Order (No. 1) 2020*.

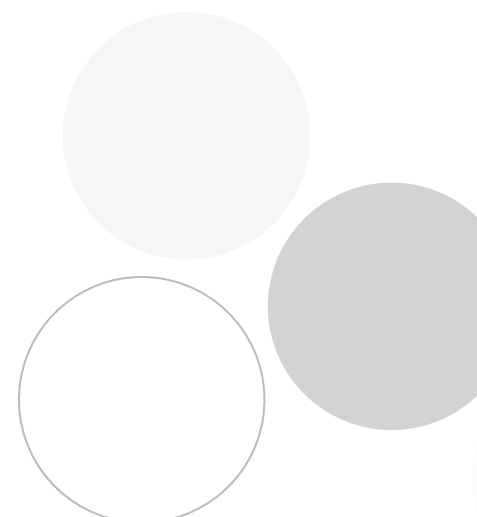
For information about the responsibilities and legislation administered by the department, please visit either:

- our website at desbt.qld.gov.au
- the Queensland Government Administrative Arrangements Orders webpage at qld.gov.au/about/how-government-works/government-responsibilities

Delivering government commitments

In 2019–20, the department delivered the following five government commitments and worked collaboratively with government and stakeholders to implement these commitments:

1. invested up to \$10 million for the training needs of the Redlands TAFE campus
2. established small business consultation panels that provide government departments with easier access to experienced small business owners and operators when developing policy and legislation
3. oversaw the work of the Better Regulation Taskforce to continue to create a balanced regulatory environment for small business
4. developed a strategy for vocational education and training (VET) in Queensland to ensure Queenslanders have the right skills to work in priority jobs across a wide range of industries
5. ensured female business owners are supported, encouraged and recognised to start and grow their own businesses by engaging and partnering with women across the state to better understand their needs, and to provide resources, events, networking, development and partnership opportunities to help women-led businesses start, grow and employ.



Our Strategic Plan 2019–23

Contributing to government objectives

The department contributed to two Queensland Government objectives for the community as set out in the *Our Future State: Advancing Queensland's Priorities*.



Create jobs in a strong economy by:

- optimising economic growth and job creation by influencing investment aligned to employment, small business and training.



Be a responsive government by:

- creating opportunities for increased workforce participation in Queensland
- supporting people to have the right information, skills, training and confidence to pursue economic opportunities
- being a responsive and diverse organisation that is reflective of the community
- using data to drive innovation and inclusion in our business practices.

Our Strategic Plan 2019–23

To view a full copy of the Strategic Plan 2019–23 go to our website: desbt.qld.gov.au/about-us/reports

Strategic Plan 2019-2023

Our vision
All Queenslanders have the skills and opportunities to participate and prosper in the economy.

Our purpose
To increase economic readiness, so Queenslanders can take full advantage of opportunities. Economic readiness means more Queenslanders are: ready to invest in themselves and their future; engaged and participate in the economy; employ, and respond to change.

We contribute to the Queensland Government's objectives
Our services and initiatives play a key role in the Queensland Government's objectives for Our Future State: Advancing Queensland's Priorities - Create jobs in a strong economy and be a responsive government.

<p>Our objective what are we trying to achieve?</p> <p>Empower Queenslanders to take full advantage of economic opportunities</p>	<p>Our strategies how are we going to do it?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 Make informed, evidence-based decisions with our stakeholders 1.2 Provide education and pathways to connect people to quality training and skills opportunities 1.3 Provide quality information to help Queenslanders make informed choices and identify economic opportunities 1.4 Offer flexible ways to prepare all Queenslanders for current and future work opportunities 1.5 Deliver programs that align workforce skills with the demands of industries in transition 1.6 Offer programs to support small businesses to prosper in the economy 	<p>Our performance how well we are successful</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased proportion of Queenslanders with higher qualifications • Customer satisfaction with policies and programs • Improved employment opportunities through participation in programs • Provision of data analytics to support business intelligence and decision making and inform best practice 	<p>How we will contribute to the Queensland Government's objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Optimising economic growth and job creation by influencing investment aligned to employment, small business and training. • Creating opportunities for increased workforce participation in Queensland
--	--	---	--

<p>Our objective what are we trying to achieve?</p> <p>Support the economic readiness of Queenslanders and businesses</p>	<p>Our strategies how are we going to do it?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1 Provide trusted advice that supports government decision making 2.2 Lead the development of whole-of-government strategic policies to support employment, growth, business skills development and social enterprises 2.3 Provide leadership at the national level on employment, small business and training opportunities for Queenslanders 	<p>Our performance how well we are successful</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal and external stakeholders are satisfied with our engagement and collaboration and with the strategic advice and support provided • Policies and the regulatory environment are fit for purpose and reflects the economic needs of Queenslanders 	<p>How we will contribute to the Queensland Government's objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting people to have the right information, skills, training and confidence to pursue economic opportunities.
<p>Our objective what are we trying to achieve?</p> <p>To be an agile and diverse organisation</p>	<p>Our strategies how are we going to do it?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3.1 Embed an agile culture for a responsive and resilient workforce 3.2 Build a culture of improvement in collaboration and customer service 3.3 Foster continuous improvement in governance and professional culture 3.4 Implement systems and processes that are fit for purpose and responsive to customer needs 3.5 Develop a diverse and inclusive workplace reflective of the communities we serve 	<p>Our performance how well we are successful</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved collaborative and innovative ways of working which align to the department's objectives • Improved key employee satisfaction indicators which indicate employees want to join, stay and stay • Increased focus on building our capability to meet current and future business needs • Increase diversity and gender equity within the department 	<p>How we will contribute to the Queensland Government's objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being a responsive and diverse organisation that is reflective of the community • Using data to drive innovation and inclusion in our business practices

Our strategic opportunities
The Government creates a variety of opportunities for DESBT and embracing these will allow us to meet the needs of our customers.

- Increasing the potential of emerging technologies to better connect with our customers
- Leveraging our regional presence will further enable us to deliver our services to meet our customers' needs
- Embedding a culture of excellence across our core services and functions to attract high quality business
- Creating our partnerships across industry, community and the public sector to enhance and better support our public and private sector strategic, related and valuable stakeholder relationships
- Leveraging data and intelligence to make better decisions and maximise services, benefits for Queenslanders and small businesses

Our strategic risks
Through active management, we will manage strategic risks by:

- Ensuring skills remain relevant in a changing economy
- Managing unforeseen economic impacts, a slowdown in economic growth may affect Queenslanders' ability to make Queenslanders for informed and practice
- Keeping pace with innovation and technology to ensure programs continue to meet the needs of our stakeholders
- Efficient and effective delivery of programs in an environment of finite resources
- Increasing knowledge and understanding of emerging economic, labor market, business and skills needs
- Providing comprehensive advice to government on employment, small business and training in a rapidly changing environment

Our values
We are committed to the Queensland Government values

Our Strategic Plan 2019–23 included the following objectives aligned to the government objectives for the community that focused our business direction and service delivery:

- empower Queenslanders to take full advantage of economic opportunities
- connect Queenslanders and businesses to skills, training and employment so they can prosper in the economy
- support the economic readiness of Queenslanders and businesses
- to be an agile and diverse organisation.

Our Strategic Plan performance

We assessed our progress and performance in achieving the department's objectives by comparing results against measures aligned to our *Strategic Plan 2019–23* indicators.

Objectives

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empower Queenslanders to take full advantage of economic opportunities. • Connect Queenslanders and businesses to skills, training and employment so they can prosper in the economy. 		
Indicator:	Increased proportion of Queenslanders with higher qualifications	
Measure:	* Proportion of Queenslanders with higher qualifications	
Indicator:	Customer satisfaction with policies and programs	
Measure:	* Overall customer satisfaction with employment programs	
Indicator:	Improved employment opportunities through participation in programs	
Measure:	* Percentage of businesses assisted by small business programs that report a projected increase in either employment, turnover or profitability	
Indicator:	Provision of data analytics to support business intelligence and decision making and inform best practice	
Measure:	* Percentage of new or existing businesses reporting increased capability (including digital) as a direct result of participation in small business grant programs	

Status legend: Actioned  Working towards target 





* Further information is available in the Service Delivery Statements performance tables in the next section.

Objective

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the economic readiness of Queenslanders and businesses. 		
Indicator:	Internal and external stakeholders are satisfied with our engagement and collaboration and with the strategic advice and support provided	
Measure:	Received positive feedback on the Small Business Recovery Hub	
Indicator:	Policies and the regulatory environment are fit for purpose and reflect the economic needs of Queensland	
Measure:	Initiatives delivered through the <i>Advancing Small Business Queensland Strategy 2016–20 (ASBQS)</i>	

Status legend: Actioned 

Objective 

• To be an agile and diverse organisation.		
Indicator:	Improved collaborative and innovative ways of working which align to the department’s objectives	
Measure:	Using technology platforms to connect with regional staff and staff working remotely	
Indicator:	Improved key employee satisfaction indicators which indicate employees want to join, strive and stay	
Measure:	Job sharing and flexible arrangements encouraged and in place across the department	
Indicator:	Increased focus on building our capability to meet current and future business needs	
Measure:	Maturing ICT governance through design authority and a change board	
Indicator:	Increased diversity and gender equity within the department	
Measure:	Percentage of employee respondents who agree or strongly agree with the survey questions: My workplace has an inclusive culture where diversity is valued and respected	

Status legend: Actioned 



Unite and recover from COVID-19

The Queensland Government acted quickly to assist business, industry and local government with resilience and recovery strategies to deal with and mitigate impacts of coronavirus.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the department quickly changed the way services and business-critical activities were developed and delivered to provide support and assistance for those in areas of need.

Investing in jobs and skills

Early in the response phase of COVID-19, the Queensland Government announced on 24 March 2020 an economic relief package to support jobs and businesses affected by the pandemic. This included up to \$500 million to assist workers who lost their job or income with retraining, job-matching and other help to transition into jobs in key industries.

Connecting Queenslanders with jobs and training through Jobs Finder

The Queensland Government launched the new Jobs Finder online portal on 16 April 2020 to connect Queenslanders who lost their jobs due to COVID-19 with new job opportunities.

A main priority was matching unemployed jobseekers with new jobs being created, especially those in areas of critical service delivery. As at 30 June 2020, there were more than 7800 registered jobseekers using the Jobs Finder portal.

The portal also offered jobseekers 15 free micro-credentials and online skills sets through TAFE in a range of high-demand industries such as food service, health and community care, transport and cybersecurity. This training provided people with the opportunity to upskill and increase capability to prepare for job opportunities after COVID-19. As at 30 June 2020, the free online training attracted 18,100 enrolments, with 9000 courses completed.

Investing in online small business training

Small businesses and their employees across Queensland were provided with free access to an online training hub, and to an extensive library of courses by GO1 that were tailored to small business needs. Funded as part of Queensland's Economic Recovery Plan, around 400 free training courses were initially accessible through the following two portals:

- the *Queensland Small Business Skills Hub* offered free courses in areas such as leading a successful business, digital skills and foundation business skills
- *Skills Focus Queensland* provided those Queenslanders whose jobs were impacted by COVID-19 with courses such as résumé writing, interview preparation, sales, finance and information technology.

Supporting small business recovery from COVID-19

Queensland's Economic Recovery Plan recognised that small businesses are vital to Queensland's economy, regional prosperity and job creation. Small businesses represent 97 per cent of all businesses and employ more than 970,000 people, or almost 45 per cent of the state's private sector workforce.

