

**Discussion
paper**

Development of a
**Queensland
Vocational
Education
and Training
Strategy**

Acknowledgement of First Nations People

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 people.

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

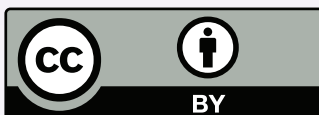
This Discussion Paper has been prepared and published to generate public discussion and comment to inform the development of the Queensland Vocational Education and Training Strategy.

The Discussion Paper does not represent Queensland Government policy or position.



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)**.



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Minister's message



Queensland has proven to be Australia's employment powerhouse, leading the nation in job creation.

Current modelling predicts we will need an additional 280,000 workers by 2024–25 and, of these workers, more than a third (38%) will require a vocational education and training (VET) qualification.

Queensland has a strong and diverse VET sector with more than 1,400 registered training organisations and almost 1 million people enrolled in VET in 2021.

To meet the demand for skilled workers now and into the future, we need to ensure our VET sector is focused on providing priority skills in traditional and emerging sectors, and supporting all Queenslanders into meaningful employment.

At a national level, the state, territory and Australian governments are progressing national skills reforms to provide high-quality, responsive and accessible education and training. This collaborative approach is already delivering results, with 37,000 Fee Free TAFE places on offer across the state to meet local skills needs.

For the Queensland Government, through the *Good people. Good jobs: Queensland Workforce Strategy 2022–2032* we are committed to maximising VET student and employment outcomes from the state's annual investment of more than \$1.2 billion in training and skills programs.

To do this, the Queensland Government will develop a new Queensland VET Strategy.

This discussion paper invites you to provide your input to inform development of the VET strategy across four focus areas:

1. delivering priority and future skills
2. ensuring access for all Queenslanders
3. working with employers and industry
4. supporting VET pathways and job transitions.

We want to hear from people involved in VET across all of Queensland – training providers, industry, government bodies, employer and employee groups, community organisations, small, medium and large businesses, students, apprentices and trainees.

Supporting this discussion paper will be a series of forums, focus groups and an online survey to capture the views of stakeholders and users of the VET system across the state and provide an opportunity for in-depth conversation.

The new Queensland VET Strategy will ensure our investment is leading to the right outcomes for students and employers, and supporting Queensland's continued growth.

I encourage you to contribute to this discussion and the future of VET in Queensland.

Hon. Di Farmer MP

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

Introduction

Queensland's economy is strong, diverse and growing, particularly in sectors such as agriculture, mining, tourism and health. The Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games, and increased investment in emerging industries – including related investment outlined in the Queensland Government's \$62 billion Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan – will accelerate growth in workforce demand and the subsequent need for higher-level and flexible skills.

To deliver on these opportunities, the *Good people. Good jobs: Queensland Workforce Strategy 2022–2032* sets out a vision to increase the size, skills and adaptability of Queensland's workforce to meet current and future workforce needs. The vocational education and training (VET) sector will play a critical role in realising this vision, while also delivering opportunities for individuals and communities.

Why we need your help

The Queensland Government is committed to creating more opportunities for Queenslanders to access good jobs now, as well as prepare for the secure jobs of the future.

While almost 1 million students undertook VET in 2021–22, there remains a high demand for skilled workers across a number of industries and in regions.

Health and aged care, building and construction, and hospitality are just some of the sectors struggling to find workers now, with the demand for workers with skills in renewable energy, advanced manufacturing and digital services increasing every day.

Increasing awareness and encouraging Queenslanders to choose to study in areas where workers are needed, complete their studies and go on to obtain employment, continues to be a challenge.

The Queensland VET Strategy will tailor the state's annual investment – over \$1.2 billion in 2022–23 – in skills and training to meet current and future demand across industries and the state.

Employers, training providers, students and governments all play a role in contributing to a high-performing VET system in Queensland. We need your help to ensure government activity is appropriately targeted to achieve the best outcomes for students, employers and communities.

Investment in VET is not the only answer to solving skills and workforce shortages. Alongside development of a new VET strategy, the *Queensland Workforce Strategy* is delivering a range of strategies through industry, community and government collaboration to increase workforce participation, develop local workforce solutions and strengthen pathways to employment.

A strong economy

- **264,000 more people are employed** in May 2023 than before COVID-19.
- **Labour force participation is at 66.5%** – higher than the pre-COVID rate of 65.7%.
- **Employment in Queensland rose 5.1% in 2021–22**, the strongest growth in 17 years.
- **More than half of all Queensland workers** are projected to have a VET qualification by 2024–25.
- **Projected growth of 280,000+ people employed** by 2024–25 to meet growing demand.

