

Consultation
summary

Developing a new

Queensland
**Vocational
Education
and Training
Strategy**

Acknowledgement of First Nations peoples

The Queensland Government respectfully acknowledges the First Nations peoples in the state of Queensland and acknowledges the cultural and spiritual connection that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have with the land and sea.

We respectfully acknowledge Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people as two unique and diverse peoples, with their own rich and distinct cultures, resilience and strengths.

We specifically acknowledge the unique history and cultural heritage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the First Peoples of Australia. We pay our respects to Elders past and present.

We are dedicated to the inclusion of cultural knowledge and values as critical factors in the development, implementation and evaluation of strategies and actions to support First Nations peoples. We extend our thanks to First Nations people who contributed to this consultation activity.



Do you need an interpreter?

If you need an interpreter, call the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) on **131 450** and request to be transferred to Multicultural Affairs Queensland on **13 QGOV (13 74 68)**.

Prepared by the Department of Youth Justice, Employment, Small Business and Training

This consultation report has been prepared and published to share the findings from consultation activity to inform the development of a new Queensland Vocational Education and Training Strategy. The consultation report does not represent Queensland Government policy or position.



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Consultation to inform a new Queensland VET strategy

Vocational education and training – or VET – plays an important role in giving Queenslanders skills for the jobs that power our state’s economy and maintain our way of life. From the tradespeople building new homes to the workers caring for Queenslanders young and old, and learning to deliver clean energy – the skills developed through VET impact us all.

To deliver the skilled workers our state needs now and into the future, the Queensland Government wants to ensure it is investing in the right training to support our changing workforce and providing all Queenslanders with access to the training they need.

That is why the Queensland Government is developing a new Queensland VET strategy – to ensure the state achieves the best outcomes from our annual investment of more than \$1.2 billion in training and skills programs.

To inform this new strategy, we spoke to Queenslanders who have undertaken VET, the organisations that collectively work to deliver VET and to the employers and industry that benefit from the skills developed.

From 29 June to 18 August 2023, the Queensland Government heard from more than 8000 Queenslanders, including students, businesses, parents, training providers, industry groups, schools and other organisations involved in VET.

VET stakeholders and users were asked a range of questions in line with four reform focus areas:

1

Delivering priority and future skills

Targeting investment to support Queensland’s growing and changing workforce

2

Ensuring access for all Queenslanders

Providing accessible training that supports Queenslanders into good, secure jobs that deliver for the community and our economy

3

Working with employers and industry

Employers, industry and government working together to deliver quality training and positive student outcomes

4

Supporting VET pathways and job transitions









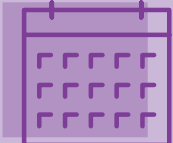

Building the transitions from school to work and lifelong learning

The new VET strategy will focus on how the Queensland Government supports training and skills development for the state, including VET funding, program and delivery arrangements. It is acknowledged that information and insights shared during consultation sometimes crossed over into areas led nationally or by others, such as industry and schools, however all feedback was encouraged to develop a deeper understanding of issues and opportunities across the VET system.

Throughout consultation there were many diverse views shared on what the VET sector is doing and should be doing. This report summarises what we learned during public consultation, which is informing the development of the new VET strategy.


The Queensland Government would like to extend its thanks to the people across the state who contributed to this consultation process.

Consultation at a glance

	24 forums and focus groups (face-to-face and online)		500+ forum and focus group participants
	7 regions across Queensland		7,800+ online surveys completed
	8,000+ kilometres travelled		60+ written submissions received
	40+ hours of stakeholder consultation		20+ different stakeholder types consulted (i.e. training providers, industry bodies, VET students)
	7 weeks of consultation (29 June to 18 August 2023)		1,800+ discrete Mentimeter* data points collected

*Mentimeter is an online polling tool used during forums and focus groups to gather participant responses to a range of questions aligned to reform focus areas. 1,800+ data points represents the number of total responses received across the forums and focus groups.

Who we consulted

	370+ training providers		4,900+ current and former VET students, school students, apprentices and trainees
	240+ schools		800+ school students undertaking VET at school
	90+ industry bodies		1,500 employers, including 500+ small businesses
	40+ community organisations		150+ parents and carers*

*Parent perspectives were also shared during forums by participants attending in another capacity (i.e. employer, school etc.).



