

The background of the entire page is a vibrant, abstract Indigenous Australian artwork. It features a rich palette of orange, blue, and white. The design is composed of various geometric and organic shapes, including concentric circles, radiating lines, and stylized patterns that resemble traditional Indigenous motifs like boomerangs and spears. The overall effect is a complex, layered composition that suggests movement and depth.

Paving the Way

First Nations
Training Strategy



Queensland
Government



Acknowledgement of Country

The Queensland Government respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the lands and seas from across Queensland. We pay our respects to the Elders past and present, for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and hopes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across the state.

A better understanding and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures develops an enriched appreciation of Australia's cultural heritage and can lead to reconciliation. This is essential to the maturity of Australia as a nation and fundamental to the development of an Australian identity.

Foreword

Paving the Way – the First Nations Training Strategy, is an important step in changing how government works with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities to develop and deliver training and skilling opportunities for the jobs of the future.



With the Queensland economy in a strong position, and the State ready to welcome the world through the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games, the need for a highly skilled workforce has never been more important. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' unique skills, knowledge and culture are playing a critical role in building this workforce, and driving continued economic growth in every Queensland community.

Paving the Way outlines a range of actions to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders' skills development, through training that will open up opportunities for employment and meet local, community and regional job needs.

It follows the Queensland Government's commitment through the Path to Treaty reforms to reframe our relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to deliver real change and real outcomes through a genuine partnership approach.

Paving the Way has been developed through nearly 12 months of open conversations across the State with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, local Indigenous community groups, community Elders,

local Indigenous small businesses, non-Indigenous businesses and employers, training providers, schools, local councils, state and federal government agencies and key Indigenous governance groups.

I want to thank every stakeholder who participated, and provided valuable input by sharing their views, experiences and aspirations for the future.

These discussions highlighted the importance of community-led responses and empowering First Nations voices in decisions that impact Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.

Our consultation also confirmed that there is much more work to do to improve the transition from training to employment, and achieve equality with non-Indigenous Queenslanders in workforce participation. We must continue to strive to close the gap in social and economic outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders – acknowledging that this is a longer-term goal that requires ongoing commitment and endeavor by us all.

I recently released the *Queensland Workforce Strategy 2022-2032* which highlights that by maximising workforce participation through diversity, and skills and

training, employers will have access to a larger talent pool to address their workforce and skills needs. This includes the wealth of knowledge and skills held by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, which are critical to the strength and diversity of our communities.

Actions and initiatives under *Paving the Way* will help drive job opportunities through Indigenous-led training and workforce solutions; skills and training pathway opportunities and support that meet local workforce needs; and by building cultural awareness skills and competency in local workplaces.

Together, we will implement practical and workable actions that will make a real difference to individuals and communities and move us forward toward our shared goal to close the gap in training and employment outcomes, and empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to achieve self-determination and create their own future.

The Honourable Di Farmer MP

**Minister for Employment and Small Business
Minister for Training and Skills Development**





Empowering First Nations voices

The Queensland Government is building a stronger relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Through the Statement of Commitment for a reframed relationship, Path to Treaty and the Local Thriving Communities reform, the Government is building a reframed relationship that recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Peoples of Queensland. This relationship is built on respect and focuses on self-determination with a strengths-based approach.

This new way of working together aims to deliver real change and outcomes. It is a genuine partnership with shared responsibility between the Queensland Government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Paving the Way focuses on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' participation in the economy through training and jobs. The Strategy aligns with the current Moving Ahead economic participation strategy, as well as the work to develop a new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Economic Strategy to be released later in 2022.

Closing the Gap in training and employment

We must continue to work together to close the gap in social and economic outcomes.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples participate more in government-funded training than non-Indigenous people, however their employment outcomes are much lower.

The Queensland Government acknowledges that more must be done to lift participation and job outcomes under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

Paving the Way supports longer term changes under Closing the Gap by improving education, training and employment.



Case Study:

TAFE Queensland is embedding new reconciliation strategies through its Reconciliation Action Plan

TAFE Queensland's Reconciliation Action Plan includes a commitment to building relationships and working in partnership with First Nations communities to ensure training is relevant and provides skills that will lead to genuine employment. The plan also implements a Cultural Capability Framework and Cultural Protocols Guide for staff and provides more opportunities through targeted employment and education strategies, procurement and scholarships.