In responding to the outbreak of COVID-19, in early 2020 the department immediately reprioritised resources to assist impacted Queensland small businesses.

To reach out and assist as many small businesses as possible, several channels were used to enable connections more easily, including mentoring sessions, financial workshops, a telephone hotline, regular email updates, and an online information tool to identify available financial assistance.

Small Business Hotline helping small businesses navigate options

In March 2020, the department established a 24/7 Small Business Hotline to assist affected Queensland small businesses navigate available support and other options to keep apprentices and trainees employed. The Small Business Hotline was serviced by the department's Customer Centre and regional offices, as well as our partners at Smart Service Queensland.

Small business impact survey

In March 2020, the department developed an online survey for small business owners impacted by COVID-19 to assist in prioritising enquiries and link affected businesses with relevant support. The department provided assistance through a range of support services, including the Small Business Hotline, the Business Queensland (BQ) website and the Mentoring for Growth program. In addition, DESBT regional officers provided direct outreach to impacted businesses as required, including providing linkages to all relevant Queensland and Australian government services.

COVID-19 Business Queensland and the Business Assistance Finder helping connect small businesses

Small businesses rapidly turned to the BQ website to prepare themselves for the COVID-19 pandemic. To improve support and content access, DESBT updated the BQ website in March 2020 focusing on COVID-19. The website achieved its largest number of views in 2019–20, with more than 6.3 million total views across the BQ website, including a 44 per cent increase in Queensland visitors.

Given the range of assistance options available to businesses of differing sizes, the department implemented the COVID-19 Business Assistance Finder on the BQ website to assist businesses identify in one place all of the financial assistance available and other types of relief options.

The initiative included a new tool to help businesses identify, based on their size of operations, the support available from the Queensland and Australian governments, plus Queensland local councils.

As at 30 June 2020, there were more than 70,000 online visits made to the COVID-19 Business Assistance Finder.

Paying businesses sooner

A priority action to assist small businesses experiencing disrupted cashflow was implementing the Queensland Government *On-Time Payment Policy* to ensure businesses that participated in government procurement were paid sooner by improving government payment practices and timeframes.

With the escalation of COVID-19, the Queensland Government fast-tracked payment times to support local businesses as a matter of urgency. This was critical to assist with recovery. The department also undertook preparatory work to put in place the necessary mechanisms to facilitate businesses to be paid within 20 days from 1 July 2020.

Supporting local small business

The #SupportSmall campaign saw the Queensland Government collaborate with the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland to #SupportSmall and encourage all Queenslanders to shop locally.

Small Business Taskforce

The Queensland Government established the Small Business Taskforce in April 2020 to work with food delivery providers and other industry stakeholders to jointly support restaurants and cafés through the COVID-19 pandemic. The Taskforce met three times in April and May 2020. DESBT's work on the Taskforce contributed to positive outcomes, including the publication of takeaway and delivery advice for food and beverage businesses on the BQ website, as well as information on hiring a contractor, consultant or freelancer, and support available for contractors, consultants and freelancers (including workplace rights and protections).

Connecting businesses and workers to critical information

With the evolving crisis, it was more important than ever to stay informed of the latest support available. The department provided updates to existing small business customers and their support networks, including local chambers, councils and industry associations, through regular communications outlining support for business, industry and workers from Queensland and Australian government agencies.

Small Business COVID-19 Adaption Grants

To support Queensland small businesses, the first round of Small Business COVID-19 Adaption Grants were announced on 19 May 2020 as part of *Queensland's Economic Recovery Plan*.

The \$100 million Small Business COVID-19 Adaptation Grants package comprised \$96 million in small business grants of up to \$10,000 each, and \$4 million in new training for businesses to counter the impact of COVID-19.

The grants were developed to assist those small businesses forced into hibernation to restructure or to significantly change their business operations or move online. The grants were used to help pay for financial, legal or other professional advice, marketing and communications activities, and digital equipment or technology strategy development to help businesses move online.

As part of *Queensland's Economic Recovery Plan*, a further \$100 million was made available for round two of Small Business COVID-19 Adaption Grants, for applications from 1 July 2020.

Backing more local Queensland businesses

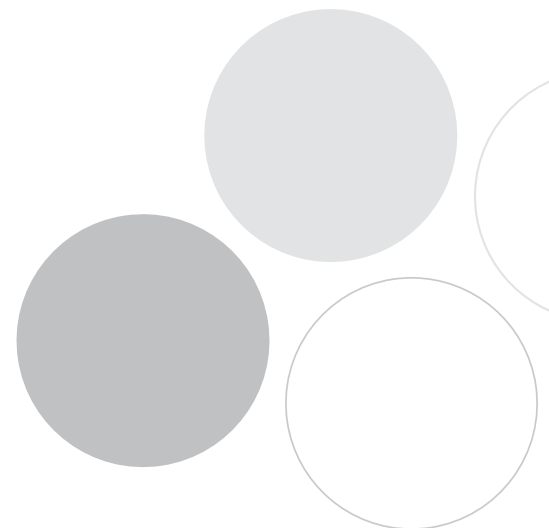
Critical to COVID-19 economic recovery, the government announced a minimum target of 25 per cent of all state government purchases to be from Queensland small and medium sized businesses, to be introduced from 1 July 2020 to support the growth of Queensland businesses, industries and jobs. The target is planned to be extended in future years.

Queensland Small Business Commissioner helping small businesses with leases

To assist small businesses impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, the government announced in May 2020 that Maree Adshead was the new temporary Queensland Small Business Commissioner, giving small businesses a single point of contact for leasing disputes during recovery from the impact of COVID-19. The new role replaced the part-time role of the Queensland Small Business Champion.

The department provided administrative support for the Queensland Small Business Commissioner through the Office of the Queensland Small Business Commissioner. Responsibilities of the Queensland Small Business Commissioner include providing information and advocacy support to small businesses, and informal resolution and mediation of COVID-19 affected small business retail leasing disputes under the *COVID-19 Emergency Response Act 2020*. The Commissioner also assisted with Queensland's implementation of the *National Cabinet Mandatory Code of Conduct – SME Commercial Leasing Principles during COVID-19*.

As at 30 June 2020, the Queensland Small Business Commissioner had received 872 requests for information, advocacy or dispute assistance from small business owners and their landlords located across Queensland.



Our service performance

Our service area structure for 2019–20 comprised three areas. Performance for each service area is addressed in the following sections and includes performance against the *Strategic Plan 2019–23* strategies:

- Employment
- Small Business
- Training and Skills.

Employment

Our objective

To increase Queenslanders' participation in the labour market.

What we do

This service area focuses on increasing employment opportunities for Queenslanders, in particular, disadvantaged cohorts. This area undertakes both policy and strategic engagement activities, as well as the delivery of key government employment programs. The service area also has responsibility for business and skilled migration policy, in consultation with Business and Skilled Migration Queensland.

Our achievement highlights 2019–20

The department continued to deliver a range of employment programs for disadvantaged cohorts such as young people, women, mature-aged people, Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples, culturally and linguistically diverse people and people with disabilities.

Supporting jobseekers with Back to Work

The Back to Work program is designed to give businesses the confidence to employ Queenslanders who have experienced a period of unemployment. The program includes support payments to eligible employers who hired eligible unemployed jobseekers.

Back to Work offered support for jobseekers who needed or wanted to update their skills to gain, change or retain employment.

The program was delivered throughout regional Queensland and in areas of South East Queensland (SEQ) experiencing significant labour market challenges.

Back to Work program snapshot

As at 30 June 2020

22,694

employees supported through Back to Work

An increase of 3139 (or approximately 16%) on 2018–19

10,744

employers supported through Back to Work

An increase of 1317 (or approximately 14%) on 2018–19

5872

apprentices and trainees supported through Back to Work

An increase of 1040 (or approximately 22%) on 2018–19

Supporting transition of Minjerribah workers

The department provided programs to help Queensland employees transition to alternative career pathways.

In 2019–20, the department provided assistance to workers impacted by the cessation of sand mining on Minjerribah through the North Stradbroke Island Workers Assistance Scheme. This included access to tailored support and to finding alternative employment and training opportunities. Since commencement, assistance has been provided to 166 workers under the scheme.

Delivering the Creating Your Future Job program



The Creating Your Future Job program aims to support an employment pathway for Queensland jobseekers through providing targeted training and mentoring to enable them to create their future job through self-employment. The Creating Your Future Job program has been delivered through projects in Logan, Townsville and Wide Bay.

Supporting Queensland Business and Skilled Migration program

In partnership with Business and Skilled Migration Queensland, the department supports delivery of Queensland’s skilled and business migration programs by developing the skilled occupation lists that support state nomination, and participating in a range of national forums.

Employment service area – Our 2019–20 performance

The following are service standard measures in the department’s 2019–20 *Service Delivery Statements*, which are used to assess overall performance of the Employment service area.

Employment	2019–20 Target/estimate	2019–20 Actual	Status
<p>Effectiveness measure</p> <p>Overall customer satisfaction with employment programs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This service standard measures overall client satisfaction with employment programs considering quality, timeliness, staff knowledge, access and outcome. It is derived from a survey of employers who have accessed the Back to Work program. The increase between the 2019–20 actual result and the target estimate was due to the established positive reputation of the Back to Work program and its strong customer support focus to ensure local support is provided to applicants in every region. 	90%	92.1%	
<p>Efficiency measure</p> <p>Average cost per hour of advice and support output</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This service standard measures the efficiency of providing employment services. The measure has been calculated using the annual Employment Policy budget, including a corporate services allocation divided by annual full-time equivalent work hours. 	\$106.56	\$106.56	

Status legend: Actioned 

Employment service area – Our future directions

In 2020–21, we are committed to continuing to deliver government priorities that will support jobs for Queenslanders and assist impacted workers and employers with recovery from COVID-19.

We will deliver programs to get people back to work and support businesses to employ and assist jobseekers.

Delivering employment policies and programs to support Queenslanders

- Continuing the Back to Work program designed to give Queensland employers the confidence to hire eligible unemployed jobseekers, including a new apprentice and trainee boost of up to \$20,000.
- Continuing to support workers to upskill, reskill and transition to new employment opportunities due to cessation of sand mining on Minjerribah through the North Stradbroke Island Workers Assistance Scheme.
- Delivering the Creating Your Future Job program to provide support, specialist business advice and mentoring to Queenslanders who want to create their own future job.
- Providing ongoing policy oversight to the state-nominated Business and Skilled Migration program in partnership with Business and Skilled Migration Queensland.

Small Business

Our objective

To ensure small businesses can seamlessly interact with government and are supported to start, grow and employ.

What we do

This service area focuses on products and services that are delivered to small businesses to better enable them to start, grow and employ, and make it easier to interact with government, including:

- enhancing the capacity of businesses to engage with markets, attract investors, navigate the business/regulatory environment and access tools, resources and expertise to grow and succeed
- supporting the creation of new businesses, helping existing businesses to work smarter and be more resilient, and assisting businesses with high-growth aspirations to grow and employ through the delivery of targeted grants programs
- engaging other business-focused government agencies to facilitate the delivery of online services for small business via the BQ website at business.qld.gov.au
- proactively employing strategies to streamline regulation to make it easier to do business
- assisting women, Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples to start and grow businesses.

Our achievement highlights 2019–20

Rebuilding stronger from severe weather events

During 2019–20, Queenslanders experienced the extremes of severe weather events from drought, to monsoon flooding and bushfires.

