

Queensland Skills Strategy

Frequently asked questions

GENERAL

Why do we need a new skills strategy?

More than ever, Queensland needs to be skilled and ready.

As Queensland's strong economy drives opportunities across our industries and regions, our TAFE and training system must be ready to respond – empowering Queensland employers and Queenslanders through skills.

There will be more jobs in traditional industries like health and community services and construction, as well as emerging industries – requiring Queenslanders to develop new and higher-level skills.

From Queensland's Big Build – our biggest decade of infrastructure delivery – to the \$3.1 billion Homes for Queenslanders plan and the SuperGrid and clean energy transition under our *Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan*, critical workforce need is combining with many exciting opportunities to fuel demand for skilled workers throughout our economy.

All Queenslanders deserve access to the good jobs on offer. Through training for good jobs, we can keep our economy strong and share its prosperity – skilling more workforces and changing more lives through the power of skills.

But while training is a critical factor in tackling skills and workforce shortages, it is not the only solution. Alongside Good Jobs, Great Training, the Queensland Workforce Strategy is delivering strategies that bring together industry, community and government to develop local workforce solutions.

As we heard during consultation, by working together we can contribute to workforce solutions and make our strong training system even stronger – with TAFE at the heart of our vibrant system and communities.

This is why we have developed the new Queensland Skills Strategy – to forge a modern, responsive and accessible training system that works for Queensland and Queenslanders.

What is the strategy?

The new *Good Jobs, Great Training: Queensland Skills Strategy 2024 – 2028* is a transformative plan for the state's training system and follows the most significant review of the system in almost a decade.

It aims to unlock billions in government investment for Queensland skills over five years, doubling as the state's roadmap to deliver on the landmark National Skills Agreement.

It means one million Free TAFE and funded training places for Queenslanders, providing cost-of-living relief as well as quality training pathways to good jobs at all career stages.

Across five focus areas and five years, the Queensland Skills Strategy will further strengthen the state's TAFE and training system while guiding billions in skills funding to boost productivity and participation – with its vision for Queensland to be an economic powerhouse driven by skilled Queenslanders.

The five focus areas are:

1. **Skills for good jobs** – Get more Queenslanders into highly skilled jobs quicker.
2. **Training that has the power to change lives** – Support Queenslanders to access the lifelong benefits of training for good, highly skilled jobs.

3. **TAFE for all Queenslanders** – Deliver training across Queensland and skills for local economies by putting TAFE at the heart of the training system.
4. **A training system backing Queenslanders** – Build on the strengths of our world-class training system by working with our partners, promoting opportunities offered by training and standing up for Queenslanders.
5. **Quality and results driven** – Focus on economic priorities, local needs and student outcomes so our training system delivers for Queensland.

Maximising outcomes under the National Skills Agreement, the strategy aims to unlock funds for national priorities such as critical skills growth, delivering TAFE Centres of Excellence and initiatives to improve course completions.

With TAFE at the heart of the training system, it also recognises the integral role TAFE plays in regional communities, and in supporting Queenslanders to get their first job and upskill throughout their lives.

A significant action under the *Good people. Good jobs: Queensland Workforce Strategy 2022 – 2032*, the strategy was informed by extensive consultation involving more than 8,000 Queenslanders.

Read the strategy and learn more at www.qld.gov.au/SkillsStrategy.

What will change under the strategy?

The new skills strategy was informed by the most significant review in almost 10 years.

We have listened to more than 8,000 Queenslanders who told us what they want from our TAFE and training system – we thank them for having their say.

An outcomes and performance-based approach will drive the government's skills investment, with sharpened focus on program effectiveness and targeted funding for the right training, with the right provider, when and where it is needed.

Enhanced industry advice on skilling needs and a revised Skills Assure Supplier framework are needed to ensure skills investment delivers on priorities – delivering for Queensland and Queenslanders, and maximising outcomes through landmark national cooperation.

Together with the new National Skills Agreement, the Queensland Skills Strategy puts TAFE at the heart of the training system and our communities. Its recognition of the broader role of TAFE means reform will benefit local communities, industries and employers, with new community service obligations and TAFE contracting arrangements, and oversight through a new Public Providers Oversight Unit.

How was the strategy developed?