Introduction

Building successful outcomes together

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' unique skills, knowledge and culture are core to the strength and diversity of our communities.

As we recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and our local and state economies grow, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples continue to play a vital role in building a strong future.

This includes a future that sees improved job opportunities and workforce participation, community empowerment and positive social outcomes.

Queensland currently has strong economic growth and low unemployment.

This has led to skills shortages in the workforce. These conditions offer a real opportunity for government to address the long-term disadvantage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' participation in the economy.

Skills and training are key in enabling all Queenslanders to be involved more fully in the workforce.

Paving the Way is a plan to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' skills development and respond to local and community employment needs.

Paving the Way includes actions and initiatives that focus on:

- Indigenous-led training and workforce solutions
- skills and training pathways that meet local workforce needs
- cultural awareness and competency.

Paving the Way is part of the \$200 million Future Skills Fund investment which supports:

- high-quality training and training infrastructure
- building a diverse workforce
- ensuring every Queenslanders has the opportunity to participate.

Paving the Way is also supporting the *Queensland Workforce Strategy 2022-2032* to ensure Queensland has trained people to strengthen our communities and keep Queensland at the forefront of new economic opportunities.

Paving the Way is underpinned by a commitment to empower community and increase participation in skills and training, particularly in areas that are most needed. These opportunities will help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples achieve self-determination goals and share in Queensland's future prosperity.



237,000
Indigenous Queenslanders

29%
of Indigenous Australians
live in Queensland

4.6%
of Queenslanders are
Indigenous



UNDER 15 **UNDER 30**
34% **60%**
Indigenous Indigenous

18% **37%**
Non-Indigenous Non-Indigenous

Indigenous people have a younger population than the non-Indigenous population



28% **30%**
Non-Indigenous Indigenous

Participation rate of Queensland VET students aged 15-64 years



82% **75%**
Non-Indigenous Indigenous

Employed or studying after training



OVER \$1.2 BILLION

has been allocated to support training and skills in the 2022-23 State Budget



Participating in VET receiving government funding



Indigenous Queenslanders appear more satisfied with VET training quality

Top areas of VET study by Indigenous students



Community Services



Construction



Business



General Education & Training



Hospitality



Health

Top employment for Indigenous people



Community Services



Labourers



Technicians & Trade Workers



Clerical & Administrative Workers



Professionals



Case Study:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student of the Year - Queensland Training Awards 2021

Kasey is a proud Mandandanji and Gunggarri woman on her mother’s side and Yuggera and Kullili on her father’s side. Kasey had two great role models in life, her parents. She watched her parents experiences and struggles through limited and often difficult roles, because they hadn’t been afforded the opportunity to seek further training and skills. Kasey’s parents have instilled a strong focus on creating a better life for herself through the path of education and training.

For Kasey, a traineeship offered the perfect opportunity to get a taste of the resources and energy industry, rather than signing up for an apprenticeship before she knew what to expect.