In north Queensland and far north Queensland, in 2019–20 the department assisted more than 290 businesses with more than \$2.83 million in Small Business Disaster Assistance Recovery Grants to repair flood damage and build resilience, so they are better prepared to face the next disaster.

The program was jointly funded by the Australian and Queensland governments through the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements, in response to the monsoon event in late January 2019.

To guide implementation of the program, the Small Business Recovery Advisory Council was established in September 2019, with membership from Townsville, north-west Queensland and state organisations with a range of expertise on the priorities for affected communities and businesses.

This disaster assistance was provided to several local government areas and included funding to assist with business planning, retraining, mentoring and advisory services, as well as new software and new equipment.

Valuable support and mentoring were also delivered by the department at the Small Business Recovery Centre in Townsville.

In November 2019, joint State and Federal Category B assistance was activated for the Scenic Rim and Southern Downs in response to the bushfires in these regions.

Helping businesses get back on track

From October to early December 2019, the department teamed up with local, state and federal agencies and local industry bodies to visit north-west Queensland communities hardest hit by the monsoon trough in early 2019.

Through the Back on Track roadshow, the department delivered tailored support to small businesses for the region's ongoing recovery and resilience.

The Back on Track roadshow provided a hub for information sharing, networking and community events, and included financial assistance information on loans and grants, disaster preparedness, free mentoring offered as part of the Mentoring for Growth program, digital solutions and mental health services for small businesses.

Small business owners and operators were able to get advice and information on support services available to help boost recovery. The department supported 282 small business owners through 455 one-on-one consultations, including 61 mentoring

sessions, 67 digital marketing consultant reviews and 131 employer assistance consultations.

A total of 17 towns and regional centres were visited from Mount Isa to Townsville, Julia Creek, Burketown and more. Highlights from the Back on Track survey showed:

- the top three required services identified by small businesses included financial and government assistance, business mentoring support and viability or recovery
- 78 per cent of respondents were aware of the Small Business Recovery Centre
- 65 per cent of small businesses owners who responded had relevant disaster and resilience plans in place or had commenced the development of plans.

Advancing Small Business Queensland Strategy 2016–20 grants

The department continued to deliver a suite of small business grant programs to help position Queensland small businesses to start, grow and employ.

In 2019–20, DESBT provided approximately \$4 million in grants to support more than 740 Queensland small businesses through the following grant programs:

- Small Business Entrepreneur Grants helped more than 230 new small businesses to engage a consultant, advisor or business coach for up to three months to help establish or develop the business
- Small Business Digital Grants helped more than 440 small businesses to access digital technologies and services
- Business Growth Fund helped 18 small businesses to purchase and implement specialised equipment or services to enable them to maximise opportunities
- Small Business Artisan Producer Grants provided assistance to artisan producers of gourmet food (including non-alcoholic beverages) to help them grow their businesses, access new market opportunities and enhance

their gourmet food expertise. In 2019–20, under the first round, 50 artisan producers were successful in securing funding to engage business consultants, mentors or digital experts to assist them.

In 2019–20, the Advancing Indigenous Business initiative supported 12 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander small business support programs across Queensland. More than 170 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander small businesses participated in these programs ranging from full TAFE Queensland qualifications to business planning and workforce development.

Through the Advancing Women in Business initiative, in 2019–20 DESBT implemented 10 industry partnership programs, delivering capacity-building events, mentoring sessions and education. More than 40 events, workshops and webinars were supported under this initiative in 2019–20.

Consulting businesses and industries in coordinating policy development

The department plays a key role in coordinating stakeholder consultation across Queensland's small business industries and collaborating with other levels of government to simplify policy processes and hiring of apprentices and trainees.

Consulting on the Queensland Small Business Strategy

The future of small business growth and job creation was a policy focus during 2019–20.

The department coordinated feedback from small businesses and stakeholders on a public discussion paper in November and December 2019, with approximately 160 submissions received from a range of stakeholders, including small businesses, social enterprises, industry and business organisations and federal and local government bodies, which helped inform the policy direction for small business.

The feedback and insights supported the development of programs and initiatives to help small businesses respond to and recover from COVID-19.

Guide to reduce capital works impacts on small businesses

In September 2019, the department released the guide *Works with Small Business – Good practice guidance for working with small businesses to minimise business disruption and support jobs when undertaking capital works projects*. The guide also assisted government agencies to be more ‘small business aware’ when planning construction projects and engaging the community.

The department developed the guide in consultation with government agencies and the Queensland Small Business Advisory Council.

Supporting Artisan Producers Plan

In July 2019, the *Supporting Artisan Producers Plan* was released setting out a range of actions to support increased investment, productivity, competitiveness and innovation in the artisan producer sector. The plan included 16 actions being delivered by agencies across the Queensland Government to support artisan producers.

Business Queensland website making it easier to access online services

As at 30 June 2020, 2224 services were available on the BQ website for small businesses and industry, including COVID-19 and disaster recovery information.

Given the importance of accessing accurate information during times of uncertainty, the BQ website provided a single touchpoint for many thousands of small businesses. As at 30 June 2020, more than 740,000 views were made to the website homepage.

The department provided up-to-date coronavirus information and assistance for business and industry from the Queensland and Australian governments on the dedicated BQ website.

Mentoring for Growth

The department continued to deliver the Mentoring for Growth program, providing 633 unique small businesses with access to experienced mentors in 2019–20. Mentors discussed a range of matters from new business ideas, expanding an existing business to working through business challenges.

The Mentoring for Growth program continued to be offered during COVID-19, with more than 210 sessions delivered virtually to businesses across the state.

Strengthening small business capability through targeted grants

Of the department’s three grants programs in 2019–20 (Entrepreneurs, Digital and Business Growth Fund):

- 27 per cent of grants were allocated to businesses in Queensland regional areas
- 43 per cent of businesses receiving a grant were owned or operated by women
- 4 per cent of businesses were Indigenous businesses.

Helping hand for Queensland social entrepreneurs

In September 2019, the *Queensland Social Enterprise Strategy* was released by the Queensland Government to support the growing social enterprise sector while creating more jobs for disadvantaged Queenslanders.

Through the strategy, we invested in the new Social Enterprise Grants program to provide valuable support during the start-up phase of a social enterprise.

These grants provided funding from \$5000 up to \$50,000 for a range of projects, including valuable training, mentoring, business and strategic planning, marketing, branding or digital strategy development, website upgrades or technology for e-commerce. In 2019–20, 26 Social Enterprise Grants were awarded.

In addition, the \$1 million strategy supported:

- implementation of a digital platform to deliver networking and mentoring, and to share resources and develop capacity across the sector, particularly in regional areas and Indigenous communities
- a strategic partnership to support the development of social enterprises to provide employment opportunities for Queenslanders experiencing disadvantage

- bursaries to support attendance at the 2019 Social Enterprise World Forum
- coordinated support, skills development and resources for Queensland’s social enterprise sector to recover from COVID-19, with a focus on regional communities.

Advocating for small business

The department supported the Queensland Small Business Advisory Council, which focuses on significant small business issues related to growth, sustainability and employment. The Council provided advice and solutions to its Chair, the Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development, Shannon Fentiman.

During 2019–20, the department assisted the Queensland Small Business Advisory Council to:

- address small business resilience in the face of drought and bushfires and other natural disasters, meeting in Townsville in November 2019 and Stanthorpe in March 2020
- provide input to the Works for Small Business guidelines designed to assist small business to minimise the impacts from capital work programs
- provide feedback on the Small Business Friendly Council and Small Business Procurement initiatives

- contribute to planning for the recovery of the small business sector post-COVID-19.

The Council’s subcommittee, the Better Regulation Taskforce, undertook:

- an artisanal producers regulation review to better understand the impact of the regulatory system on artisan food and non-alcoholic beverage producers
- a small business transfer duty regulatory review, with a focus on transfer duty relief for restructures undertaken by small businesses.

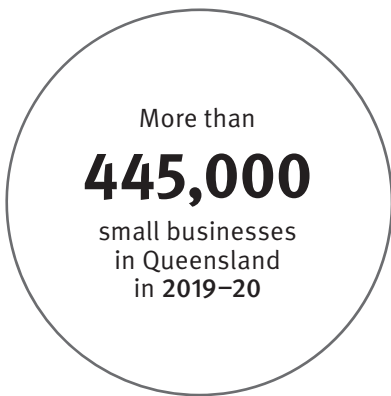
The department supported the Queensland Small Business Champion to engage with industry and stakeholders, and to represent Queensland at the national level.

The Queensland Small Business Champion assisted small businesses to manage business disruption from government infrastructure works and to improve access to market for artisan food and beverage producers.

In May 2020, the part-time role of the Queensland Small Business Champion was replaced with a temporary Queensland Small Business Commissioner.



Queensland small business snapshot



During 2019–20



Small Business service area – Our 2019–20 performance

The following are service standard measures in the department's 2019–20 Service Delivery Statements, which are used to assess overall performance of the Small Business service area.

Small Business	2019–20 Target/estimate	2019–20 Actual	Status
<p>Effectiveness measures</p> <p>Percentage of new or existing businesses reporting increased capability (including digital) as a direct result of participation in small business grant programs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This service standard measures the effectiveness of Small Business grant programs outlined in the ASBQS to increase the capability of small business in using digital technologies and implement innovative solutions to help their business grow. • Capability is defined as having increased confidence or capability in business operational processes and systems, business management or corporate governance, human resources, understanding financial statements and forecasting, general business related skills or knowledge, strategic or business planning, financing or investment, marketing or promotion, digital technologies or implementation, product development or innovation and/or entering new markets or increasing market share. 	98%	98.9%	
<p>Percentage of businesses assisted by small business programs that report a projected increase in either employment, turnover or profitability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small businesses are surveyed either on completion of their project or six months after participating in a program. The survey measures the Mentoring for Growth panel participants and selected ASBQS grants program participants (Small Business Digital Grants, Small Business Entrepreneur Grants, Small Business Growth Fund). • As part of the survey, small businesses are asked to determine if they forecast a projected increase in employment, turnover or profitability as a result of undertaking the program. • The variance between the 2019–20 target/estimate and the 2019–20 actual result can be attributed to the impact of COVID-19. 	98%	95.9%	

Small Business	2019–20 Target/ estimate	2019–20 Actual	Status
<p>Customer Effort Score: Average score out of 5 by customers for how easy it is to use the Business Queensland (BQ) website</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This service standard measures the effectiveness of the BQ website by rating how easy it is for customers to interact with government through the website. • The measure is from an online survey of customers using the BQ website who are asked how easy it is for them to achieve their purpose. It is rated on a scale from 1, being very difficult, to 5, being very easy. 	3.5	3.44	
<p>Efficiency measure</p> <p>Average cost to DESBT to provide online services per customer visit to Business Queensland</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This service standard measures the average cost to the department to provide online services for each customer visit. A customer visit is defined by using a customer session, which is a group of interactions undertaken on a website. These interactions may include viewing a number of different webpages, completing an online application form or making a payment. • The cost to the department is based on the cost of the business area managing the services, including the cost of technical infrastructure required to support the website. • The decrease between the 2019–20 actual result and the target estimate was due to continued strong business customer use, particularly due to COVID-19. This resulted in a significant increase in customer visits to the website at the same time as efficiencies which resulted in lower expenditure than in previous years. 	\$0.27	\$0.19	

Status legend: Actioned  Working towards target 

Small Business service area – Our future directions

In 2020–21, we are committed to continuing to deliver government priorities that will assist small businesses and those impacted in recovering from COVID-19.

We will help small businesses to start, reopen, grow and employ through grants and support programs.