What we heard

Organisations involved in VET

1,000+



Organisations delivering or using VET

Across the consultation period we heard from more than 1,000 organisations involved in VET, including training providers, schools, universities, industry bodies, group training organisations, community organisations, local and state government bodies, chambers of commerce and more.

The following table provides a high-level summary of key findings from consultation with these groups. Significant commentary was received in relation to each focus area, with some common themes raised across multiple focus areas.



1

Delivering priority and future skills



Funding models

- Funding should enable **training to be regionalised** to meet the specific needs of local workforces and industries, acknowledging training is not a one-size-fits-all approach (e.g. regional training hubs).
- Additional funding is needed to cover the costs of regional training delivery.
- Students should be supported to access **different VET pathways**.
- **Free TAFE** was perceived by some organisations as limiting student choice of training provider.
- Training programs need to be **more flexible** to respond to current industry and emerging market needs, particularly in regional, rural and remote locations.
- A **better understanding of VET** student pathways and reasons for non-completion is needed to inform funding solutions.

Training packages and delivery

- A range of examples were provided of training packages that are not up-to-date with industry standards, practice and technology.
- Awareness and access to **foundation skills programs**, particularly language, literacy and numeracy (LNN), is critical for success.
- Encourage and make it easier for mature age students and career changers to access short, focused training such as **micro-credentials and skill sets**.

Trainers and training providers

- The process to become a **Skills Assure supplier (SAS)** should be simplified to enable additional providers to deliver training in more locations.
- **Attracting, retaining and accessing quality industry trainers** is a challenge across the state.
- More needs to be done to increase **transparency and accountability of service providers** within the VET system (i.e. AASNs, RTOs etc.) to ensure they are delivering to performance standards.

Education and collaboration

- Greater understanding of **what training is available**, and how to best access and interpret it, is needed for all stakeholders, including students, business, industry and schools.
- More **sector and cross-government collaboration and communication** is required, including working collectively to bring training solutions to regional, rural and remote areas.



HIGH-LEVEL SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

Funding models

- Funding should provide students with **opportunities to access different pathways** at the right time and in the right place.
- More support is needed to overcome **barriers faced by regional, rural and remote VET stakeholders** (including students, training providers and employers) to cover costs associated with training and transport, lack of internet connectivity and access to training opportunities, and to improve productivity.

Training packages and delivery

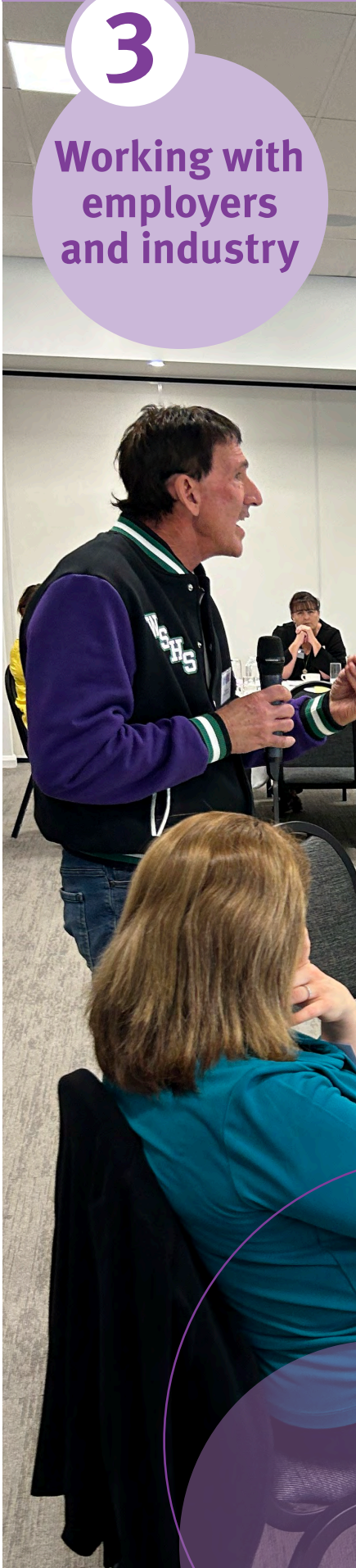
- **Accessing quality RTOs and face-to-face training** in regional, rural and remote areas, and in First Nations communities is a priority.
- Students are **not always informed when making decisions** about what VET program to select which can ‘waste’ their access to funded training that leads to a positive employment or study outcome.
- **Gaining relevant, hands-on experience** as part of a VET program needs to be a priority for all students.
- **Existing workers and career changers face barriers** to up-skilling and re-skilling, including ineligibility for funded training, time available to train and recognition of existing skills.
- Training on offer in local communities should **align to local employment priorities**.
- First Nations and multicultural students need access to **culturally appropriate training** to maximise successful outcomes.
- Awareness of and access to **foundation skills programs**, particularly language, literacy and numeracy (LLN), needs to be improved.
- Some First Nations students would **benefit from support** to build their skills before enrolling in a qualification (e.g. bridging program).