Developing a new vocational education and training (VET) strategy for Queensland is a key action under the *Good people. Good jobs: Queensland Workforce Strategy 2022 – 2032*.

The action is part of the 'Skilling Queenslanders now and in the future' focus area, which sets out to forge an innovative, modern and flexible training system that delivers for traditional and emerging industries, and increases collaboration between government, industry and the education system at all levels.

Extensive research and statewide consultation were undertaken to inform the strategy, with consultation held from late June to 18 August 2023.

More than 8,000 students, parents, employers and organisations involved in VET contributed their feedback and ideas through submissions to the discussion paper, participation in forums and focus

groups, and by completing an online survey. We thank everyone who contribution to this important statewide discussion.

A summary of consultation activity and what we heard is available online at www.qld.gov.au/SkillsStrategy.

The strategy also draws on insights and recommendations made through independent reviews conducted by the Queensland Training Ombudsman as well as the *Inquiry into the Delivery of VET in Regional, Rural and Remote Queensland* conducted by the Queensland Parliament's Education, Employment and Training Committee in 2023.

How does the strategy align with national priorities?

Queensland's skills strategy doubles as the state's roadmap to deliver on the National Skills Agreement (NSA) – unlocking billions in state and federal funding for skills now and into the future.

The landmark five-year agreement took effect from 1 January 2024. More information is available at www.dewr.gov.au/skills-reform/national-skills-agreement.

How will the strategy deliver?

Across five focus areas and five years, the strategy will deliver through a range of initial actions and long-term commitments.

We're getting to work straightaway – building on strengths and working collaboratively to forge a modern, responsive and accessible training system that delivers for Queensland and Queenslanders.

The strategy unlocks billions in government investment in skills over five years, doubling as the state's roadmap to deliver on the landmark National Skills Agreement.

It means one million Free TAFE and funded training places for Queenslanders– providing cost-of-living relief and training for good jobs for Queenslanders at all career stages.

Initial actions include:

- a commitment to fund one million training places for Queenslanders, including more Free TAFE places
- a new Career Ready VET in Schools program, including funded training and more Trade Tasters for school students delivered by TAFE, supported by a network of quality Skills Assure Suppliers
- better information about careers and training options, including a new website
- local training strategies for regional, rural and remote communities
- revitalising TAFE campuses
- greater access to language, literacy, numeracy and digital skills, especially for apprentices and trainees
- more pre-apprenticeships and Work Skills Traineeships as pathways to further study and good jobs
- more subsidised higher-level qualifications to help Queenslanders upskill and reskill
- funding for industry-led solutions to keep pace with changing skills needs
- additional Indigenous Workforce and Skills Development Grants and actions to Close the Gap for First Nations communities

- enhanced industry input on skills needs and what courses are funded through an expanded engagement model
- a new Skills Assure Supplier framework to deliver quality training in priority areas
- collaboration to deliver National Skills Agreement priorities, including TAFE Centres of Excellence and initiatives to improve completions.

We will publish a Training Priorities Plan each year, which will set out training and skills activities for the year ahead, delivering on actions outlined in the Queensland Skills Strategy and maximising outcomes for Queensland under the National Skills Agreement.

Work is now underway on a range of initial actions, listed in full in the strategy and online at www.qld.gov.au/SkillsStrategy.

STAKEHOLDERS AND USERS

How will Queenslanders benefit?

Queenslanders will benefit from greater access to TAFE and skills pathways at all career stages, so you can get your first job, a better job or grow a business.

It means one million funded training and Free TAFE places for Queenslanders, providing cost-of-living relief as well as quality training pathways to good jobs.

Whether you are at school and getting career ready, just starting or taking your career to the next level, the Queensland Skills Strategy delivers for all Queenslanders.

School students will benefit from a new Career Ready VET in Schools program, including funded courses that align to job opportunities and more TAFE Trade Tasters, giving students a taste of what it's like to work in industries such as healthcare and construction.

Job seekers will be able to access more Free TAFE and subsidised training for local and in-demand jobs, with opportunities for women as well as support for diverse and disadvantaged job seekers through pre-apprenticeships and foundation skills – language, literacy, numeracy and digital – so they can be ready to learn and find a good job.