Delivering a recovery plan for small business

- Implementing *Queensland's Economic Recovery Plan* through the delivery of a package of programs to support small business recovery from COVID-19.

Advocating for Queensland small businesses

- Continuing to support the Queensland Small Business Commissioner to deliver an advocacy role, dispute triage and referral activities for Queensland small businesses.
- Continuing to provide local advice and recommendations through the Small Business Recovery and Resilience Advisory Council, a community-led body, helping north and far north Queensland businesses as part of the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangement Extraordinary Assistance package.

Supporting small businesses and strengthening capability

- Continuing to support the growth of small businesses in Queensland, to facilitate increased investment, productivity, competitiveness and innovation in the sector.

Strengthening capability through targeted grants

- Continuing programs supporting the start-up and growth of Indigenous and culturally and linguistically diverse small businesses, and businesses owned and operated by women.

Implementing Queensland Small Business Procurement commitment

- Supporting small business participation in government procurement and leading the implementation of the Queensland Government *On-Time Payment Policy* to improve government payment practices and timeframes.
- Implementing the small and medium enterprise (SMEs) procurement target, which requires Queensland government agencies to collectively source 25 per cent of procurement by value from Queensland SMEs from 1 July 2020, increasing to 30 per cent by 30 June 2022.

Making it easier for small businesses online

- Continuing to enhance engagement with small businesses and making it easier to find information, advice and support.
- Creating an online platform that makes discovery of VET consumer information more accessible and simplifies the process for businesses to hire an apprentice or trainee.

Facilitating stakeholder consultation

- Continuing to work directly with our stakeholders, hearing directly from them through our roundtables, events and partnerships.

Training and Skills

Our objective

To skill Queenslanders for jobs and secure employment outcomes.

What we do

Improving the skills profile of Queensland through delivery of a diverse and inclusive VET programs that delivers on industry skills demands of today and the future, and supports publicly funded training providers to deliver high-quality training.

Our achievement highlights 2019–20

Skilling our future through stronger partnerships

In August 2019, the Queensland Government published the *Queensland Government: Skills for Queensland – Great training for quality jobs* strategy targeting critical skills needs, new skills needed for existing jobs, emerging opportunities brought about by technology advances, and regional and state-wide priorities.

In implementing the strategy, the department developed strong partnerships between government, industry and other skills sector stakeholders engaged in creating an enduring skilling and learning culture, which will support individuals throughout their working lives and lead to improved job outcomes.

In 2019–20, the Queensland Government, through the department, invested \$978 million to support skills and training to meet immediate demands and emerging needs so that Queenslanders are skilled for the jobs of today and the future.

Targeted initiatives under the *Queensland Government: Skills for Queensland – Great training for quality jobs* strategy are shown in the diagram.

Future skills through an adaptive system

The following initiatives delivered focused training to students and workers to improve specific skills throughout their careers to address growing business needs for higher level skills and more innovative pathways to maximise job opportunities.

In 2019–20, the department implemented:

- micro-credentialing pilots worth \$5.5 million over three years (2019–22) by supporting employers and their workers to gain the skills sets needed to adapt to workplace changes, including new technologies. These pilots are delivered through three targeted streams: public providers, strategic partnerships and market-led proposals. As at 30 June 2020, all funding had been committed for 17 micro-credentialing pilots
- higher level apprenticeship pilot worth \$300,000 over two years (2019–21) involving training apprentices in specialty and emerging technical and trade fields. As at 30 June 2020, approximately \$150,000 had been invested in the pilot
- additional funding of \$5 million invested in higher level skills pathways to help maximise job creation and employment opportunities across the Queensland economy. Under the Higher Level Skills program, additional funding was directed to support increased student demand in priority qualifications in the health, community services, tourism, construction and arts sectors.

Jobs for regional Queensland

Through improved regional coordination across government and industry, the department worked with employers, particularly small businesses, to make better connections between local employers, jobseekers and government initiatives.

During 2019–20, six new regional jobs committees were established in Townsville, Mackay, Fraser Coast, Springfield, Toowoomba and Redlands. These committees brought together local industry groups, training providers, local and major employers, and councils to help plan local training and address workforce development issues. The regional jobs committees addressed local issues ranging from capturing data and local impacts of COVID-19 to identifying potential opportunities to requirements for reskilling and future skills gaps due to the changing nature of work.

Some achievements included broad stakeholder engagement such as sharing of business and workforce intelligence/data to identify the unique challenges regarding the recovery from COVID-19.

The department coordinated the delivery of place-based responses to address local stakeholder skilling and jobs needs. Regional planning discussions highlighted further opportunities and collaboration efforts across agencies by focusing on support for workforce planning, development and investment locally, and by industry.

During 2019–20, the *Regional Skills Adjustment Strategy* was extended to a \$15 million three-year initiative (2017–20) through a further \$5 million for TAFE Queensland to continue to support worker transitions and skills needs in emerging industries.

Under the *Regional Skills Investment Strategy* comprising \$9 million funded over four years (2017–21), the department funded 17 projects across Queensland. These projects encourage employer collaboration on local workforce skills needs and identify region-specific training solutions that support and encourage economic growth. During 2019–20, the department invested approximately \$2.3 million in regional communities under the *Regional Skills Investment Strategy*.



Figure 2: A diagram summary of the *Skills for Queensland – Great training for quality jobs* strategy.

Quality

During 2019–20, the department implemented the Skills Assure initiative, in preparation for commencement from 1 July 2020, to make it easier to recognise providers that offer training subsidised by the Queensland Government.

The department worked with 460 registered training organisations operating as pre-qualified suppliers in 2019–20 to be high-quality, compliant training providers focused on skilling students to obtain employment. These are supported by industry, including supporting organisations seeking approval to deliver government-subsidised training to interpret program policies and understand quality standards.

Better pathways

During 2019–20, the department:

- expanded the Gateway to Industry Schools program enabling school students to train in emerging and innovative industries. As at 30 June 2020, approximately \$2 million was invested in the Gateway to Industry Schools program, which delivered services directly to more than 260 schools across Queensland
- implemented the Industry Engagement Framework by working and consulting with industry to target critical skills needs, new skills needed for existing jobs, emerging opportunities brought about by technology advances, and regional and state-wide priorities
- commenced implementing a new Link and Launch pilot targeting young people aged 15 to 24 years. As at 30 June 2020, approximately \$175,000 was invested by the department in a pilot to provide school and community-based activities to assist 400 Indigenous secondary school students aged 15 to 17 years to navigate skills and employment pathways to increase participation and prevent long-term disengagement.

Inclusivity and the public provider

During 2019–20, the department invested more than \$100 million in upgrades and new training assets to revitalise TAFE campuses across Queensland to ensure fit-for-purpose assets provide the best possible learning environment. A new Rural Centre of Excellence at Toowoomba's TAFE Queensland campus was opened in February 2020. The new facility delivers high-quality training to the state's future rural industry workforce. The new \$26 million extension building was completed at Pimlico TAFE and upgrades to training facilities for nursing were completed at Loganlea, Caboolture and Redcliffe.

During 2019–20, the department continued to support public providers in the delivery of training services throughout Queensland by providing a State Contribution Grant. As at 30 June 2020, there were four Queensland public training providers supported by the department with a total of \$195.6 million in funding during 2019–20.

Industry and small business

During 2019–20, the department:

- refreshed industry engagement approaches to improve information sharing and program design to help industry contribute to government priority setting, target regional skills priorities and foster a better understanding of the opportunities
- supported a newly established Ministerial Skills Roundtable comprising a broad membership of industry skills sector stakeholders to ensure government galvanises the voice of industry that provides direct input to prioritising skills investment. The Ministerial Skills Roundtable met once with a focus on workforce development and future industry skills needs.

Skilling our youth

Integral in the *Queensland Government: Skills for Queensland – Great training for quality jobs* strategy in laying pathways to employment was the focus on skilling our youth.

Free apprenticeships and traineeships for those under 21

From 1 July 2019, young people up to 21 years were provided with the opportunity to undertake one of 139 apprenticeships and traineeships across 17 industries and have their training paid for by the Queensland Government.

As at 30 June 2020, 15,810 young Queenslanders were supported to learn lifelong skills and build careers in industries with jobs of the future, with approximately \$48.6 million in training subsidies paid to training providers.

Free tafe for Year 12 graduates

To support Year 12 graduates into work, the Queensland Government covered the full cost of training for eligible graduates in high-priority qualifications with an approved training provider. As at 30 June 2020, 1682 Year 12 graduates were supported during 2019–20, with approximately \$3.6 million in training subsidies paid to training providers.

Skilling our workforce

Skilling Queenslanders for Work

The department administered the Queensland Government's Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative (SQW) through seven programs, with an investment of \$420 million over six years (2015–21) to support up to 54,000 Queenslanders into work. During 2019–20, the department invested approximately \$80 million in SQW supporting more than 10,000 disadvantaged Queenslanders to get into work.

Upskilling through Skills Boost

In October 2019, the Queensland Government announced a \$4 million Skills Boost to help deliver skilled workers where they are needed across the state. Skills Boost provided a training subsidy for people who wanted to update their skills to go further in their current job or pursue a different career, even if they already held a VET qualification.

More than 10 certificate and diploma level courses were made available for each region, open to people of all ages who could benefit from the subsidy in key qualifications, instead of having to pay the full training fees themselves.

Recognising excellence

Queensland's best apprentices, trainees, students, employers, and training and community organisations were recognised at the 58th Queensland Training Awards in September 2019.

These awards celebrated individuals and organisations that strive for and achieve success, best practice and innovation in VET.

To view the award winners, visit our website at desbt.qld.gov.au/training/qta

SQW snapshot

During 2019–20

Assisted
more than
10,000
disadvantaged
Queenslanders

Approved
343 community-based
projects worth nearly
\$70 million
to provide skills development,
nationally recognised training
and job opportunities for more
than 10,000 people

Created
67
full-time traineeship
opportunities and 12 months of
employment with community-
based organisations through a
\$1.34 million investment





Invested
\$6 million
for 400 full-time traineeship
opportunities and 12 months of
employment with 61 local councils






Paid
**\$3.26
million**
to private sector employers to
employ former SQW participants
as trainees or apprentices


From 2015 to
30 June 2020, the
SQW program
has assisted
51,542
Queenslanders,
with 30,899
securing a job

Training and Skills service area – Our 2019–20 performance

The following are service standard measures in the department's 2019–20 *Service Delivery Statements*, which are used to assess overall performance of the Training and Skills service area.