Sources: ABS, Labour Force, May 2023 Trend; Jobs Queensland, Anticipating Future Skills, March 2022.

Have your say to inform the development of a Queensland VET Strategy



The Queensland Government welcomes input from all stakeholders and users of VET to develop a new VET strategy.

To have your say:

- **Provide a written submission** in response to questions outlined in this discussion paper. You can respond to as many or as few of the questions as you wish.

To submit your response:

web: Complete the online survey at www.qld.gov.au/qvetstrategy – choose ‘Organisation involved in VET’ at question 1

email: QVETStrategy@desbt.qld.gov.au

post to: QVET Strategy, Strategic Policy
Department of Youth Justice, Employment,
Small Business and Training
PO Box 15483
City East Brisbane QLD 4002

- **Complete the online survey**
– visit www.qld.gov.au/qvetstrategy
- **Participate in a forum**
– find out more at www.qld.gov.au/qvetstrategy

Closing time for submissions and survey responses is 5pm Friday, 18 August 2023.

If you have any questions or require accessibility adjustments to have your say, please email QVETStrategy@desbt.qld.gov.au or call 1300 369 935.

VET in Queensland

The VET sector delivers on individual aspirations, the skills needed by employers and drives economic growth through quality training delivery.

According to Jobs Queensland, nine of the 10 fastest growing occupations are projected to be supported by VET qualifications by 2024–25. These include hospitality workers, food trade workers such as chefs and butchers, salespeople, information and communication technology professionals, and carers and aides.

Queensland’s skills system

VET in Queensland is part of a national skills and training system. The training system is a partnership between the Queensland and Australian governments, employers, private and public registered training organisations, unions and individuals. Each of these stakeholders has a role in delivering the training and skills needed to meet industry and community demand for workers.

Jobs and Skills Australia provides advice on workforce skills and training needs to improve employment opportunities and economic growth at a national level. Industry groups, employers and unions lead the identification of future skills needs and communicate training expectations nationally through the newly established Jobs and Skills Councils.

In Queensland, VET is delivered by more than 1,400 public, private and community-based training providers, with students accessing fee-for-service training in addition to government subsidised training. Quality assurance

of training providers nationwide is the responsibility of the Australian Skills Quality Authority.

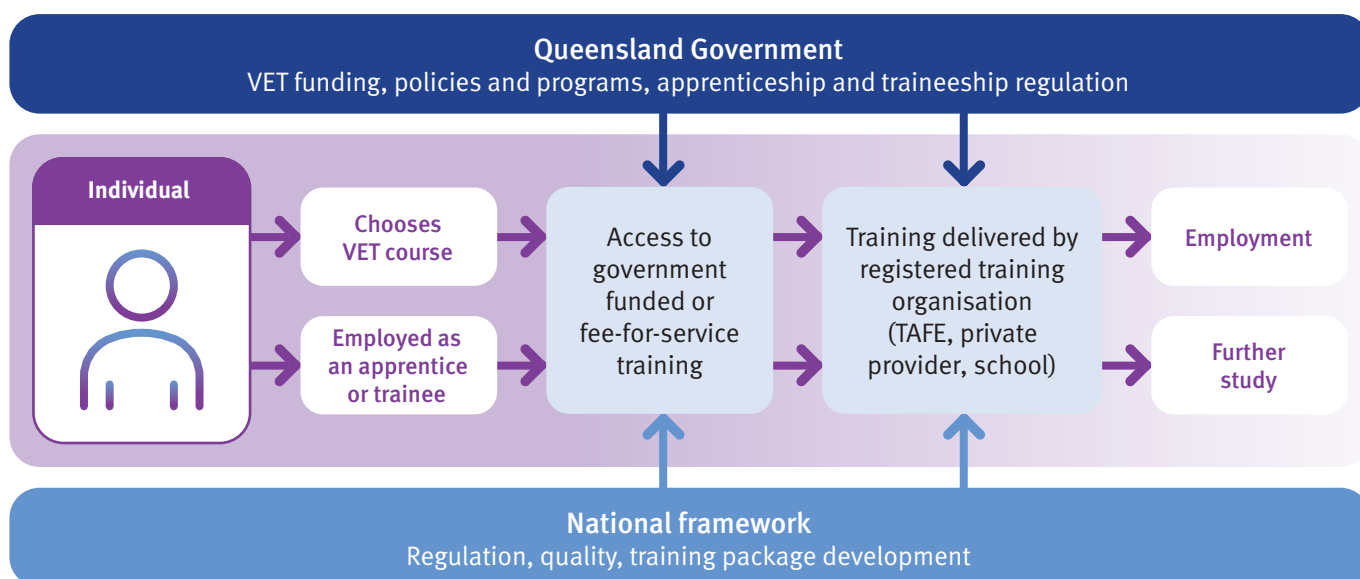
Queensland Government subsidised training is delivered by our public providers, TAFE Queensland and CQUniversity (as the TAFE provider for Central Queensland), complemented by a network of nearly 400 training providers – Skills Assure Suppliers – that have met robust entry criteria to deliver subsidised training.