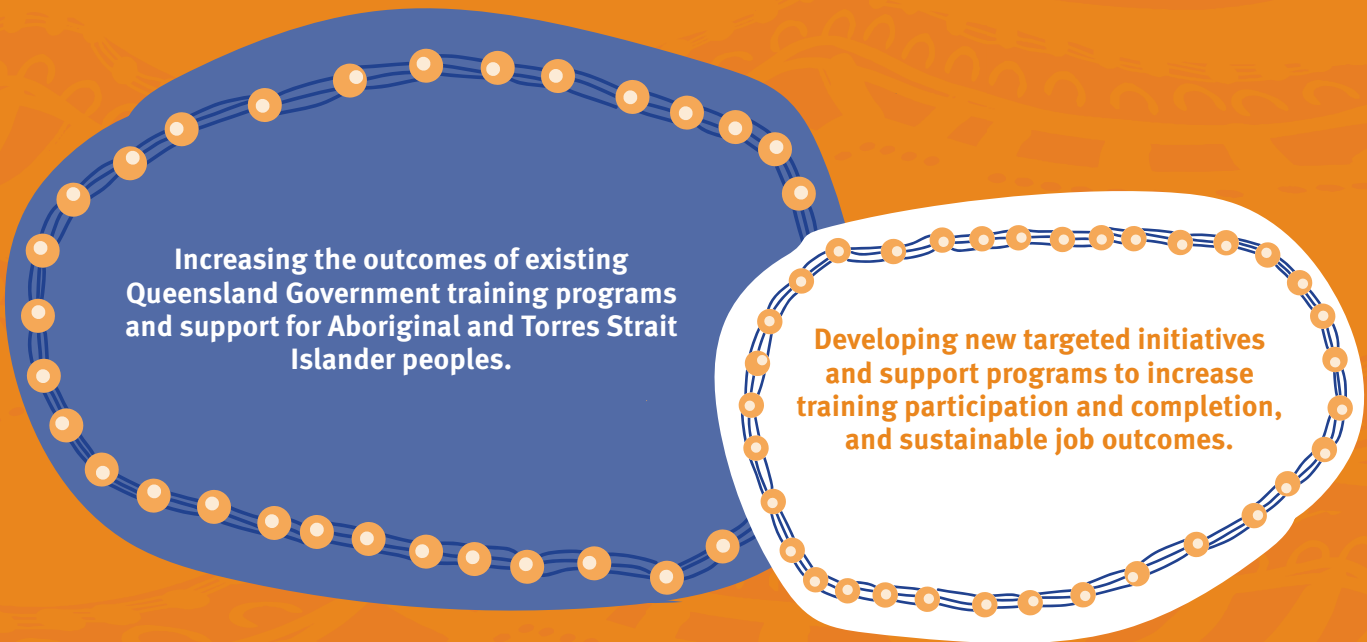
Kasey chose the resources sector to learn more about natural gas extraction, particularly about its impact on the environment. Having now completed her traineeship, she is continuing her Workplace Health and Safety studies and is a keen mentor of other Indigenous trainees. Kasey says being a mentor and role model has been one of her motivations to achieve success in her life.

“I want children in my community to see positive behaviours and mindsets towards employment because you can’t be, what you can’t see.”

Kasey is nearing completion of her second consecutive traineeship, through employers Migas and Shell QGC and is close to her dream of becoming a qualified and experienced HSSE Advisor in the oil and gas industry and will continue to inspire other members of her community as a mentor.

About *Paving the Way*

Vision: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have strong skills and training pathways, and support that will lead to sustainable, local jobs and ensure participation in a stronger future for Queensland.



Increasing the outcomes of existing Queensland Government training programs and support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Developing new targeted initiatives and support programs to increase training participation and completion, and sustainable job outcomes.

Focus areas for action:

1. Indigenous-led training and workforce solutions.
2. Skills and training pathway opportunities and support that meet local workforce needs.
3. Cultural awareness skills and competency.

Paving the Way Principles

Delivery of *Paving the Way* is underpinned by the following guiding principles.

Respect

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have the right to be treated respectfully, and are free to control their destiny and pursue their economic, social and cultural development.

Locally led

Community-led approaches address local needs and harness efforts, resources and opportunities to work toward shared and long-term goals, including goals for self-determination.

Shared commitment and responsibility

Lifelong learning and skills development is a shared responsibility of government, employers, communities and individuals.

Sustainable and meaningful

Meaningful and sustainable jobs improve the lives and wellbeing of individuals, families and communities.

Diversity

An inclusive and diverse workforce at all levels contributes to the growth and productivity of the Queensland economy.

The Community

Targeted community engagement

Consultation was held across Queensland to develop *Paving the Way*.

Led by an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consultation specialist the sessions engaged with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander councils, community groups, businesses, industry groups and individuals.

This process provided an opportunity to listen to the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It provided important insights into the challenges and opportunities within communities and regions, across businesses and industry sectors.

Input from Governance Groups

Targeted discussions were also held with key Governance groups.

The Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education and Training Committee provided advice on issues relating to pathways to post-school options including work, training and university for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Business Innovation Reference Group provided advice on how to better support small business to build capability, and provide self-employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



11 face to face sessions



4 online sessions



One Roundtable



200+ people consulted

Consultation Roundtable

A Roundtable was hosted by the Minister for Employment and Small Business, and Minister for Training and Skills Development. This sought expert views from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples on how to create more opportunities for their participation in training and skills for sustainable employment at a local and regional level.

What we heard

Community consultation provided an understanding of the challenges being experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across communities and how to achieve better job and training outcomes.



Paving the Way responds to key themes raised by the Community:

Tailored skills pathways with links to local jobs

Training must link to real jobs in the local area.

Improved resources, information and co-ordination

To help understand the training options available, navigate the system and improve agency connections.

Cultural awareness and empowerment

To embed cultural considerations and perspectives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to improve training and job outcomes.

Wrap around support

To enhance the ability to successfully participate in and complete training and transition to sustainable jobs.

Better regional development and planning

To support local leadership, identify community skills and job needs, and provide services/infrastructure to support training and job creation.

More targeted small business support

To build Indigenous business skills and capability.



Building on existing investment and success

Paving the Way will build on the Queensland Government's more than \$1.2 billion annual investment to connect people to quality training and skills and prepare them for work now and in the future. Existing programs being delivered include:

Skilling Queenslanders for Work

Supports Queenslanders to gain the qualifications and skills needed to enter and stay in the workforce.

Back to Work

Provides incentive payments and other supports to employers who hire an eligible and previously unemployed Queenslander.

Free Apprenticeships and Fee Free TAFE

Fully subsidised training in priority apprenticeship and traineeship qualifications for under 25s and for all Queenslanders studying a high priority qualification with TAFE Queensland or CQUniversity.

Vocational Education and Training (VET) in Schools

Provides training courses to students while they are at school, and offers school-based paid apprenticeships and traineeships with an employer while studying for

their Queensland Certificate of Education.

User Choice

Contributes to the cost of training and assessment for eligible Queensland apprentices and trainees.

Higher Level Skills

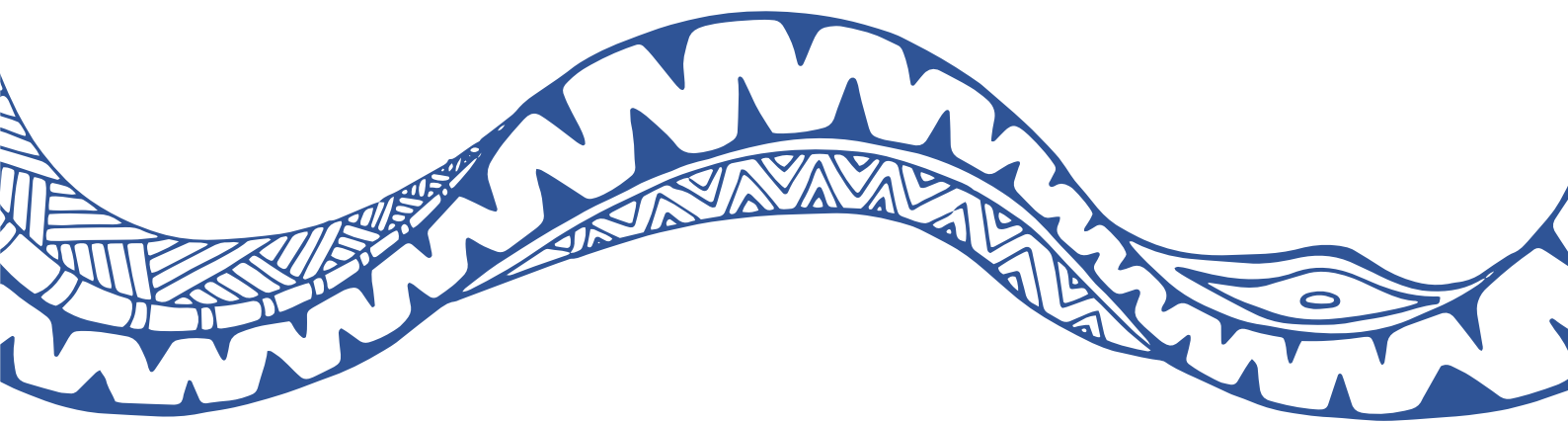
Assists individuals to gain the higher-level skills required to secure employment or career advancement in a priority industry or to transition to university.