Training and Skills	2019–20 Target/estimate	2019–20 Actual	Status
<p>Effectiveness measures</p> <p>Proportion of all attempted competencies successfully completed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This service standard is calculated by dividing the number of successfully completed competencies by the total number of competencies attempted. 	93%	93.8%	
<p>Proportion of Queenslanders with higher qualifications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics <i>Survey of Education and Work</i>, Australia, May 2018 data cube: Table 25 Highest non-school qualification: Certificate III level or above, Persons aged 20–64 years – 2004 to 2018. This measure applies to the subset who are aged 25 to 64. While the department actively influences this service standard (including through the Higher Level Skills program and providing funding for other higher level qualifications based on industry advice), it is affected by a range of factors including the economy, higher education providers, the Australian Government and the VET sector. 	62%	62.8%	
<p>Proportion of VET graduates in employment or further study</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sourced from the annual National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) Student Outcomes Survey. The last survey was conducted in 2019 and relates to students who graduated in 2018. While the department actively influences this service standard (including through the Higher Level Skills program and providing funding for other higher level qualifications based on industry advice), it is affected by a range of factors including the economy, higher education providers, the Australian Government and the VET sector. The decrease between the 2019–20 actual result and the target estimate was reflective of a national trend where performance in this measure has been stable for many years. 	87%	82.6%	
<p>Number of completions: apprenticeships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The decrease between the 2019–20 actual result and the target estimate was consistent with national results impacted by COVID-19 global economic conditions impacting on employers. 	11,500	8800	

Training and Skills	2019–20 Target/ estimate	2019–20 Actual	Status
<p>Number of completions: traineeships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traineeships have been supplemented through the Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative, which is a \$420 million commitment over six years from 2015–16 until 2020–21 and incorporates traineeship programs. • The decrease between the 2019–20 actual result and the target estimate was due to COVID-19 economic conditions impacting on employers. 	13,500	12,700	
<p>Number of completions: school-based apprenticeships and traineeships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The decrease between the 2019–20 actual result and the target estimate was due to negative economic conditions in the retail, tourism and hospitality sectors which have traditionally been significant employers of trainees. 	5000	3900	
<p>Proportion of graduates satisfied with the overall quality of their training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The data is taken from the most recent NCVET Student Outcome Survey. The 2019 result for Queensland was 0.6 per cent higher than the 2018 result. Satisfaction rates in 2019 for Queensland TAFE and other government providers was higher at 89.1 per cent. 	89%	88.1%	
<p>Proportion of employers satisfied with graduates of: nationally accredited training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employer satisfaction estimates are obtained from the biennial national survey Employers' Use and Views of the VET System, which was last conducted by NCVET in 2019. • The decrease between the 2019–20 actual result and the target estimate was reflective of a national trend where all eight jurisdictions saw a decrease between 2017 and 2019. Queensland had the third highest satisfaction rate of all jurisdictions. 	85%	78.2%	
<p>Proportion of employers satisfied with graduates of: apprenticeships and traineeships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employer satisfaction estimates are obtained from the biennial national survey Employers' Use and Views of the VET System, which was last conducted by NCVET in 2019. • The decrease between the 2019–20 actual result and the target estimate was reflective of difficult economic conditions negatively impacting on the market to provide stable employment opportunities, which are key to the apprenticeship and traineeship market. 	83%	77.6%	

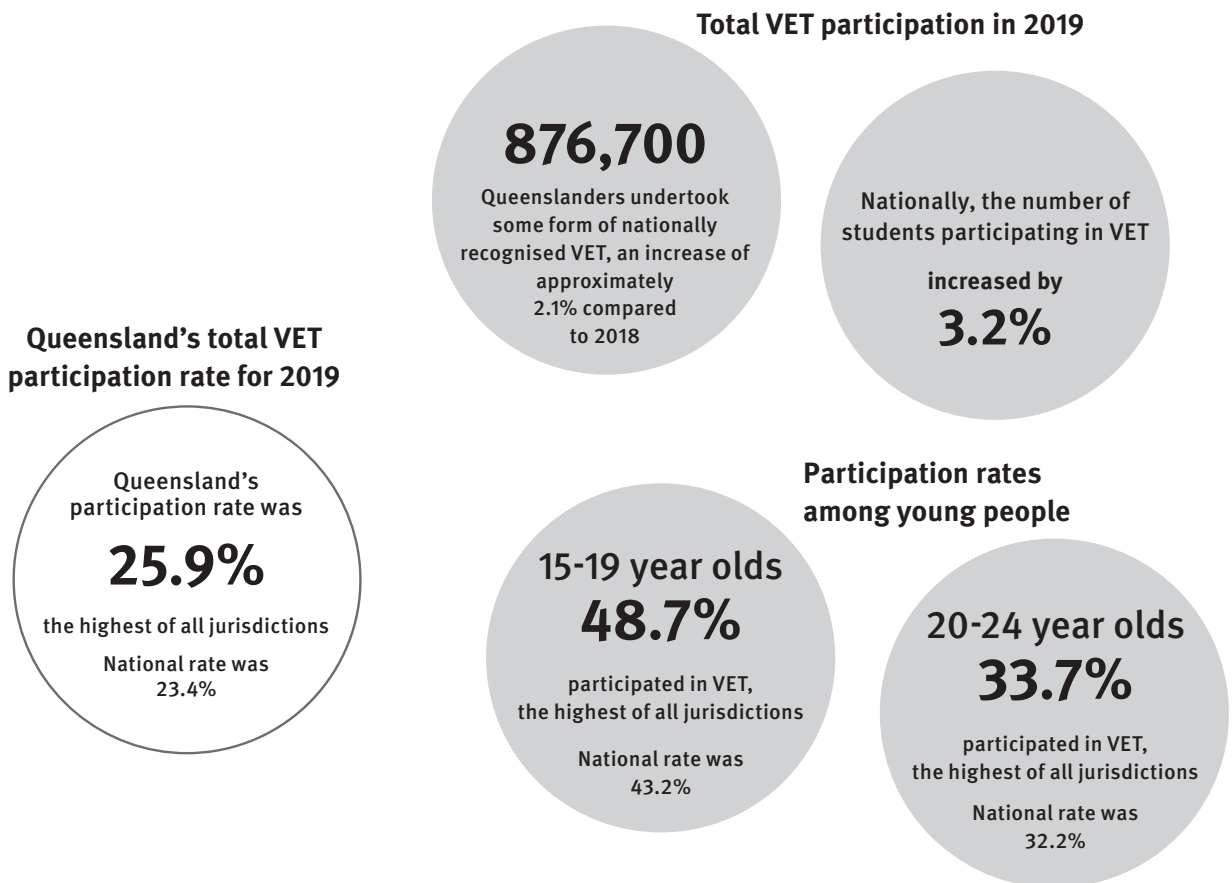
Training and Skills	2019–20 Target/estimate	2019–20 Actual	Status
<p>Efficiency measure</p> <p>Average cost per competency successfully completed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This service standard is calculated by dividing the Training and Skills service area budget by the number of successful VET competencies (individual study units) directly funded by the department. The increase between the 2019–20 actual result and the target estimate was due to the training budget being revised higher than the growth in successfully completed competencies as a result of COVID-19 related expenditure. 	\$595	\$625	

Status legend: Actioned  Working towards target 

VET snapshot

Queensland is a leader in VET, having the nation’s highest VET participation rate in 2019.

This means more students are gaining world class training that will prepare them for their future.



Training and Skills service area – Our future directions

In 2020–21, we are committed to continuing to deliver government priorities and assist impacted Queenslanders, employers and training providers with recovery from COVID-19.

Delivering a skills strategy for Queensland

- Continuing to implement the *Queensland Government: Skills for Queensland – Great training for quality jobs* strategy—the Queensland Government’s plan for a skilled and adaptive workforce.

Future skills through an adaptive system

- Continuing to invest in micro-credentialing pilots to address critical emerging skills gaps that are important to Queensland industries.
- Continuing to invest in higher level apprenticeships by partnering with industry to pilot specialised skills with the traditional apprenticeship model.

Supporting jobs for regional Queensland

- Continuing to implement Regional Jobs Committees to bring together industry groups, training providers, local and major employers, employee representatives, schools/higher education and councils to help plan local training investment so it matches local skills needs and addresses workforce development and planning issues.
- Continuing the *Regional Skills Investment Strategy* aligning training outcomes for Queenslanders with local employment skills demand.

Focusing on quality to increase confidence in training outcomes

- Driving a new approach to quality provision of training delivery and assessment, and choice of provider through the Skills Assure initiative.

Building better pathways

- Promoting training pathways in skills areas of high demand with Free apprenticeships for under 21s, and by providing access to fully subsidised training across 139 priority apprenticeship or traineeship qualifications.
- Targeting critical skills needs, new skills needed for existing jobs, emerging opportunities brought about by technology advances, and regional and state-wide priorities utilising the Industry Engagement Framework introduced by the *Queensland Government: Skills for Queensland – Great training for quality jobs* strategy.
- Implementing a VET informed consumer product that makes it easier for people looking for training courses.

Investing in Queensland’s training assets

Continuing construction that commenced in 2019–20 on the following key projects:

- the \$10 million investment for the Alexandra Hills TAFE in the Redland region
- the \$15 million investment for the Ashmore and Southport TAFE campuses in the Gold Coast region
- the \$15 million investment in the Mt Gravatt TAFE campus.

Implementing an overall capital program of \$79.9 million for which planning had commenced in 2019–20, including an investment of up to \$15 million at the Cairns TAFE campus and upgrading training facilities at regional campuses across Queensland, including at Bowen, Bohle, Burdekin and Cannonvale. In addition:

- supporting the further development of a specialised plumbing apprenticeship centre incorporating a hydrogen training centre of excellence at Beenleigh through a \$20 million grant over two years
- supporting the construction of a new purpose-built Renewable Energy Training Facility in South East Queensland through a \$17 million grant over two years. The new facility will

provide world-class training in electrical, solar and telecommunications for 750 apprentices a year, as well as assisting around 26,000 local licensed electricians with further training.

Supporting public training providers

- Managing the State Contribution Grant supporting public providers in the delivery of training services in our communities.

Supporting industry and small business

- Giving industry and small business a voice in shaping future policy and investment settings through the enhanced industry engagement framework of the *Queensland Government: Skills for Queensland – Great training for quality jobs* strategy.
- Implementing the Small Business Online Training Project to provide free online, non-formal education and training for COVID-19 impacted small businesses and employees for a period of six months.

Increasing training and skilling opportunities

- Continuing the Free tafe for Year 12 graduates initiative to cover the full cost of training in high-priority qualifications to ensure eligible Year 12 graduates get the skills to start their career for free.
- Continuing the Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative to support up to 10,000 disadvantaged Queenslanders into work.
- Increasing accessibility and affordability of training through the TAFE Skills Boost.

Maintaining access to confidential advice

- Ensuring individuals and employers continue to have access to confidential, free advice through the Queensland Training Ombudsman.
- Supporting the Queensland Training Ombudsman, who is undertaking a review into the practice of registered training organisations being associated with organisations, such as recruitment companies or brokers, who are engaging in either third party marketing or recruitment of students.