VET training can be classroom or workplace-based or delivered through a combination of on-the-job and in the classroom through an apprenticeship or traineeship. The Queensland Government is responsible for regulating the apprenticeship and traineeship system under the *Further Education and Training (FET) Act 2014*, which sets out the roles and responsibilities of employers, training providers, and apprentices and trainees.

National skills reform

Reflecting our shared funding responsibility, all state and territory governments are working towards a new National Skills Agreement and national skills reform agenda. A central, national engagement hub provides up-to-date information and opportunities for stakeholder participation in developing these reforms (www.skillsreform.gov.au).

Queensland VET System



Queensland VET snapshot

977,051

VET students
in Queensland
in 2021

Around **30%**
of Queenslanders
aged 15–64
undertook VET in 2021

75,543

new apprenticeship
and traineeship
commencements
in 2021–22

Total of
104,436
apprentices
and trainees
as at 30 June 2022

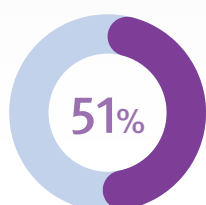
More than
1,400
registered training
organisations
in 2021

More than
\$1.2b
Queensland Government
funding to support
training and skills for
Queenslanders in 2021–22

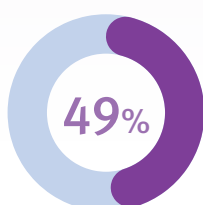
TAFE Queensland
and CQUniversity
are the **state's public
providers** under the
*TAFE Queensland
Act 2013*

96,993
or **43%**
of government funded
students trained
at TAFE and other
government providers

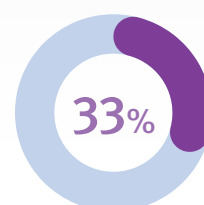
There were **226,768** Queensland Government funded
VET students in 2021–22:



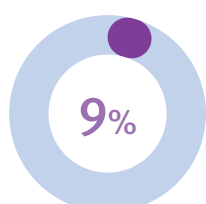
Regional and remote
114,783



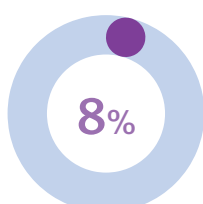
Female
110,906



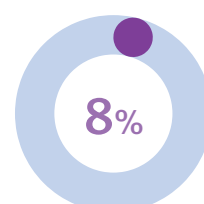
30 years and over
74,161



Culturally and linguistically
diverse people
19,878



People
with disability
18,132



First
Nations
17,643

Sources: Queensland Government, Internal Database; National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER), Total VET students and courses 2021.

Delivering priority and future skills

Targeting investment to support Queensland's growing and changing workforce

Skills and workforce shortages are being experienced across the state, with unemployment at near historic lows and more than 280,000 additional workers needed by 2024–25 to meet demand across a range of traditional and emerging industries.

Higher level and flexible skills are becoming increasingly important as our economy changes. Technology continues to drive a need for lifelong learning to ensure Queenslanders can acquire new skills or learn new ways of doing an existing job.

Together with higher education, VET plays a critical role in meeting workforce demands, with growth projected in all regions and across many industries.

In Queensland, government funding supports about a third of all VET activity with the remainder of VET programs paid for by the student or employer (fee-for-service) or covered by a VET Student Loan which students can access for some diploma-level and above courses.

By establishing training priorities and setting government subsidies, funding can be directed toward the skills and qualifications to produce workers for jobs needed by employers and industry. Queensland Government subsidised programs are published on the Priority Skills List and User Choice Price List at www.desbt.qld.gov.au/training/providers/funded/priority-skills-list.