Certificate 3 Guarantee

Helps individuals to complete their first post-school Certificate III level qualification to increase their skills.

Gateway to Industry Schools

Assists industry and schools to work together to provide students with industry relevant skills, knowledge and attributes for the workplace, which benefits local employers and communities.





Targeted support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

- **Higher concessional government subsidies** to enable Skills Assure Suppliers to reduce the co-contribution fee and/or provide increased learning support for the student.
- **Location loadings** to support the costs of training delivery into country and remote areas of Queensland, and Cape York and Torres Strait communities in addition to the government subsidy for training.
- **Priority subsidy settings** – under the User Choice Program, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants receive 100% of the government contribution for Priority Two or Priority Three qualifications
- **Subsidies for specific vocational qualifications**, including some with specific relevance for Indigenous Queenslanders such as the Certificate III in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Arts and the Certificate III in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care.

The Queensland Government Building and Construction Training Policy

Supports employment opportunities and skills development in Queensland's building and construction industry. It also focuses on increasing the economic independence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders in the industry. For all Indigenous projects, it is a priority that the core requirement (10% of the total labour hours or 15% for projects \$100 million or greater) of the training policy be met by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander apprentices and trainees and local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers.



Case Study:

Skilling Queenslanders for Work funded Work Skills Traineeships project

For 19-year-old Catherine Curnow, an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander woman, completing a Work Traineeship has set the scene for a career in the arts industry. Catherine first applied for the traineeship delivered by Cairns Indigenous Art Fair (CIAF) because it supported First Nations new and emerging artists to gain a Certificate I in Business as well as hands on work experience in the Cairns art industry.

Catherine has since gained employment as an Exhibition Assistant at CIAF as well as being an emerging artist herself.

Catherine says working in the art industry, interacting with the artists and art centres and also hearing the

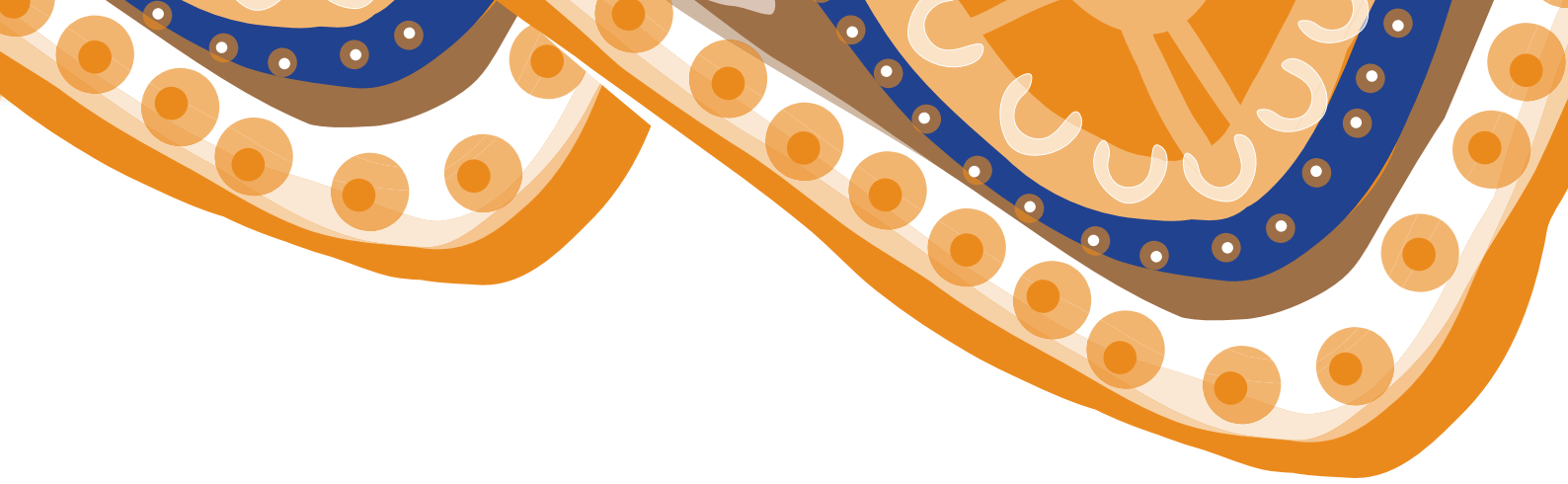
stories and cultures behind each of the artworks, has been a life changing experience.