Recognising excellence

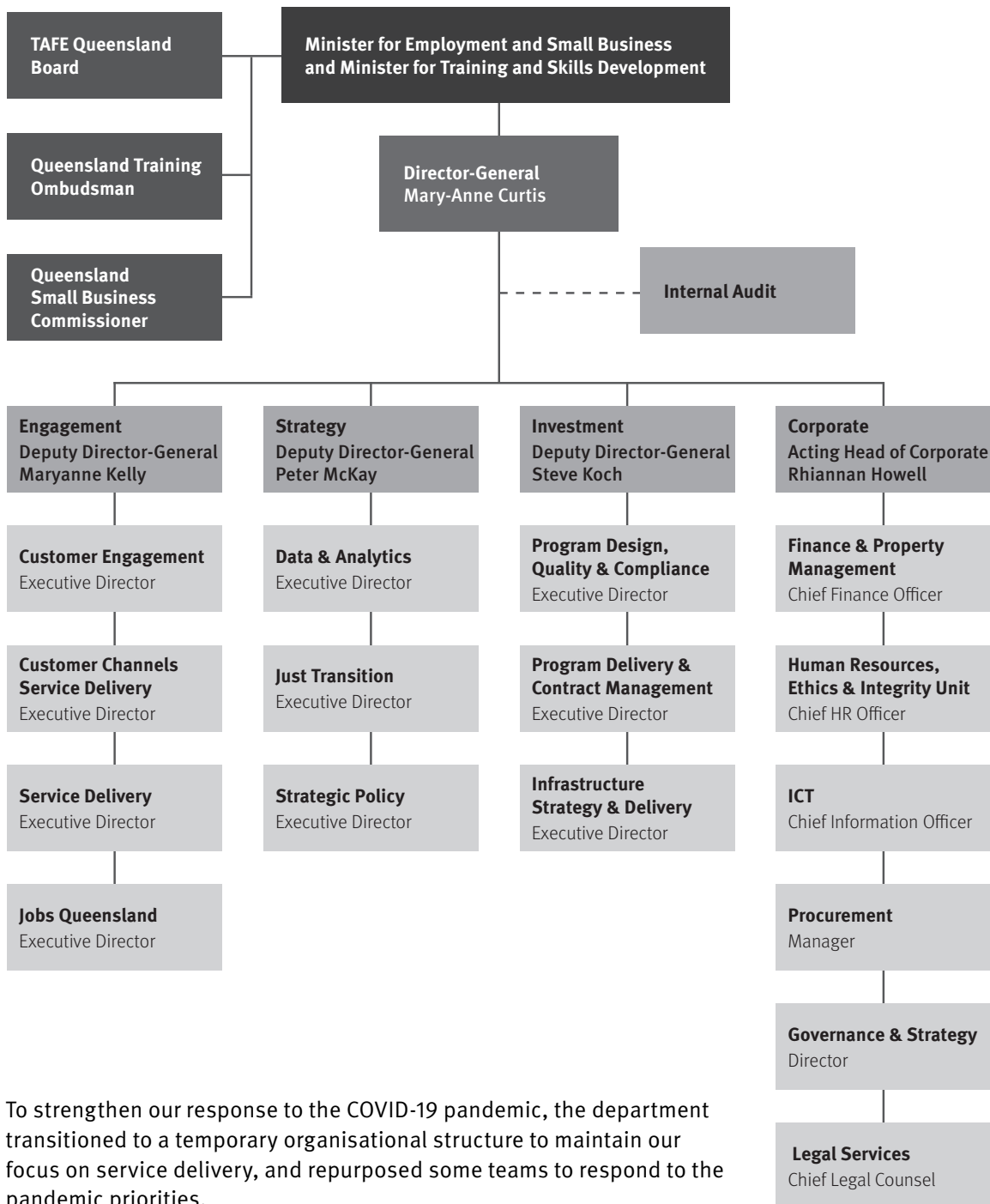
- Delivering the Queensland Training Awards events that celebrate VET for Queensland training providers and trainees.

Our governance

To ensure the continued effectiveness of our department’s structure, the Executive Leadership Team reviews the structure and working arrangements where needed, to ensure the structure and governance are effectively meeting our service delivery needs.

In November 2019, the Customer Experience area, with broad and complex responsibilities, was split into two discrete workgroups: Customer Engagement and Customer Channels. In October 2019, Strategy & Governance and Legal Services were separated into two units.

Our structure as at 30 June 2020



To strengthen our response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the department transitioned to a temporary organisational structure to maintain our focus on service delivery, and repurposed some teams to respond to the pandemic priorities.

Our leaders

As at 30 June 2020, the following leaders comprised the Executive Leadership Team and Board of Management of the department.

Director-General Mary-Anne Curtis

Bachelor of Laws
Bachelor of Commerce
(with distinction)

Mary-Anne Curtis has led the department since its formation in December 2017. Mary-Anne leads the development of strategic policies to support employment growth, enable sustainable small business opportunities and ensure a skilled workforce now and into the future.

Mary-Anne has more than 20 years experience within the Queensland Public Service, in particular providing advice and analysis to the Queensland Government on public policy, fiscal and economic issues. Prior to joining the department, Mary-Anne was a Deputy Under Treasurer with Queensland Treasury.

Mary-Anne is a Trustee of QSuper and a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

Deputy Director-General – Engagement Maryanne Kelly

Bachelor of Commerce
Master of Social Planning
and Development
Graduate Diploma of
Business with a major
in accounting

Maryanne Kelly joined the department in January 2020 to lead the Engagement division. In this role, Maryanne leads the department's engagement and communication approaches with industry, peak bodies, small businesses and students, as well as overseeing regional service delivery, the regulation of Queensland's apprenticeship and traineeship system, and secretariat support for the Jobs Queensland Board.

Maryanne has more than 20 years experience in leadership roles across the Queensland Public Service, Commonwealth Public Service and the United Kingdom Civil Service. Previously, Maryanne was Acting Deputy Under Treasurer, Agency Performance, Queensland Treasury from December 2017. Maryanne has experience in strategy, engagement and leadership.

Deputy Director-General – Strategy Peter McKay

Peter McKay joined the department in late 2018 and has led the Strategy division since March 2019. In this role, Peter represents Queensland on the Skills Senior Official Network and is a Director of the National Centre for Vocational Education Research.

Peter is on an interchange from his role as Deputy Commissioner at the Public Service Commission, where his focus was on enabling improved organisational performance.

Deputy
Director-General –
Investment
Steve Koch

Bachelor of Economics
Bachelor of Business
Management

Steve Koch has 20 years experience in designing and delivering economic development programs and initiatives for government, and is passionate about the economic and social outcomes that these initiatives deliver, particularly the life-changing impact for individuals.

He has a strong background in VET, employment and small business, having held executive roles in departments responsible for these sectors over the past eight years.

In Steve’s current role, he leads the development of training infrastructure strategy and delivery, as well as program design and delivery for the department’s suite of employment, small business and training programs.

Acting Head of Corporate
Rhiannan Howell

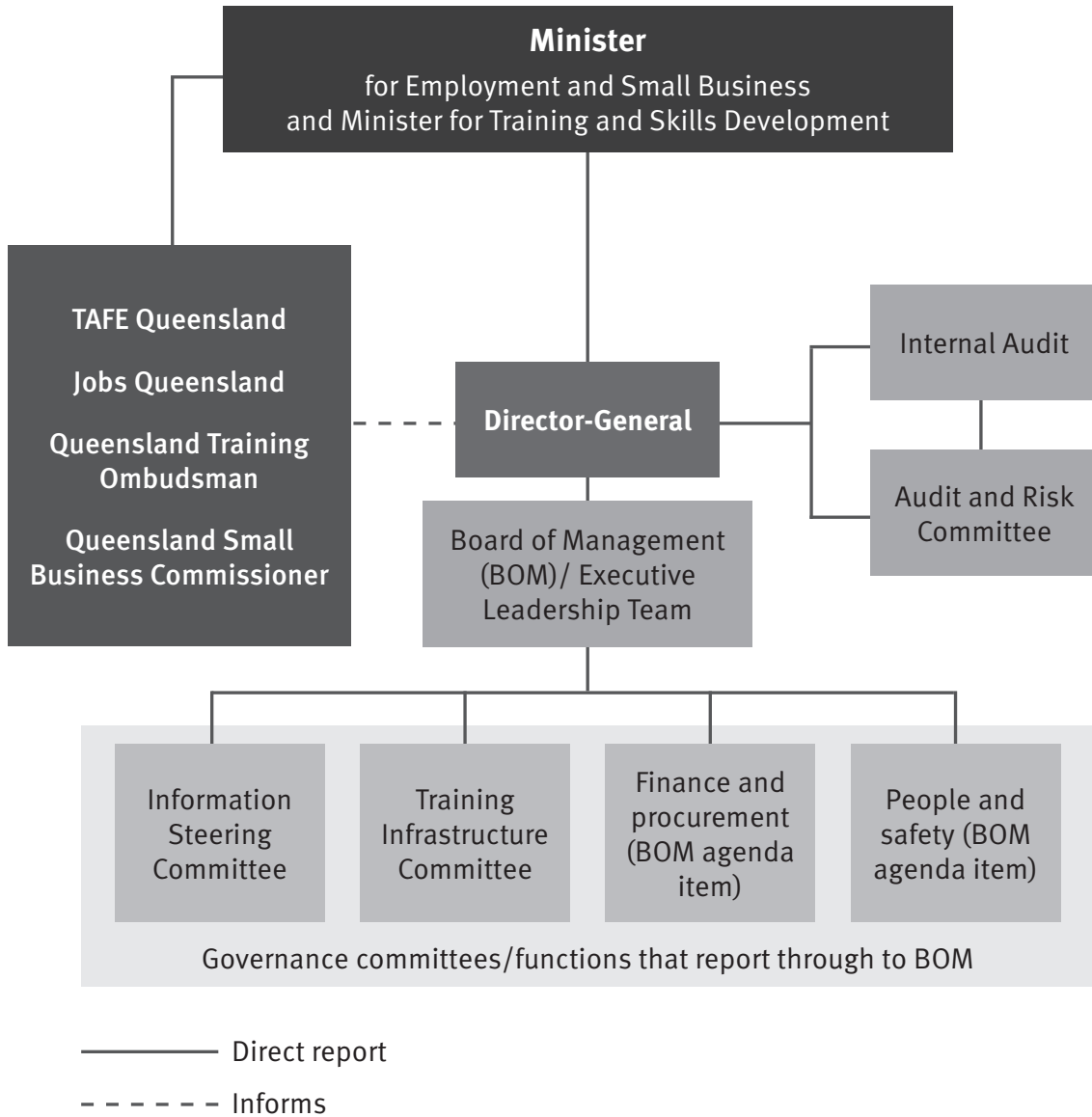
Rhiannan Howell joined the department at its formation as the Chief Human Resources Officer in late 2017. In February 2020, Rhiannan commenced as Acting Head of Corporate for the department’s Corporate Services division, leading the functions of financial management, procurement, human resources, information and communication technology, legal services, and strategy and governance.

Rhiannan has a diverse background across the public and private sectors in a number of service delivery and corporate service roles. Prior to joining the department, Rhiannan was the Director Workforce Strategy in the former Department of Science, Information Technology and Innovation.

Rhiannan is in her final year of completing an Executive Master in Public Administration as part of the Australia and New Zealand School of Government program.

Governance and accountability

The DESBT portfolio governance arrangements are shown below.



Board of Management

The role of the Board of Management is to:

- use analytics and insights to drive the department to provide engaging and relevant community programs to meet the department’s vision
- assess whole-of-government priorities for department implications relating to policy and resourcing
- provide a forum for decision making on key strategic and operational issues including:
 - » monitoring performance and reporting requirements for department targets
 - » reviewing risk treatment strategies and actions, and providing continual monitoring of the risk appetite for the department
 - » managing departmental audit recommendations and subsequent implementation actions to ensure a robust, compliant department.

Membership

Chair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Director-General
Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Deputy Director-General Investment ● Deputy Director-General Engagement ● Deputy Director-General Strategy ● Head of Corporate
Observers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Director, Office of the Director-General ● Secretariat

Audit and Risk Committee

The Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) operates under a charter in accordance with the *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2019* and ethical standards, and has due regard to the Audit Committee Guidelines. The ARC is directly responsible to the Director-General and has no executive powers unless delegated to the ARC by the Director-General. During 2019–20, the ARC met five times.

The role and functions of the ARC are to:

- assist the Director-General as the accountable officer to meet responsibilities under the *Financial Accountability Act 2009*, the *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2019* and other prescribed requirements
- provide independent assurance and assistance to the Director-General on:
 - » the risk, control and compliance frameworks
 - » the department’s external accountability responsibilities as prescribed in the relevant legislation and standards
 - » the department’s integrity framework
- review the implementation of external audit recommendations accepted by management.