Where are we now?

- In 2021–22, more than 200,000 students accessed subsidised training in more than 300 qualifications and skills sets and nearly 250 apprenticeship and traineeship qualifications.
- Courses with the highest student participation in 2021–22 included:
 - Certificate III in Individual Support
 - Certificate I in Construction
 - Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care
 - Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care
 - Certificate II in Engineering Pathways
 - Certificate II in Health Support Services
 - Certificate III in Electrotechnology Electrician
 - Certificate III in Hospitality
 - Certificate II in Hospitality
 - Diploma of Nursing
 - Certificate III in Carpentry
 - Certificate III in Engineering – Mechanical Trade
 - Certificate II in Electrotechnology (Career Start)
 - Certificate III in Business.

Source: Queensland Government, Internal Database.

Future skills considerations

- Growing industries by 2024–25 include:
 - accommodation and food services (18.5%)
 - health care and social assistance (16.7%)
 - financial and insurance services (15%)
 - mining (14.5%)
 - education and training (13.9%)
 - retail trade (13.1%)
 - agriculture, forestry and fishing (11.1%)
 - construction (6%).
- By 2024–25, the number of new jobs in these industries are forecast to increase by:
 - 34,650 in accommodation and food services
 - 63,111 in health care and social assistance
 - 10,583 in financial and insurance services
 - 10,371 in mining
 - 30,136 in education and training
 - 33,504 in retail trade
 - 8,786 in agriculture, forestry and fishing
 - 14,133 in construction.
- Workforce shortages are expected to widen in healthcare, education and hospitality as demand outpaces supply, with a projected shortage of 6,000–10,000 workers by 2027.
- New demand from investment in renewables
 - around 100,000 jobs to be created by the Queensland SuperGrid by 2040.

Sources: Jobs Queensland Anticipating Future Skills; Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan; Queensland Government internal analysis.



Discussion questions

What opportunities have you been able to experience through VET as:

- a student
- an apprentice or trainee
- an employer
- a registered training organisation
- other groups? (e.g. peak bodies, unions, community organisations)

What gaps or challenges have you experienced with VET as:

- a student
- an apprentice or trainee
- an employer
- a registered training organisation
- other groups? (e.g. peak bodies, unions, community organisations)

What is the one thing you would do to improve the VET experience?

Ensuring access for all Queenslanders

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

Queensland is a large and decentralised state, with about half the population living outside of Greater Brisbane. The government is committed to connecting Queenslanders to the training and skills they need for work now and in the future, wherever they live and whatever their background.

VET is particularly important for regional, rural and remote communities. It delivers the skills needed for local industries and workers in regional areas are more likely to have a VET qualification than workers in a similar occupation in major cities. Training delivery in regional, rural and remote Queensland receives additional loadings of 15% in country areas, 75% in remote areas and 150% for Cape York and Torres Strait in recognition of the higher costs of delivery.

VET also plays an important role in maximising opportunities for Queenslanders to fully participate in the workforce, particularly for those underrepresented or underemployed in the workforce, such as migrant communities, First Nations peoples, people with disability and women. VET can assist people access jobs and contributes to a diverse workforce that is stronger, more resilient and capable.

Public and private providers deliver VET to diverse Queensland communities and are an essential component of our VET system and supporting a strong economy. TAFE has a comprehensive footprint of delivery locations across the state, from Thursday Island in the north, the Gold Coast in the south and Charleville in the west, and helps people of all backgrounds to access the benefits of training and skills.

Where are we now?

- 28% of 15–64-year-olds in Queensland participated in nationally recognised VET in 2021, compared to 24% nationally.
- 73% of Queensland Government funded VET graduates in remote and very remote areas were likely to improve their employment status after training, above the Queensland average of 68%.
- A network of over 60 TAFE delivery locations and nearly 400 Skills Assure Suppliers, delivering subsidised training across the state.
- Nearly \$280 million invested in upgrading, renewing and revitalising TAFE campuses to provide access to adequate, modern facilities for Queensland's VET students since 2017.
- Over 75,000 unemployed and underemployed Queenslanders supported through the Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative, with 76% of participants finding work or going on to further study.
- \$8.3 million in new initiatives to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' participation in training and skills under the *Paving the Way – First Nations Training Strategy*.
- Delivering the Train and Retain initiative to build a stronger, inclusive training system that delivers for apprentices and trainees, including diversity and inclusion strategies for small business, improving industry-wide workplace culture, and increasing participation and completion rates of apprentices from diverse backgrounds.