Education, collaboration and support

- A greater understanding of **VET and the pathways available** is needed.
- Learners need more **wrap-around support**, including mental health support.
- First Nations and multicultural students need **increased mentoring support**, including additional dedicated support officers.
- **Multicultural students would benefit from post-training support** from the training provider or other agencies to connect with employment.
- Coordinate and pool training resources through **greater sector collaboration**.

Value of VET

- **Promote the VET pathways** available to build an exciting career.



HIGH-LEVEL SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

Training packages and delivery

- Students **need more information and support to make** decisions about career pathways and VET options, including subsidised and supported pathways.
- A greater focus on **pre-apprenticeship programs and compatibility testing is needed** to assist with course selection.
- Find ways to **increase training in regional, rural and remote areas**, such as community-based training models.

Education, collaboration and support

- Employers, particularly small businesses, **need more support to take on and manage apprentices and trainees** to improve completion rates (e.g. incentives, information, communication and guidance).
- Greater awareness of **industry engagement mechanisms** is needed to ensure industry and employers understand the entry points into the system.
- Bring more training solutions to regional and remote areas by improving **sector and cross-government collaboration and communication**, including assistance to work collectively.
- There was limited awareness of the role **industry bodies play in providing industry input** to training.
- Schools can find it challenging to **link with local employers and industry to provide VET pathways for students**.
- Employers need support to increase **cultural awareness**, including greater understanding of the cultural needs of First Nations and multicultural apprentices and trainees.
- The **Industry Skills Advisor network is an effective model** but advisors can find it difficult to engage across their sector to ensure robust, timely engagement with industry and training providers.

Value of VET

- **VET needs greater recognition** as a valuable career pathway.

Funding models

- Students, existing workers and career changers need **opportunities to access different VET pathways** at all stages of their career.
- There is **limited understanding of VET student pathways** and **reasons for non-completion** which would help inform training solutions.

Training packages and delivery

- VET pathways must focus on **employability and employability skills** as a key benefit of VET as an education option.
- School students and older Queenslanders do not always have access to the **information they need** to make decisions about VET selection.
- Students need greater **flexibility in completing work placement hours** as part of their training.
- There are **barriers to up-skilling and re-skilling** for existing workers and career changers, including challenges experienced with the existing recognition of prior learning (RPL) process.
- Existing workers should be supported to undertake VET that articulates to a **university pathway** to address priority skill needs and provide career pathways.
- **Many training packages** are not up-to-date with industry standards, practices and technology.
- **School leavers don't have the support they need** to connect with industry and gain employment post-school.

Education, collaboration and support

- Some employers, apprentices and trainees do not understand the **expectations of an apprenticeship or traineeship** leading to training or workplace difficulties and possible non-completion.
- For individuals looking to undertake study, there is confusion and misinformation about **how to access VET options**.
- Employers need support to increase **cultural awareness**, including greater understanding of the cultural needs of First Nations and multicultural apprentices and trainees.
- Schools and VET teachers **need to develop industry connections** and maintain industry currency.
- More work is needed to **transition to a more integrated tertiary sector**.