The functions of the ARC do not replace or replicate:

- established management responsibilities and delegations
- the responsibilities of other executive management groups within the department
- the reporting lines and responsibilities of either internal audit or external audit functions.

Responsibilities

The ARC carries out a range of duties and responsibilities to maintain oversight of key financial, risk and performance management activities for our department including:

- financial statements—reviewing the appropriateness of our accounting policies, significant assumptions and critical judgements made by management, review the appropriateness of disclosures in our financial statements and analysing our financial performance
- integrity oversight and misconduct prevention—monitoring misconduct trends and prevention approaches and addressing any gaps in dealing with integrity issues in relation to misconduct. Also monitoring the compliance of the department with relevant integrity

legislation and whole-of-government policies, principles and guidelines

- risk management—reviewing the effectiveness of our risk management framework, and processes for identifying, monitoring, escalating and managing significant business risks
- internal control—reviewing, through the internal and external audit functions, the adequacy of our internal control structure and systems, including information technology security and control
- performance management—reviewing compliance with the relevant legislative and whole-of-government performance management and reporting requirements and identifying appropriate use of performance information
- internal and external audit—reviewing and endorsing our Internal Audit Plan, and consulting with External Audit on our proposed audit strategy, reviewing findings and recommendations from audit activity accepted by management. Where issues remain

unresolved, ensuring that satisfactory progress is made to mitigate the risk associated with audit findings.

Achievement highlights 2019–20

- Continued the ARC chaired by an external member, with additional representation from an external public sector agency.
- Reviewed the financial statements for 2018–19 and Chief Finance Officer statement of assurance.
- Endorsed the implementation of the International Standard 18:2018 *Information Security Annual Return* and the International Standard 18:2018 *Information Security Attestation Letter* in November 2019.
- Endorsed the *Risk Management Policy and Procedure* in May 2020.
- Reviewed the *2020–21 Internal Audit Plan*, with oversight of review outcomes.
- Reviewed and endorsed the updated ARC Charter in June 2020.

ARC membership

Name	Position	Committee role	Membership period
Karen Prentis	Consultant	External Chair	July 2019-June 2020
Steve Koch	Deputy Director-General, Investment	Member, departmental	January 2020-June 2020
Jessica Riddell	Acting Deputy Director-General, Investment	Member, departmental	November 2019-December 2019
Irene Violet	Deputy Director-General, Investment	Member, departmental	July 2019-October 2019
Maryanne Kelly	Deputy Director-General, Engagement	Member, departmental	January 2020-June 2020
Steve Koch	Acting Deputy Director-General, Engagement	Member, departmental	July 2019-December 2019
Peter McKay	Deputy Director-General, Strategy	Member, departmental	July 2019-June 2020
Debbie Brooks	Chief Finance Officer, Queensland Treasury	Member, Public Sector external	July 2019-June 2020

As an independent and external member of the committee, Karen Prentis received \$11,000 in 2019–20 to prepare for and attend meetings.

Risk management

The department's Risk Management Framework is a comprehensive approach to identifying, assessing and treating risk based on the department's risk appetite within the context of our risk environment, and is designed to support the achievement of the department's strategic plan objectives. Risk is managed in accordance with the international standard for risk management AS/NZS ISO31000:2018.

The department has a two-tiered structure of risk registers for strategic and operational risks to ensure that all risks are reviewed, escalated, managed and reported at an appropriate level within the organisation. This includes escalating risks to the the DESBT Board of Management, with regular updates reported to the ARC. Business areas regularly review and update their risk registers and identify risk mitigation strategies for implementation.

A review of the department's Risk Management Framework was conducted in early 2020, with updates made to the *DESBT Risk Management Policy and Procedure*, Strategic Risk Register and Risk Appetite Statement.

Internal audit

The Internal Audit function reports to the ARC, with direct access to the Director-General and ARC Chair. The Internal Audit function operates in line with the ARC Charter and Internal Audit Charter, as well as relevant audit and ethical standards. The function is outsourced to PricewaterhouseCoopers.

In 2019–20, Internal Audit operated in accordance with the Internal Audit Charter, which provided the framework for the conduct of the Internal Audit function in DESBT. The charter is reviewed on an annual basis and is endorsed by the ARC.

Role and functions

Internal Audit provides an independent and objective assurance and advisory service to:

- provide assurance to the DESBT Director-General and ARC that DESBT's financial and operational controls are operating in an

efficient, effective, economical and ethical manner

- assist management in improving the entity's business performance
- ensure audits are performed in accordance with accepted professional standards and practices and by qualified, competent and skilled persons
- prepare the risk-based Internal Audit Plan and its scope, and report progress in implementing the audit work plan
- report to ARC any significant changes to the Internal Audit Plan, including any difficulties or restrictions on scope of activities, or significant concerns
- work cooperatively with other agencies' or service providers' Internal Audit units to ensure coverage of key risks, and that there is appropriate coordination with the External Auditor
- review and monitor management's response to Internal Audit findings and recommended actions
- review the implementation of agreed management actions and where issues remain unresolved, ensure that satisfactory progress is being made to mitigate the risk associated with Internal Audit's findings.

Internal Audit Plan

Internal Audit's scope of work is based on an audit plan endorsed by the ARC. This encompasses the review of all financial and non-financial policies and operations, including evaluating the adequacy and effectiveness of DESBT's governance, risk management process, system of internal control structure and quality of performance in carrying out assigned responsibilities to achieve DESBT's stated objectives. The *2020–21 Internal Audit Plan* was endorsed in May 2020.

Achievement highlights 2019–20

- Completed five Internal Audit reviews scheduled for the period.

- Monitored the status of the Internal Audit Plan and internal audit reports at each meeting.
- Followed up and reported on the progress of management actions at each meeting, including open and overdue actions.
- Developed the Annual Assessment of Control Environment against the Committee of Sponsoring Organizations of the Treadway Commission components based on the Internal Audit activity reported during the period.
- Developed the *2020–21 Internal Audit Plan*, including a rolling Three-Year Plan.

Managing risk

The strategic risk register is a key input into the annual planning performed by Internal Audit to inform the DESBT strategic three-year plan and the annual operational plans.

Building a human rights-centred culture

Since the commencement of the *Human Rights Act 2019* (the Act) on 1 January 2020, to 30 June 2020, the department received no human rights complaints, or complaints that were later assessed as involving human rights, from either customers or employees.

In supporting implementation of the objects of the Act, DESBT undertook a range of measures to ensure:

- staff continued to act and make decisions compatibly with human rights
- our clients and stakeholders were made aware of our commitment to protecting their human rights.

Measures supporting implementation

Policy and legislation

- Reviewed the following for human rights compatibility and, where relevant, including details about the Act:
 - » legislation and subordinate legislation
 - » corporate policies and procedures

- » internal divisional practices
- » the DESBT *Customer Complaints Management Policy and Information Privacy Policy*, which were reviewed and amended to include a reference to the Act and how to manage human rights complaints.

- Ensured portfolio statutory bodies were aware of their obligations.
- Ensured human rights are central to the development of policy and legislation.

Communicating with our clients and stakeholders

- Provided information about the Act and compliance to:
 - » pre-qualified suppliers via the Contract Connector newsletters
 - » SQW stakeholders via SQW alert
 - » Queensland small businesses via the Small Business Connect newsletter.

Communicating with our employees

- Communicated and raised awareness about human rights by informing staff, clients and customers about their rights and obligations under the Act. Several articles about the Act, policy updates and availability of human rights resources were included in our internal staff newsletter.
- Presented information sessions in person to senior leaders within DESBT, ministerial office staff, most central office staff, and to the regions by webinar, with a recording available to all staff.
- Rolled out mandatory online training for all staff, including for new staff as part of induction processes, about the purpose of the Act, acting compatibly with human rights, complaint processes and reporting obligations.
- Developed and maintained a dedicated human rights intranet page.
- Updated the departmental role description template to include a reference and support of human rights.

Our decision-making, planning and reporting

- Ensured any potential human rights complaints received were managed through effective and accountable internal processes.
- Delivered training to regional employees, including examples of compliant decision making with the Act.
- Incorporated a commitment to human rights in the future cycle of DESBT's strategic and business plans.
- Included human rights obligations in relevant contracts and procurement processes.
- Included a section dedicated to considering human rights compatibility as part of decision making in every executive briefing note template.
- Recorded actions and outcomes related to reporting obligations under section 97 of the Act and participated in the quarterly Human Rights Commission's Interdepartmental Committee meetings.

Protecting human rights during COVID-19

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the department continued to provide new and existing programs and services connecting small businesses and individuals to skills, training and employment opportunities for Queenslanders, consistent with the human rights of Queenslanders. This included having access on general terms of equality to the public service, by the department putting people first in our actions, decisions, interactions, policy development and planning, and making decisions and applying eligibility criteria with respect to and protecting human rights.

Given the social distancing requirements during COVID-19, departmental services were predominantly delivered online and over the phone using online video meetings, providing accessible online information, regular e-newsletters and customer assistance available through our Customer Centre, including delivery to people from vulnerable groups.

A suite of free online training was also made available to support individuals, including vulnerable groups and those unemployed seeking to upskill to improve employment prospects. Free online training was also made available to small businesses impacted by COVID-19. The department made every effort to ensure people from vulnerable groups could continue to access services consistent with the right of every person to enjoy their human rights without discrimination.

For more information about DESBT's programs, services and operations during COVID-19, refer to the earlier section in this report titled, 'Unite and recover from COVID-19'.

External scrutiny

The department is subject to external review. The following reports applicable to the department were tabled by the Queensland Auditor-General in Parliament during 2019–20:

- *Queensland state government entities: 2018–19 results of financial audits* (Report 8:2019–20)
- *Investing in vocational education and training* (Report 1: 2019–20).

For more information, refer to either:

- the Queensland Audit Office website at qao.qld.gov.au/reports-resources/parliament
- the Queensland Parliament website at parliament.qld.gov.au

For information about the reviews conducted by the Queensland Training Ombudsman during 2019–20 involving the department, refer to the Queensland Training Ombudsman's website trainingombudsman.qld.gov.au

Records governance and systems

Our department is committed to meeting its recordkeeping requirements under the:

- *Public Records Act 2002* (Qld)
- *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2019*
- Queensland Government Enterprise Architecture (QGEA)
- *Records Governance Policy*
- whole-of-government information standards.

DESBT implements appropriate strategies, processes, applications and tools to ensure records of business activities are made and kept for as long as required, in accordance with the approved records retention and disposal schedules.

Communicating roles and responsibilities

As a commitment to good records governance and practices, the department:

- implemented mandatory online staff training in information security and information privacy to increase staff awareness of their role in good information security practices and responsibilities, with annual refresher training for all staff
- maintained published policies and guidelines accessible by all staff
- promoted Right to Information Day and Privacy Awareness Week to reinforce privacy rights, responsibilities and protection of information.

Improvements

During 2019–20, several improvement milestones were delivered in changing the way we manage information in DESBT. Highlights included:

- DESBT *Information Privacy Policy and Procedure* was reviewed and updated to align to the implementation of the *Human Rights Act 2019*
- DESBT *Information Security Policy* was finalised as part of DESBT's Information Security Management System Framework

- development of guidelines for staff to assist in preparing documents for decision makers
- finalisation of DESBT's *Administrative Release Policy*, procedure, register and fact sheet.

Managing digital records and systems

The department purchases transactional processing services from Queensland Shared Services and uses whole-of-government systems for finance and human resource management services.