Sources: NCVER, Total VET students and courses 2021; Productivity Commission, Report on Government Services 2023 – Section 5 Vocational education and training; Queensland Government, Internal Database.

Future access considerations

- First Nations people undertook government funded VET training at a higher rate (12.6%) than non-Indigenous people (6.8%) in 2021 but are less likely to be employed or studying after training (77.9% compared to 84.7%).
- Women accounted for 10% of apprenticeship commencements in male-dominated trades and about 96% of commencements in community services programs in 2020–21.
- 8.2% of government funded VET students (15–64 years) reported having a disability in 2021; 59% of students with disability in the 20–64 age group were employed after training compared with an average of 78% for students overall.
- 12% of 15–64-year-old Queenslanders participated in government funded VET in remote and very remote areas compared with 6.3% in major cities.
- 32% of VET students in regional and remote areas are more likely to study lower-level courses than those in major cities (24% nationwide).
- NCVET highlights challenges for regional, rural and remote students, employers and registered training organisations, including digital connectivity and literacy, small class sizes and costs to deliver training, lack of training facilities and/or teaching workforce, and training relevance.

Sources: Productivity Commission, Report on Government Services 2023 – Section 5 Vocational education and training; Queensland Training Ombudsman, Review of support provided to Queensland Apprentices and Trainees, with a focus on female apprentices in male dominated occupations, 2022; Jobs and Skills Australia, Vocational education and training in regional, rural and remote Australia 2023; NCVET VET delivery in regional, rural and remote Australia: barriers and facilitators 2023.



Discussion questions

How has TAFE supported you, your industry and/or your community?

What are the barriers to accessing or delivering quality training and skills for:

- a student
- an apprentice or trainee
- an employer
- a registered training organisation
- other groups? (e.g. peak bodies, unions, community organisations)

What is the one thing you would do to improve access to quality training and skills for you, your industry and/or your community?

Working with employers and industry

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

Employers and industry play a critical leadership role in the VET sector. They communicate the jobs and skills required, co-design and deliver training, provide work placements for students, employ apprentices and trainees, hire VET-qualified workers and use VET to provide ongoing professional development for their workforce.

Priority courses are subsidised by the Queensland Government to supply the skills needed by Queensland industry. Priorities and subsidies are informed by Industry Skills Advisors who engage with employers, small business and industry stakeholders.

Government is working closely with industry stakeholders on targeted skills needs in Queensland through the \$15 million VET Emerging Industries Initiative, the Hydrogen Skills Roadmap and the Future Energy Workforce Roadmap. A shared understanding of skills needs and gaps assists with identifying opportunities and solutions.

Employers are increasingly exploring new ways to attract and retain workers, and the Queensland Workforce Strategy recognises that while employers must take ownership of this issue there is a role for industry leadership and government facilitation. A network of Industry Workforce Advisors are working with employers on their workforce and skills needs, and Regional Jobs Committees deliver local solutions to improve training and employment pathways.

Where are we now?

- 61% of Queensland VET graduates reported improved employment circumstances after training in 2022 and 89% were satisfied with their training.
- 3.6% of Queensland workers were employed as apprentices and trainees compared to 3.1% nationally (as at June 2022).
- Nearly 60% of Queensland employers used accredited training in 2021.
- 81.2% of graduates were employed after completing a post-school VET course under the Certificate 3 Guarantee program in 2020–21.
- Up to \$1 million for large scale industry and community-led projects to attract and retain employees, and up to \$5,000 for small businesses to implement innovative human resource solutions under the Workforce Connect Fund.
- Support payments of up to \$20,000 for employers to hire unemployed Queenslanders under the Back to Work program.

Sources: Productivity Commission, Report on Government Services 2023 – Section 5 Vocational education and training; NCVET VOCSTATS Total VET Student Outcomes 2016–2022; NCVET Apprentices and Trainees 2022 June Quarter; Queensland Government, Internal Database.

Future considerations to strengthen employer and industry partnerships

- VET students have better employment outcomes in courses where employers play an active part in creating a job-ready workforce; in 2021, 24% more students reported improved employment outcomes from training that included a work-based component.
- 80.6% of employers in 2021 were satisfied with nationally recognised training they used, but this was lower for employers who had a VET qualification as a job requirement (73.2%) and for employers with apprentices and trainees (73.9%).
- Despite overall high satisfaction with nationally recognised training, employers report a need for greater customisation and flexibility of training to better meet the skills needs of their organisations.
- The main reasons for dissatisfaction among employers who had a VET qualification as a job requirement were perceptions that skills taught were not relevant (54.7%) and quality of training (47.0%).