Value of VET

- **VET pathways that lead to exciting careers** could be better promoted to students, parents and schools.

What we heard

Consultation to inform the new VET strategy focused on ensuring the voice of Queenslanders who use VET was clearly heard. Below is a summary of key findings from targeted consultation with students, apprentices, trainees and businesses.

Students, apprentices and trainees

4,900+

current and former VET students, apprentices and trainees



During the consultation period, more than 4,900 former and current VET students, apprentices and trainees shared their views, the majority through the online survey.

Key findings:

- The main reasons for choosing VET were cost (compared to university) as well as VET leading to more job opportunities, the ability to earn a wage while learning and it provides a ‘foot in the door’ to industry.
- Industry relevance of programs and having teachers/trainers who are up-to-date with industry standards were concerns raised by students.
- 47% of students who responded to the survey had not undertaken any form of work experience or placement with an employer as part of their VET studies.
- Through the online survey, communication between the student and training provider emerged as an area for improvement.
- An obstacle facing students appeared to be accessing industry information regarding job opportunities and vacancies.

School students undertaking VET

800+

VET in schools students



The consultation process engaged with more than 800 secondary school students undertaking VET as part of their school studies. This included six face-to-face and online focus groups with 99 secondary school students.

Key findings:

- Students chose VET at school as a pathway to a desired trade career, to get paid for work placement, as a way to achieve a QCE or ATAR or as a pathway to employment.
- The largest barrier to students both starting and completing VET studies is transportation (access to and cost) to attend training or work placement.
- In-person delivery of VET to school students provides an opportunity for interaction and hands-on experience.
- Students’ views on whether they intend to complete further VET study after school varied considerably across most groups and for quite different reasons.
- While not all students intend to complete further VET study after school, most agreed the knowledge and skills they have learned through their studies will be useful in the ‘real world’ and they would recommend undertaking VET at school to others.
- Parents and carers supported the value of VET however there was a desire for VET and TAFE to be more accessible, particularly for regional, rural and remote students.
- Students indicated the main influence on their choice of VET program was their school, with advice from family and/or friends ranking third in the list of responses.

First Nations students

As part of the consultation process, focused engagement sessions were held with First Nations students as well as community members and organisations in Cairns, Townsville, Palm Island (online), Rockhampton and Brisbane. In addition, almost 250 VET students who completed the online survey identified as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person. Key findings included:

- Literacy and numeracy skills are making it difficult for some students to complete course work as well as to fill-in required forms related to training.
- There is a need for more First Nations mentors and champions for First Nations students on campus or within the community to support successful training delivery and completion.
- A lack of access to locally delivered face-to-face training means students have to travel away from home to attend training.
- More programs are needed that provide wrap-around holistic support from the start, during and at the end (and beyond) of a student's training journey.
- Learning support needs to be delivered in culturally appropriate ways.
- More cultural awareness training is needed for non-Indigenous employers.
- Further development of First Nations' networks to drive information-sharing and access to initiatives and support.
- Challenges completing training due to limited access to technology and the internet.

Multicultural communities

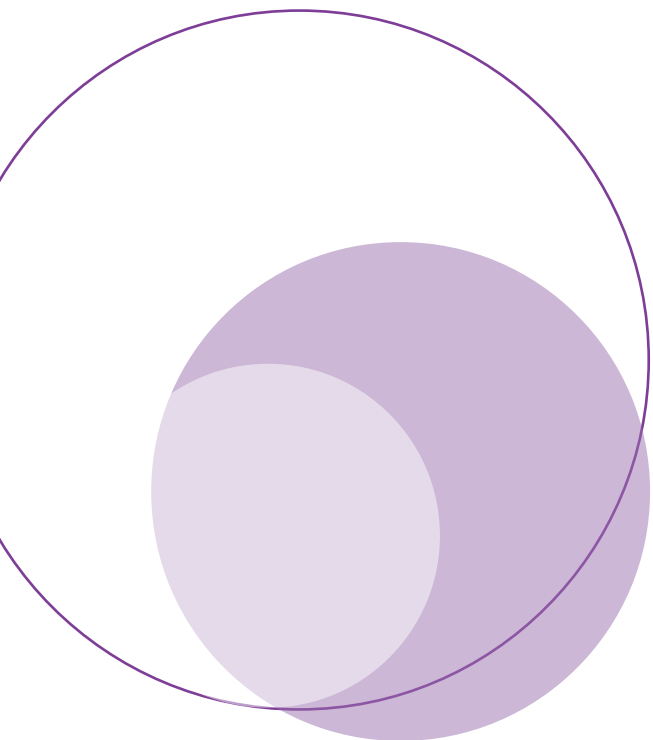
Engagement with Queensland's multicultural community was undertaken through a focus group with community members in Townsville, submissions from a number of organisations that work with multicultural communities, and responses from over 300 VET students to the online survey who identified as culturally and linguistically diverse. Key findings included:

- Community members need accessible information about VET pathways and support available.
- Increase access to more practical training and less theory-based learning to demonstrate practical skills rather than undertake assessment through traditional methods (i.e. exams, assignments), particularly where English is a second language.
- Additional support is required to address specific learning needs, including English language and digital skills.
- Increase support and communication following completion of a qualification to connect with employment.
- More support is needed to access local work experience. Language remains a key barrier to connecting with employment opportunities.

People with disability

Consultation heard from organisations that support people with disability to access training and employment services, almost 400 VET students who completed the online survey who identified as a person with disability, and a number of students who attended online focus groups. Key findings included:

- Completion rates are affected by students having varying levels or readiness for study so they may need additional support to complete training.
- Innovative strategies could attract students into study areas of need, including exploring technology-based solutions to provide engaging and dynamic learning experiences.
- Training needs to be attractive and consistent, and high-quality materials need to be developed that target First Nations people, migrants, people with disability and other underrepresented groups.
- Public providers should protect the interests of socially and financially disadvantaged groups and provide the resources needed to overcome the barriers in accessing training.
- There is a need for consistency in the support available to students with disability across the secondary and tertiary education sectors, particularly with respect to career advice, adoption of universal design for learning principles and brokering paid internships.

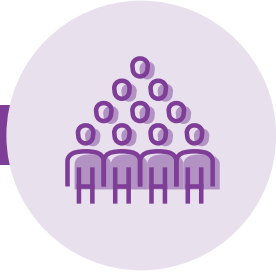


What we heard

Business

1,500

employers, including
500+ small business



Online survey:

What is the main industry that your business operates in?

Construction	390
Manufacturing	180
Other Services	180
Retail Trade	91
Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services	90
Accommodation and Food Services	75
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	69
Health Care and Social Assistance	67
Education and Training	61
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	47
Mining	35
Transport, Postal and Warehousing	29
Unsure	19
Arts and Recreation Services	15
Information Media and Telecommunication	15
Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services	13
Administrative and Support Services	11
Financial and Insurance Services	9
Public Administration and Safety	8
Wholesale Trade	5

Key findings:

- Employers highlighted challenges with the relevancy of courses and content, and felt students were not getting enough practical training and access to work experience.
- The issue of flexibility and the time required for apprentices and trainees to take time off work to complete training was also prominent, with various suggestions of offering more modular course delivery.
- Communication between industry and organisations involved in VET could be improved, particularly between the various parties involved in apprenticeships and traineeships.
- Access to training for both students and employers should be equal regardless of location.
- Lack of consistency in training delivery resulting in mixed outcomes with some students not job-ready upon completion of training.
- Trainer qualifications should be revised and packaged to align with different levels of expertise (e.g. trainer, assessor, designer).
- The cost of VET is often prohibitive and funding is not adequately supporting the costs of regional training delivery.
- There needs to be greater connection and collaboration between government, RTOs and employers to ensure training is meeting industry needs.
- The importance of the strong link between VET pathways and industry was reinforced.