“I believe training will help those find a job if they put the time and effort into it!

“I have worked hard in my chosen industry to help my family and now my employment will mean my sisters have somewhere to come home to when they come back to Cairns.

“My dreams might not seem big to some but I have always wanted to fix the house that will be passed down to me and with a job and a career for the future I will be able to realise that dream.”

Catherine’s tribal totems are called Brown Snakes (Aboriginal) and “Ait Koedal” which stands for Saltwater Crocodile (Torres Strait Islander).



Focus Areas

Focus Area One

Indigenous-led training and workforce solutions

Community consultation highlighted the importance of local decision making to ensure authentic and effective Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' representation.

Paving the Way recognises that skills and training for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples will be more successful when solutions are developed locally and supported by the community.

Local structures currently supporting training and workforce outcomes include Regional Jobs Committees

and the network of Department of Employment, Small Business and Training (DESBT) regional offices. The Local Thriving Communities local decision-making bodies will be engaged regarding the delivery of training and workforce solutions for their community.

Paving the Way will build on these structures to provide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities with a stronger voice.

Key Actions

Deliver a new **Indigenous Workforce and Skills Development Grant** program to fund Indigenous designed and led projects that support or respond to local workforce and training needs.

Invest in new industry and community partnerships and approaches focussed on improving the participation and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Queensland, through the **Workforce Connect Fund**.



Focus Area Two

Skills and training pathway opportunities and support that meet local workforce needs

Community feedback emphasised the need for tailored and one-on-one support to help individuals better access and navigate the training system, particularly for those traditionally underrepresented in the workforce or needing additional assistance, such as women, people with disability and seniors. It also highlighted the need for additional support to address barriers to school to work transitions and completion of training.

The Queensland Government invests significantly to maximise opportunities for Queenslanders to participate in training and the workforce, through programs such as Skilling Queenslanders for Work, Back to Work, Free Apprenticeships for under 25s, Fee Free TAFE and the Certificate 3 Guarantee.

The Strategy will provide increased guidance and wrap around support so that individuals will be better placed

to access training opportunities, and maximise job outcomes in their local community.

The Strategy will also foster partnership arrangements that create new opportunities for government and industry to be more responsive to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.

Indigenous councils will continue to be supported through the successful Local Government Association of Queensland Capacity Building for Remote Indigenous Communities initiative, which is helping to build capacity across their workforce and provide local residents with local jobs.

Key Actions

Provide **tailored support and information** on navigating training and workforce opportunities and support.

Work with industry to deliver training support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to provide a **supported pathway to completing higher level qualifications** with Skills Assure Suppliers for apprentices and trainees and the Certificate 3 Guarantee graduates.

Fund targeted projects to improve **school to work transitions** for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

Partner with industry to provide opportunities to kick start or transition to a career in digital through the **First Nations Digital Careers Program**.

Align and leverage sector-specific training and workforce strategies to be more responsive and achieve greater efficiencies.

Extend funding support for a further three years for the Local Government Association of Queensland to **build workforce capacity in remote Indigenous communities**.



Focus Area Three

Cultural awareness skills and competency

The need for targeted and culturally appropriate mentoring for Indigenous small businesses was a key theme that emerged from the community consultation.

Under *Paving the Way*, Indigenous mentors will provide one-on-one assistance to businesses in the early stages to build skills and capability. This will work alongside existing business services such as DESBT’s Mentoring for Growth program and TAFE Queensland’s One Business program.

Improving cultural awareness and competency through training and mentoring in places of employment was

also an emerging theme. Establishing culturally safe workplaces is vital to support reconciliation and to maximise positive training and job outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

By building cultural competency, businesses benefit from the unique learning opportunities offered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ knowledge, as well as improving their ability to attract and retain a skilled and diverse workforce. This will contribute to their growth and productivity.