Sources: NCVET VOCSTATS Total VET Student Outcomes 2021; NCVET Apprentices and Trainees 2022 June Quarter; NCVET Employers' and views of the VET system 2021; Productivity Commission, Report on Government Services 2023 – Section 5 Vocational education and training.



Discussion question

What is one thing government could do differently to improve employer and industry input to training that meets workforce needs and delivers student outcomes?

Supporting VET pathways and job transitions

Building the transitions from school to work and lifelong learning

Queensland is recognised nationally for its strengths in VET delivered to secondary students. Access to VET is supported through government funding under the VET in Schools (VETiS) program as well as school-based apprenticeships and traineeships, delivery by schools and use of fee-for-service arrangements.

Aligning training and skills investment with strong workforce demand and demonstrated student outcomes can support secondary students to progress from school to work, into an apprenticeship or traineeship, or into further VET study. When considering post-school study and occupational choices, young people will often look to their parents, families or friends for guidance. It is important that young people and their families are fully aware of the diverse range of VET pathways that are available to suit the different needs of learners, and lead to interesting and rewarding career opportunities.

Access to suitable and relevant training pathways is not just important for young people starting their careers. We also need to consider how lifelong learning opportunities can assist working-age Queenslanders to update or develop their skills and knowledge to meet employer and workforce needs.

We want to understand how the Queensland Government can most effectively support lifelong learning that increases the employability and mobility of our workforce and meets the changing job needs of industry and employers.

Where are we now?

- More than 30,000 students supported through the Gateway to Industry Schools Program in 2022, with 11 industry sectors delivering employment outcomes for students, local communities and businesses.
- \$3 million School to Work Transitions program to improve post-school outcomes for students at risk of not transitioning to further education, training or employment.
- 99,810 secondary students undertook VET in Queensland schools in 2021.
- From 2018 to 2021, the number of Queensland secondary students enrolled in VET increased by 33.7% compared to 8.9% nationally.
- Nearly 60 certificate I and II qualifications eligible for government subsidies through VETiS in 2023.
- Over 9,000 school students started the transition to employment by commencing a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship while completing their secondary schooling in 2021–22.
- Over 170 higher level qualifications and skill sets eligible for government subsidies in 2023.
- Nearly 48,000 people supported to gain skills for employment or career advancement or to transition to university under the Higher Level Skills Program in 2021–22.
- Up to \$250,000 available for projects that support flexible skills delivery for industry priorities under the Micro-credentialing Program.

Sources: NCVER, VET in Schools 2021, students DataBuilder; Queensland Government, Internal Database; Report on Government Services 2021.

Future considerations for pathways and transitions

- At 39.8%, Queensland had the highest share of secondary students undertaking VET in Australia in 2021; Victoria reported 20.6% and NSW 19.1%.
- Employers identify that there are opportunities for better alignment between VET delivered to school students and workplace and industry skill needs.
- Almost 10% of Queensland students who completed Year 12 in 2021 were not in education, employment or training six months later.
- Almost 25% of Queensland workers will have obtained qualifications at certificate III and IV levels, and 12% at the advanced diploma and associate degree level by 2024–25.
- 73.2% of diploma and above completers (20–64 years) improved their employment status in 2021, as did 71% of certificate III and IV completers and 58.4% of certificate I and II completers.
- Impact of digital disruption on skills and for existing workers.

Sources: NCVET, VET in Schools 2021, students DataBuilder; Department of Education, Next Step Post-school Destination Survey 2022 – Year 12 Completers survey; Jobs Queensland Anticipating Future Skills; Productivity Commission, Report on Government Services 2023 – Section 5 Vocational education and training.



Discussion question

How can we support you to access the training you need to set you up for success if you are:

➤ a secondary student

➤ a job seeker

➤ a worker

➤ an employer?

Thank you and next steps

Thank you for taking the time to make a contribution to the continuing growth, diversification and prosperity of Queensland's economy. The consultation process and subsequent analysis will inform development of a Queensland VET Strategy.

**To stay up-to-date with the development
of the Queensland VET Strategy visit:
www.qld.gov.au/qvetstrategy**



**Queensland
Government**