Online survey

Employer question:

1

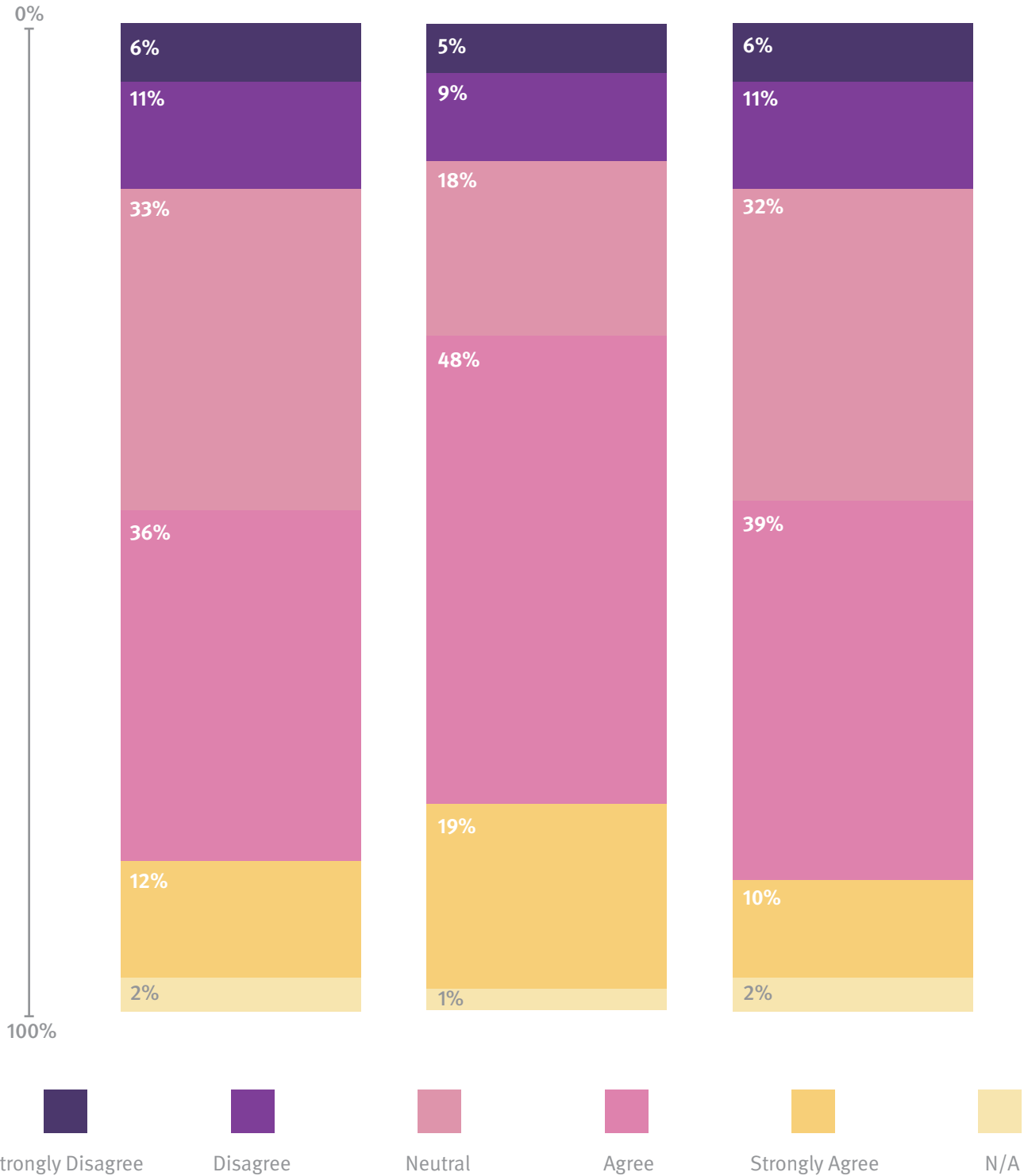
The government is funding training in industries that need the most workers.

2

The training available is relevant to my industry.

3

VET programs are offered in the right locations.