As part of the DESBT's information vision, with an emphasis on working digitally in an integrated way, several key milestones were achieved during 2019–20, including:

- rolling out and training staff in using a new correspondence system that streamlined and consolidated all ministerial and executive correspondence into one automated workflow management system
- releasing the DESBT *User Information Security Manual*, which contains common principles for staff using information communication technology assets
- making improvements in cybersecurity protection of our digital records and systems
- implementing enhancements to the DESBT's SharePoint intranet site as a central communication platform within the department
- migrating Team Sites and consolidating DESBT's computing network and other business critical assets

- closing the Ingres databases after 27 years with Training and Skills due to increased maintenance costs and legacy toolboxes. Ingres had supported several applications as a crucial part of VET Systems and was replaced by a new Microsoft Structured Query Language Server.

Other whole-of-government plans/specific initiatives

Queensland Government

During 2019–20, the department was responsible for leading the following whole-of-government programs and initiatives. Further information about these are contained within this report:

- Back to Work program, supporting eligible employers and jobseekers
- SQW initiative, supporting Queenslanders back into work
- Queensland Apprenticeship and Traineeship System
- *Advancing Small Business Queensland Strategy 2016–2020*
- Business Queensland website, communicating government business services online
- *Queensland Government: Skills for Queensland: Great training for quality jobs* strategy
- *Queensland Social Enterprise Strategy*.

The department also supported the following whole-of-government plans and initiatives:

- *State Disaster Management Plan*
- *Advance Queensland*
- *Advance Queensland Manufacturing Strategy*.

National agreements and reform initiatives

Queensland is a leader in the national VET system, having the highest proportion of students completing VET qualifications.

During 2019–20, the department led the Queensland Government management of the

National Agreement for Skills and Workforce Development. It continued to support training programs to meet the objective of this agreement, which is to achieve a VET system that delivers a more productive and highly skilled workforce, enabling all working age Australians to participate effectively in the labour market and contribute to Australia’s economic future.

During 2019–20, the department contributed to the Queensland Government implementation of the national initiative, *Small Business Regulatory Reform Project Agreement*, by:

- streamlining the start-up and compliance pathway for small business in Queensland
- commencing development of the Queensland Business Launch Pad project to make it easier for businesses in the food and beverage and construction industries to transact with government
- commencing development of the VET Support Program as part of the Small Business Regulatory Reform Agenda, to improve the way businesses access training and apprenticeship services.

In 2019–20, the department also contributed to:

- *National Indigenous Reform Agreement* (Closing the Gap)
- *National Disability Strategy*
- Bilateral Agreement between the Commonwealth and Queensland for the transition to the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

Our people, our strength

Central to our department delivering government objectives and services to Queenslanders are the dedicated DESBT employees who make a difference in people's learning, careers and working lives.

Our people have been our strength and have responded in a caring and agile way to the evolving impacts of COVID-19 that affected our work environment, operations, stakeholders and Queensland communities.

COVID-19 was a disruption that presented new and unique challenges, which staff navigated by learning new ways to work while also taking care of personal mental health and wellbeing. DESBT employees supported one another and got on with their jobs, demonstrating flexibility and perseverance by collaborating with each other.

Refocusing our business to help Queenslanders

In uniting our efforts and contributing to *Queensland's Economic Recovery Plan*, staff joined new teams to deliver priority projects in responding to COVID-19.

In DESBT, employees contributed to this effort by:

- continuing to deliver essential services in line with normal arrangements and responding to government priorities
- being deployed to priority COVID-19 related programs of work, which demonstrated an agile and responsive departmental resourcing model adaptable for future needs
- performing different work within the department to help respond to emerging needs as part of the activation of our business continuity plans
- performing work in another agency through the whole-of-sector Queensland Government COVID-19 Employee Mobilisation Service
- performing work through the Community Recovery Ready Reserves.

In March 2020, our business continuity plans across the department were activated, with staff required to work remotely, and in some instances, perform alternative duties as part of a re-prioritisation effort to support high priority areas. In June 2020, a staged return to the office commenced in alignment with Queensland's roadmap to easing restrictions.

Keeping connected

It was critical in responding to COVID-19 to engage differently and keep up to date with the latest information. DESBT staff were kept informed by leaders through online staff forums and regular communications such as newsletters and emails.

Staying safe and well

Our key priority continued to be ensuring the ongoing health, safety and wellbeing of our employees, wherever and however they were working.

During 2019–20, the department focused on a range of strategies supporting the safety and wellbeing of our staff to perform at their best and encourage work–life balance. Management and staff were supported by the DESBT Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee.

Staff wellbeing was encouraged by:

- providing training for managers, supervisors and health and safety representatives to learn more about identifying and managing health and safety within teams
- promoting physical and mental health safety awareness during Work Safe Month and Queensland Mental Health Week in October 2019
- supporting employees affected by domestic and family violence and maintaining departmental White Ribbon accreditation
- promoting staff access to influenza vaccinations
- offering staff free, professional, short-term counselling through an Employee Assistance Program in partnership with Benestar

- actively managing staff rehabilitation and return to work programs following injury or illness
- hosting four employees from other agencies under the Recover @ Work program, coordinated by the Public Service Commission.

Staff work–life balance options were encouraged and supported including:

- part-time arrangements and job sharing
- a range of leave provisions including carer’s leave
- flexible and remote working arrangements
- a multi-purpose room available for varied uses including carers, parents and religious needs.

Workforce profile

To improve service outcomes for Queenslanders, our workforce data was used to inform our decision making, workforce policy development and planning. The snapshot data also assisted in evaluating workforce policies and practices.

In 2019–20, the department had:

- 576.91 full-time equivalent employees as at 24 June 2020 (the last pay period for 2019–20) as per the Minimum Obligatory Human Resource Information
- a permanent separation rate of 2.22 per cent
- no redundancy, early retirement or retrenchment packages were paid during the period.

Valuing inclusion and diversity of our workforce

The following data provides a breakdown of diversity groups within our department.

Diversity groups	Actual as at June 2020 ^{1,2}	As a percentage of total workforce June 2020	Compared to 2018–19
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples	16	2.62%	✓
People with disability	19	3.11%	✓
People from non-English speaking background	42	6.87%	✓
Women in the workforce	459	72.12%	✓

Status legend: Improved on 2018–19 ✓

- Notes: 1. Data is based on full-time equivalents as at 24 June 2020 as at the last pay period for 2019–20.
 2. Staff can self-identify with multiple diversity groups.

Diversity groups	Headcount actuals as at June 2020	As a percentage of the relevant classification group June 2020	Compared to 2018–19
Women in all senior leadership roles (SO, SES, CEO)	31	51.67%	✓
Women in leadership roles (AO6, AO7, AO8, PO5, PO6 and equivalent)	203	63.84%	✓

Status legend: Improved on 2018–19 ✓

Strengthening our workplace culture

Strategic workforce planning

In implementing effective human resources policies and practices supported by workforce data, the department developed the following workforce planning initiatives and contemporary strategies during 2019–20:

- established an agreement with Job Access to work with the department to increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities through providing advice, tools and training for departmental employees
- developed a *Cultural Capability Action Plan 2019–2023* as part of the Queensland Government Cultural Capability Framework. This plan provides direct opportunities to support Indigenous employment and continues to build staff cultural capability awareness across the department
- established the DESBT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Talent Pool in February 2020, promoting employment opportunities available in the department to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- promoted access to Queensland Health’s translator and interpreter services through a standing offer arrangement, to address language barriers and deliver optimal outcomes for all Queenslanders. This service includes 220 Auslan interpreters and, for the first time, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander interpreters, making it easier for all members of the community to access DESBT services
- continued implementing actions from the DESBT *Disability Service Plan 2017–2020* by:
 - » working towards ensuring information is accessible and in multiple formats on our websites
 - » ensuring DESBT policies and programs reflect the needs and interests of people with disability and their carers

» offering reasonable adjustment through a range of ways to maximise participation of people with disabilities, their families and carers when engaging with staff and stakeholders.

Our ethics and employee relations framework

Underpinning our workplace culture and management of staff are our ethical values. During 2019–20, the department continued the commitment to high behavioural standards and supporting staff to do the right thing through educational training and administrative policies and practices. The department continued to implement and comply with the *Public Sector Ethics Act 1994* principles by delivering online Code of Conduct training and Prevention of Fraud and Corruption training for all staff, as well as annual refresher training.

The *Industrial Relations Act 2016* and the following instruments comprised our industrial and employee relations framework:

- *Queensland Public Service Employees and Other Employees Award – State 2015*
- *State Government Entities Certified Agreement 2015*.

The department actively consulted with the Together Union through a staff consultative committee regarding employee and industrial relations matters, including flexible workplace arrangements and workplace change.

Managing high performance

High standards of performance and clear behavioural expectations are aligned to the Queensland Public Service values, which are communicated in our policies and procedures.

During 2019–20, DESBT employee performance was managed through performance and development planning as a key component of the Queensland Public Service Commission’s conduct and performance excellence framework. Effective performance management enabled employees and teams to understand how they contributed to achieving government and DESBT objectives.

We measured our collective performance and staff engagement through the Public Service Commission's annual Working for Queensland employee opinion survey. The 2019 results showed that, as a department, we maintained a high response rate, at 85 per cent. Overall, the results of the survey were positive. Our results reflected strength in our teams, our relationships with our managers, and our job empowerment. We had notable improvements in our organisational fairness and anti-discrimination in the workplace, which exceeded public sector results in some of these areas.

External providers delivered training to departmental leaders emphasising their work, health and safety responsibilities. The training covered legislative requirements and responsibilities and increased leadership capability in this critical area.

Recognising staff excellence

In November 2019, DESBT staff received recognition for two programs in the Queensland Premier's Awards for Excellence. The Small Business Recovery Centre in Townsville received a highly commended award in the category 'Be a responsive government'. The department's Back to Work program was also recognised as a finalist in the 'Creating jobs in a strong economy' category.

Encouraging learning and preparing for the future of work

During 2019–20, staff were encouraged to continue learning and development as part of performance and development planning. The MyCareer learning management system provided online mandatory training for DESBT staff to keep their knowledge up to date.

We supported the public sector's Leadership Competencies for Queensland by supporting three of our Executive Leadership Team members to participate in the LEAD4QLD program, which builds Queensland's leaders and incorporates the latest thinking in leadership capability assessment and development.

In 2019–20, highlights included:

- role-specific mandatory training for DESBT regional officers as an important component

of our Service Delivery's Regional Staff Development Program. The course provided an introduction and reinforcement of VET knowledge and awareness of the regional operating environment

- one mandatory Procurement 101 training module to increase staff awareness of the *Queensland Government Procurement Policy* and procedures
- holding regular 'lunch and learn' sessions where staff shared their knowledge and learned from work colleagues about different DESBT programs of work
- mandatory annual financial delegations training for all delegated officers.

In order to further prepare and position DESBT for the future of work, the department:

- continued our Senior Leadership Network as a forum for senior officers to share knowledge and innovative practices and harness contemporary perspectives
- completed talent mapping across the senior leadership group to understand the talent pipeline and identify opportunities for individualised development
- improved our workforce data analysis to understand trends and workforce issues in supporting workforce planning
- continued to participate in the sector-wide Leadership Competencies Community of Practice.

Supporting our communities

In assisting Queensland communities in 2019–20 affected by natural disasters of floods, fires and drought:

- 11 departmental staff volunteered their time away from work and family to support community recovery efforts during the southern Queensland and eastern Queensland bushfires
- regional departmental staff worked at the Small Business Recovery Centre in Townsville supporting seven days a week operation.