Apprentices and trainees will benefit from more free and low-fee apprenticeships and traineeships in traditional and emerging industries, as well as support to learn and complete their training, including access to language, literacy, numeracy and digital skills.

Workers will be able to access more opportunities to upskill and reskill, with more Free TAFE and funded courses up to diploma level, as well as support for initiatives encouraging skilled workers to become trainers and assessors themselves – forging a new career in education and helping to grow our future workforces.

How will Queensland benefit?

To deliver the strategy, the Queensland Government will work with business, industry and training providers to build a responsive, accessible and valued training system – developing priority skills and delivering training for all Queenslanders into the future.

Queensland communities and regions

New investment in TAFE, including new community service obligations, will support TAFE to deliver skills and services needed in regional communities – from Thursday Island in the Far North, west to Mount Isa, and Charleville and Warwick in the south. Queensland communities can expect more local training delivery aligned with community needs and continued investment in new and upgraded TAFE facilities, as well as more local council traineeships through the Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative, and greater collaboration with industry and the education system at all levels in the delivery of TAFE Centres of Excellence.

Queensland industries and businesses

Queensland industries and businesses will benefit from more funded training to meet current and future industry needs, with sharpened focus on targeting skills investment to Queensland's economic opportunities and enhanced industry advice to government on skills needs. There will also be additional funding for industry groups to develop short courses and flexible training solutions that respond to priority and emerging skills needs. Employers will also benefit from information about training pathways for them and their staff, as well as advocacy for quality training packages at the national level – so the training system grows the highly skilled workers industries and employers need.

VET sector

What does the strategy mean for the VET sector in Queensland?

All training providers – public, private, not-for-profit and dual-sector schools and universities – contribute to Queensland's strong and vibrant VET system and this won't change.

Queensland has a strong and diverse VET sector, with more than 1,400 registered training organisations – hundreds of which are current Skills Assure Suppliers, quality-assured to deliver government-funded training.

Queensland is committed to a quality VET sector and delivering outcomes from the training it funds. This too will not change – and in fact will strengthen as systems move to an enhanced evidence and performance-based investment model.

Through the Queensland Skills Strategy, the Queensland Government commits to forging a stronger, more responsive and accessible training system – where government, industry, TAFE and education providers at all levels work together to deliver quality training and outcomes for Queensland.


The strategy builds on the strengths of our system while driving transformation – recognising that government must provide strong leadership for TAFE and the training system to ensure it delivers the skilled workers our economy needs while enabling access to training for good jobs for all Queenslanders.

TAFE / public providers

Public training providers are an essential component of a healthy training system and a strong economy, particularly for regional areas.

Four organisations are recognised as public providers in Queensland, including TAFE Queensland and its subsidiary company Aviation Australia, CQUniversity, and the Aboriginal Centre for the Performing Arts (ACPA).

TAFE Queensland is the state's largest training provider, delivering from more than 60 locations statewide – almost 40 in regional and remote Queensland – and to more than 104,400 students in 2022.



CQUniversity is the only dual-sector entity under the *TAFE Queensland Act 2013*. CQUniversity has been the TAFE provider for the Central Queensland region since 1 July 2014 and, in 2022, supported more than 8,500 students.

In 2022–23, 41.2% of Queensland Government funded students studied at a public provider.

The Queensland Skills Strategy recognises TAFE's position at the heart of the training system and many of our communities.

During consultation, Queensland communities told us that they expect TAFE to lead the way – delivering training and community services needed across our regions, and supporting Queenslanders who need extra help to train and get a job.

They recognise that TAFE has a role to deliver training in specialised fields and priority areas, no matter how big or small the market, and to lead capability building for the VET workforce.

Through the skills strategy, the Queensland Government will work closely with our state's largest training provider, TAFE Queensland, to ensure it is responsive and sustainable, and ready to deliver the skills Queensland's local communities, industries and economies need.

It will deliver new investment in TAFE, including new funding for community service obligations – recognising the broader role TAFE has, above and beyond what's expected of other training providers.

The Queensland Government will also work with the Australian Government to develop a National TAFE Network and establish TAFE Centres of Excellence, which will see TAFE and education providers at all levels work collaboratively with industry to meet critical skills needs.