Consultation activity summary

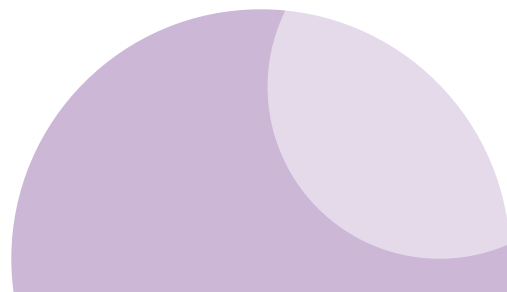
Forums and focus groups

12 July 2023 – Regional VET sector stakeholders – Eight Miles Plains
13 July 2023 – Regional VET sector stakeholders – Chermside
19 July 2023 – Regional VET sector stakeholders – Bokarina
20 July 2023 – Regional VET sector stakeholders – Maryborough
24 July 2023 – VET in schools focus group – Townsville
25 July 2023 – Regional VET sector stakeholders – Townsville
25 July 2023 – Multicultural users focus group – Townsville
31 July 2023 – VET in schools focus group – Rockhampton
1 August 2023 – Regional VET sector stakeholders – Rockhampton
2 August 2023 – VET in schools focus group – online
2 August 2023 – VET student, apprentice and trainee focus group #1 – online
2 August 2023 – VET in schools students and parents (rural/regional/remote) – online
3 August 2023 – VET in schools focus group – Brisbane
8 August 2023 – Training providers – online
8 August 2023 – VET in schools stakeholders – online
8 August 2023 – Industry and employer stakeholders #1 – online
9 August 2023 – First Nations student focus group – Cairns
10 August 2023 – Regional VET sector stakeholders – Cairns
10 August 2023 – VET in schools focus group – Cairns
14 August 2023 – Small and medium business focus group – online
14 August 2023 – Industry and employer stakeholders #2 – online
15 August 2023 – Regional VET sector stakeholders – Toowoomba
15 August 2023 – VET in schools focus group – Toowoomba
17 August 2023 – VET student, apprentice and trainee focus group #2 – online

Written submissions

Interested stakeholders, users of VET and the general public were also given an option to respond via written submissions to questions outlined in a discussion paper. Sixty-three submissions were received from five individuals and the organisations listed below.

Active Queenslanders Industry Alliance
Ai Group
Alpha 1 Memorials Pty Ltd
Association of Marine Park Tourism Operators
Australian Industry Trade College
Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union
Australian Medical Association Queensland
Australian Publishers Association
Bundaberg Fruit and Vegetable Growers Limited
Bundaberg Regional Jobs Committee
Business Chamber Queensland
Cairns Regional Council
Centacare - Archdioceses of Brisbane
CheckUP Australia
Community Services Industry Alliance
Community Solutions Group
Cotton Australia
CQUniversity
Darling Downs and South West Queensland – Regional Community Forum
Department of Regional Development, Manufacturing and Water
DP World
East Coast Apprenticeships
Golden West Apprenticeships
Griffith University
Independent Education Union - Queensland and Northern Territory Branch
Independent Schools Queensland
Independent Tertiary Education Council Australia
Institute of Urban Indigenous Health
Jobs Queensland
Laundry Association of Australia
Local Government Association of Queensland
Manufacturing Skills Queensland
Master Electricians Australia
Mercury's Wings Theatre Company
Multicultural Australia
My Pathway
Office of the Inspector-General of Emergency Management
Qld Small Business Courses
Queensland Alliance for Mental Health
Queensland Building and Construction Commission
Queensland Catholic Education Commission
Queensland Corrective Services
Queensland Mental Health Commission
Queensland Nurses and Midwives' Union
Queensland Resources Council
Queensland Teachers' Union
Queensland Tourism Industry Council
Queensland Water Directorate (qldwater)
RAT Engineering
Regional Development Australia Logan & Redlands
Restaurant and Catering Industry Association
Rural Jobs and Skills Alliance
Services for Australian Rural and Remote Allied Health (SARRAH)
SQW Training and Assessing
Stanwell
The Perry Group
Townsville Enterprise
University of the Sunshine Coast



