



Business Queensland Connect

September 2024



Queensland Training Awards recognise exceptional employers

Congratulations to the 14 winners and all the finalists from the 2024 Queensland Training Awards (QTA) state final. These awards celebrate the outstanding contributions from various sectors and industries that support vocational education and training across Queensland. Their dedication is instrumental in shaping a skilled workforce for the future.

Photo: Medium Employer of the Year Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary representative Briony Low.

And the QTA Employer winners are:

- Small Employer of the Year: Gunggandji-Mandingalbay Yidinji Peoples Prescribed Body Corporate Aboriginal Corporation
- Medium Employer of the Year: Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary
- Large Employer of the Year: Riviera Australia.

Small Employer of the Year Gunggandji-Mandingalbay Yidinji Peoples Prescribed Body Corporate Aboriginal Corporation, is a community organisation delivering an Indigenous ranger program which provides meaningful employment through dedicated training and mentoring.

Of course all the apprentices, trainees, teachers, and trainers and many of the vocational students recognised were supported by businesses of all sizes including local councils, a small boat broker, a large boat builder, an internationally known miner, and local hairdressers.

Check out the full list of [winners and finalists](#) and if you, or someone you know, could be a good nominee, complete the [expression of interest](#) to be notified when nominations open for the 2025 Queensland Training Awards.



Business Basics grants open soon

With increased funding to \$7500, start planning your registration of interest in the latest round of small business grants, Business Basics.

Designed to enhance your core business skills and adopt best practices, the grant can support:

- professional business advice
- strategic marketing services
- website build and/or upgrades.

The Business Basics grant program is open to businesses with fewer than 5 staff and a turnover of less than \$300,000.

[Check full eligibility and key dates.](#) **Registrations of Interest open 30 September 2024.**



Bushfoods Pilot – Expression of Interest

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade is seeking expressions of interest from Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people and eligible organisations to participate in a bushfoods pilot, as part of an [Australia-WIPO International Intellectual Property Cooperation Project](#).

The bushfoods pilot will focus on the export of Australian bushfoods products. It aims to identify and address practical intellectual property challenges faced by First Nations businesses when considering exporting.

[Applications close 25 September 2024.](#)



MAKING OUR MARK
CELEBRATING 50 YEARS



Celebrate Indigenous Business Month this October

[Indigenous Business Month](#) (IBM) is a nation-wide initiative held from 1–31 October each year, showcasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business leadership across Australia.

It provides an opportunity to recognise Queensland's 4,855 Indigenous business owners who play a vital role in local, regional, and state economies.

This year, the theme is **'Making Our Mark'**, which encourages everyone to celebrate by attending or hosting events and supporting Indigenous businesses by purchasing products, services, or experiences.

Get involved by visiting business.qld.gov.au/ibm and see what events are happening locally. Check out the national indigenousbusinessmonth.com.au site too for more news and events across the country.



Boost your business with our cultural capability webinars

Sign up for the [Enhancing Your Small Business with First Nations Cultural Capability](#) webinar series this September and October to help you build a culturally safe and inclusive workplace.

As well as exploring the [First Nations Cultural Capability Resource](#), these webinars will provide businesses with invaluable resources and practical tips. Whether you're thinking of hiring a First Nations employee or want to deepen your knowledge, you'll learn the benefits of cultural diversity, effective communication strategies, and best practices for engaging with First Nations peoples.

The series is hosted by the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training and led by Jenni Walke, a proud Bundjalung woman and founder of Elephant in the Room Consulting. [Register here.](#)

This initiative is part of the First Nations Training Strategy, powered by the *Queensland Workforce Strategy 2022–2032*.



IUIH secures funding for culturally responsive First Nations training

Jobs Queensland is proud to announce the [Institute for Urban Indigenous Health](#) (IUIH) as one of nine successful recipients of the [Queensland Care Consortium funding](#) round two – an action of the Queensland Workforce Strategy.

Through their 'Supporting Staff to Support Mob' program, IUIH and its partner network of community-controlled health services in South East Queensland will deliver culturally responsive and trauma-informed training that equips staff to work alongside First Nations clients and colleagues.

The successful projects were chosen for their alignment with the funding's goal to enhance the psychosocial wellbeing of healthcare and social assistance workers in Queensland.



New FREE courses to help employees



Queensland's new one-stop shop for tendering and supply

The Queensland Government has launched a one-stop shop to simplify the tendering process for businesses,

The [Back to Work](#) team, in collaboration with TAFE Queensland, have added brand new courses to the [Back to Work Small Business Short Course](#) program:

- Cultural diversity in the workplace
- Supporting mental health in the workplace
- Supporting sexual and gender identities in the workforce

All three courses have been developed in consultation with individuals with lived experiences.

A total of 18 courses are now available to all Queenslanders, regardless of eligibility and will equip business owners and employees with the skills to build supportive and inclusive workplaces.

These courses are proving to be very popular so enrol today at [Back to Work](#).

Learn more about the Back to Work program and other support available to [small business employers](#).



Queensland Manufacturing Month

Did you know? Everything from food and beverages to medication and aerospace components are manufactured in Queensland.

Find out more during September which marks the second [Queensland Manufacturing Month](#).

The month celebrates the 180,000 Queenslanders working in the industry and the huge contribution they make to our economy.

Networking events around the state will bring manufacturers together to make connections and find new business opportunities.

[Read more here](#).

making it easier to access opportunities across government agencies and local councils.

This new procurement platform, [VendorPanel](#), is the first of its kind in Australia and offers a single portal for suppliers to discover and respond to business opportunities.