With its large footprint, supported by a network of quality-assured training providers, TAFE is well-placed to drive excellence and anchor the delivery of priority training and community services across Queensland – securing equity and access to education pathways to employment, similar to the role of state schools in the schooling system.

Moving forward, the strategy will ensure greater focus is placed on the role of public providers and the broader performance of TAFE in meeting community expectations and state priorities.

Current Skills Assure Suppliers

To meet national and state priorities, development of a new Skills Assure Supplier framework is among a range of actions outlined in Queensland's new skills strategy.

Skills Assure Suppliers (SAS) are registered training organisations that are pre-approved to deliver training and assessment services subsidised by the Queensland Government.

We heard during consultation that subsidised training was working – that we were generally funding the right areas – but that more could be done to align funded training with skills and workforce needs and improve outcomes, especially for students.

Key drivers of change include calls for more local delivery and targeted support for diverse and disadvantaged learners, greater links to industry and employers, a funding model and information about training pathways that is easier to understand, more evidence-informed investment decisions, and greater transparency and accountability regarding the quality of funded training and programs and the outcomes they deliver.

Reform of the SAS framework is also needed to introduce new contracting and performance arrangements supporting short and long-term priorities, including critical skills delivery aligned to the National Skills Agreement, the *Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan*, the Big Build, Homes for Queenslanders plan, Queensland's booming health workforce, natural disaster resilience and recovery, and ongoing regional economic development.

While a new SAS framework is developed alongside the first annual Training Priorities Plan, there will be no systemic changes to current SAS arrangements.

Current SAS should continue to meet their contractual obligations. If you have any questions, contact your Contract Manager at the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training.

Updates on the implementation of the Queensland Skills Strategy will be provided across departmental communications, including SAS newsletter Contract Connector and the department's website (www.desbt.qld.gov.au).

To learn more about the strategy, its actions and consultation insights, visit www.qld.gov.au/SkillsStrategy.

What can current SAS expect, including next steps?

To inform the new framework, a 12-month Rural and Remote Pilot is being undertaken with registered training organisations interested in delivering face-to-face training and assessment services in rural and remote areas of Central and North Queensland.

The pilot aims to identify ways to overcome the challenges of local delivery, provide fairer access to quality training and better meet the needs of local communities, industries and employers – developing a better picture of the real costs associated with enabling face-to-face delivery in rural and remote Queensland.

Eligible RTOs, including those who are currently not Skills Assure Suppliers, could apply. Applications opened 9 February 2023 and closed on 8 March 2023. Guidelines, including locations, qualifications and requirements, were available on the DESBT website.

While a new Skills Assure Supplier framework is developed alongside first annual Training Priorities Plan, there will be no systemic changes to current SAS arrangements. Contracting under the new SAS framework is anticipated to start later in 2024.

Updates on the implementation of the Queensland Skills Strategy will be provided across departmental communications, including SAS newsletter Contract Connector.

To learn more about the strategy, its actions and consultation insights, visit www.qld.gov.au/SkillsStrategy.

Will more RTOs be able to become SAS?

All eligible registered training organisations (RTOs) will be able to apply to deliver funded training in future, with contracting under the new SAS framework anticipated to start later in 2024.

Providers that are not current SAS may also be eligible for pilot activity informing the development of a new Skills Assure Supplier framework.

RTOs can [subscribe to a new SAS contracting alert](#). Alert emails will advise when the new SAS framework is open, including eligibility requirements for RTOs and details on how a new expression of interest process will work.

If you emailed your interest prior to 20 May 2024, you do not need to subscribe. Details have been transferred. Current SAS also do not need to subscribe to receive alert information.

Updates on the implementation of the Queensland Skills Strategy will be provided across departmental communications, including department's website (www.desbt.qld.gov.au) and by [subscription to strategy updates](#).



Group training organisations

The new skills strategy will deliver more support to help VET students, including apprentices and trainees, to succeed. This includes more support for diverse learners and greater access to foundation skills, including language, literacy, numeracy and digital skills.

It will also fund more pre-apprenticeships as pathways to employment, with group training organisations having an important role in driving positive outcomes for students. Further details will be provided in 2024-25.

How can I learn more about the strategy?

You can read the strategy and learn more online at www.qld.gov.au/SkillsStrategy, where you can also discover consultation insights, tune into information sessions and subscribe to email updates.