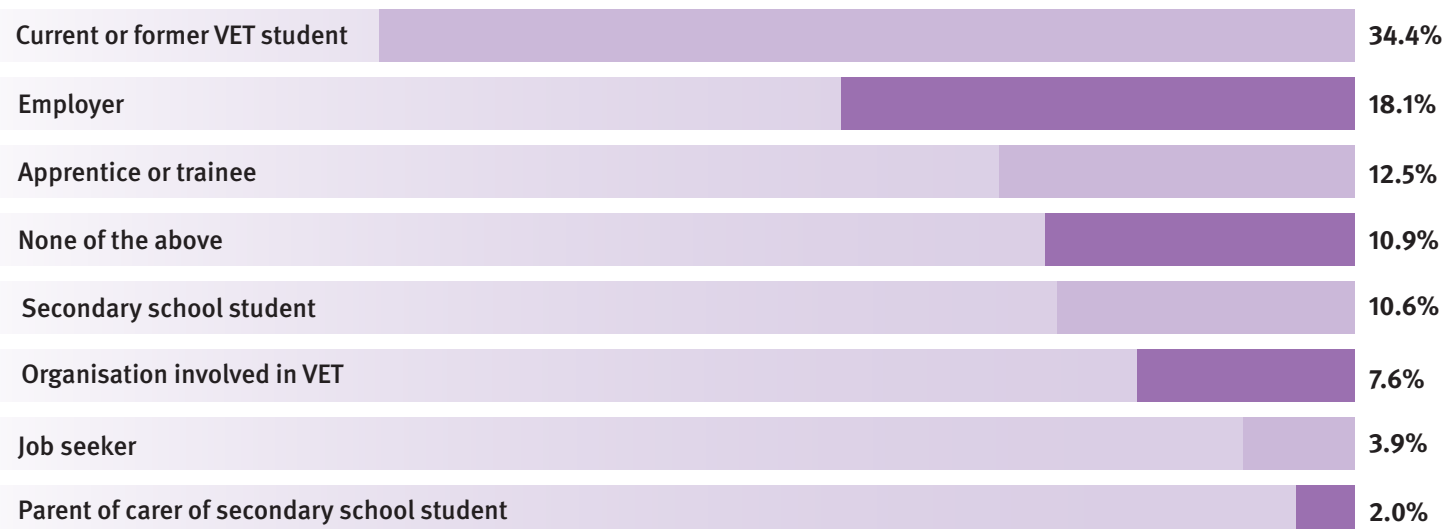
Online survey

An online survey was available through the Department of Youth Justice, Employment, Small Business and Training website (www.qld.gov.au/qvetstrategy) between 29 June and 18 August 2023 to enable students, parents and carers, employers and organisations involved in VET to easily have their say. Emails encouraging completion of the survey were sent by the department directly to current and former VET students, apprentices and trainees, employers of apprentices and trainees, and training organisations throughout the consultation process.

In total the survey received 7,823 responses, including responses from 4,806 students (including apprentices and trainees), 1,414 employers, 598 organisations and 153 parents.

Online survey respondent breakdown:

Which of the following best describes you?



During the consultation period, information promoting the opportunity to have a say to inform the new VET strategy was also included on the Get Involved website – www.getinvolved.qld.gov.au.

Additional engagement

To supplement the broader consultation activity, focused engagement was undertaken with a range of stakeholders, including:

- presentations at seven Regional Community Forums (Monto, Mareeba, Moranbah, Muttaborra, Thuringowa, Roma and Gladstone) on 10 July 2023 attended by 250 stakeholders and community members
- meetings with First Nations stakeholders and users of VET via the Principal Indigenous Program Officer network, building on the consultation undertaken in May 2022 to inform the First Nations Training Strategy
- representations at various stakeholder forums and meetings.

A Queensland VET Strategy Reference Group comprised of representatives from industry, community and the VET and education sectors, also provided guidance on the implementation of the consultation process.

List of abbreviations

ABBREVIATION	DEFINITION
AASN	Australian Apprenticeship Support Network provider
ATAR	Australian Tertiary Admission Rank
LLN	Language, literacy and numeracy
QCE	Queensland Certificate of Education
RPL	Recognition of prior learning
RTO	Registered training organisation
SAS	Skills Assure Supplier
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
VET	Vocational education and training
VETiS	VET in Schools program

Next steps

Detailed consultation findings and data are informing the development of the new Queensland VET Strategy.

To stay up-to-date with the progress of the new VET strategy, visit www.qld.gov.au/qvetstrategy or email qldvet.strategy@desbt.qld.gov.au.