Key Actions

Develop a **Cultural Capability Toolkit** to support small business employers’ skills to establish culturally safe workplaces.

Deliver one-on-one **mentoring for Indigenous businesses** to increase capability and build business skills.

Connect Indigenous businesses with training, resources and support services in Far North Queensland through the **Deadly Business 2032 initiative**.

Implementation

Paving the Way is being delivered under the Queensland Government’s commitment to reframe the relationship, which is the overarching strategic reform agenda to improve outcomes in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Actions under *Paving the Way* will support stronger partnerships with communities and regions through local leadership groups. This Strategy will ensure community perspectives are embedded into program design and delivery. This will maximise employment and training outcomes.

To ensure *Paving the Way* remains responsive to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities all actions will be monitored through performance measures and reporting.

Implementation of *Paving the Way* will be guided by an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consultative committee, representing stakeholders from a range of training, community and business organisations.





Case Study:

Back to Work supported Indigenous business

Djabugay and Yirrganydji man Knephi Brim (Brimmy) started with SDC Group in May 2021 as a casual labourer. His background was retail but wanted to learn a trade.

Brimmy has progressed quickly to now becoming a concreter with potential to step up into a leadership role in the near future. He has also recently started a Certificate III Concreting which will be aligned with SDC Group's internal training program.

SDC Group is a 100 per cent Indigenous, certified Supply Nation Employer, with offices in the Sunshine Coast and Far North Queensland.

SDC Group, believes that the best investment the company can make is an investment towards the development of talent through training.

SDC are passionate about building pathways for young people and future leaders, assisting them to find employment, confidence and personal satisfaction within the workforce.

As a Queensland Government Back to Work supported business, they are culture driven, making employees feel a sense of belonging. SDC operates on the belief that the first few steps in the workforce empowers employees to upskill and improve their personal and professional development. Their mantra is we can't change the world, but if the candidate is willing, we can change theirs.



Find out more

To find out more about skills and training support available through the First Nations Training Strategy:

☎ 1300 369 935

📘 facebook.com/skillsforqueensland

🌐 desbt.qld.gov.au/first-nations-training

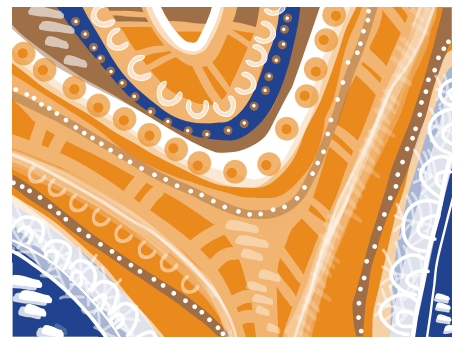
Paving the Way



The Training Landscape



The Learning Journey



The Uplifting Effect for Community

Through this custom embodied design titled, *Paving the Way*, the artists have represented the landscape of cultural connection and opportunities from a bird's eye view. Linework represents expanding pathways of growth, where each pathway explores the various touchpoints of both education and training.

The embodied design is broken up into three key segments (known as a triptych). Each segment explores its own representations of growth and capability building. Within this series, each design can exist separately and as a collective, which speaks broadly to building and growing capability and community capacity.

This embodied design, '*Paving the Way*', was created in 2022 for the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training by Iscariot Media's artistic team. Michael Ah Kee (Yidinji, Kuku Yalanji, Waanyi, Koko Berrin), Stephanie Evans (Kooma and Maori) and Matrisse Watego (Aboriginal and South Sea Islander).



Also incorporated into the design of *Paving the Way* is artwork from Jessie Mordey nee Ketchell. Jessie grew up in Waiben (Thursday Island) in Zenath Kes (the Torres Strait) and is a descendant of Dauar Eb Clan from Mer (Murray Island) and Maluilgal, Wakaid Clan from Badu Island.

The storyline of this design draws on totems that keeps our communities connected to ancestors.

The drum and headdress is about getting together and celebrating cultural heritage.



Department of Employment, Small Business and Training

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**Queensland
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