By creating a free profile on VendorPanel, your business will be visible to government buyers and receive real-time notifications for relevant tenders. The platform is open to businesses across sectors, including government agencies, councils, not-for-profits, and universities.

There are no fees to quote, tender, or supply and if you're already registered on VendorPanel or Local Buy Arrangements, there's no need to create a new profile.



Trade to Teach Internship Program — applications now open

Are you an experienced tradesperson looking for a new and rewarding career, or passionate about sharing your skills with the next generation?

The [Trade to Teach \(T2T\) Internship Program](#) can help you transition to teaching with a \$20,000 scholarship during the first year of study and a paid 3-year teaching internship with in-classroom support. Upon completion, you'll secure a permanent teaching position in one of Queensland's state schools.

The T2T Program is delivered as part of the [Queensland Workforce Strategy 2022-2023](#).

[Applications close 22 September 2024.](#)



Supports for small business

At [Business Queensland](#) we have a huge range of resources to help you start, run and grow your business.

No matter where you are in Queensland, you can access [financial counsellors and wellness coaches](#), available to both you and your family members who work in your business. Support is also available in your preferred language.

Have you considered a mentor? The [Mentoring for Growth](#) program has been helping Queensland businesses since 2002, offering advice to identify opportunities and overcome challenges.

The [ecoBiz program](#) provides personalised advice to help small and medium businesses reduce waste, water, and energy, saving money and improving sustainability. Visit business.qld.gov.au today.



Employer mental health and injury resources

[WorkCover Queensland](#) has launched their 'Mental Health and Injury: Employer Influence' campaign—an initiative aimed to help employers better understand, manage, and prevent work-related mental injuries.

The first [four videos and factsheets](#) cover important topics such as debunking myths about mental injuries and highlighting the crucial role employers play when a worker is injured or becomes ill at work.



Webinar: Why mental health matters in the workplace – 9 October 2024

In this short and sharp [Hiring Outside the Box webinar](#) (30 minutes), learn from industry experts and employers why mental health matters in the workplace.

Learn what practical wellbeing strategies you can use to ensure a safe and positive work environment. Presented by the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations.



REGIONAL PLACE ACTIVATION PROGRAM



WELCOME TO:

- CASSOWARY COAST SHIRE COUNCIL
- MT ISA CITY COUNCIL
- LIVINGSTONE SHIRE COUNCIL
- HINCHINBROOK SHIRE COUNCIL

Collaborating to activate regional spaces

At its core, the Queensland Small Business Commissioner's [Regional Place Activation Program](#) is a collaboration between [Small Business Friendly Program](#) members and property owners to offer local creative small businesses rent-free access to vacant commercial spaces. Ten fully funded places have been offered to regional and remote Small Business Friendly Program members.

The first four councils have been confirmed, with another six to be announced soon. Congratulations to the following members:

- Cassowary Coast Regional Council
- Livingstone Shire Council
- Hinchinbrook Shire Council
- Mount Isa City Council.

If your creative small business is in one of these activation areas, keep an eye out about how to get involved when the expression of interest process opens soon.

Resources



Tips to deal with unpaid invoices

Small business owners are telling us unpaid invoices are placing huge pressure on their cashflow.

Acting on unpaid invoices as soon as possible can help. Here are some steps you can take.

- Review the contract: Look over the agreement you have with the debtor to understand your rights and responsibilities.
- Send a reminder: Politely remind the debtor of the outstanding payment by phone and email. This can often prompt payment.
- Send a letter of demand: If the reminder doesn't work, send a formal letter stating the debt details, the amount owed, the due date, and consequences for not paying. Give them a reasonable deadline to pay and mention your intention to take legal action if needed. Read more [information and download a Letter of Demand template](#).
- Get help with dispute resolution: If there's a disagreement, consider using a mediator or arbitrator to find a fair solution without going to court. If there is an ongoing relationship between the parties, one of the [Dispute Resolution Centres](#) may offer free mediation to resolve the dispute.
- Lodge a Minor Debt Dispute with the [Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal](#) (QCAT).

According to QCAT, a minor debt dispute may be made for 'an unpaid invoice, account or demand'. To lodge a minor debt dispute application it must:

- be for an amount no more than \$25,000 (excluding interest)
- involve a previous agreement about payment of an amount of money

- have happened no more than 6 years ago (the date the agreement was made).

Expect to pay between \$90.10 and \$379.50 depending on the amount claimed. With the present wait about six weeks, you may want to consider the time and costs in recovering overdue arrears. You should seek legal advice when recovering a debt.

The Queensland Small Business Commissioner team can help to broker communication between parties in a business-to-business dispute. They also have a helpful fact sheet on [payment issues](#).

Unfortunately, in some instances a client may be unable to pay their invoice at all and this might impact your business. You can connect with a [Small Business Financial Counsellor](#) or contact the [Small Business Debt Helpline](#) to get help to understand your financial position.



Digital transformation success for rural business

[Rural Psych](#) is a psychology service in Southwest Queensland delivering face-to-face and telehealth services to rural people by rural people. Recently, they completed a digital transformation with the help of [Digital Solutions](#). Unsure where to start, Principal Psychologist and Director, Alex Donoghue was impressed by the prompt access to experts in a supportive environment for only \$110 including GST.

“These sessions helped elevate my security practices, streamline digital systems, integrate processes, and change my domain host. And Alex is happy to recommend the service to other small businesses stating, “I will use this program in the future and encourage others to do so. It is excellent.”

[Find out more about Digital Solutions](#), an initiative of the Australian Government.



Be cyber wise – don't compromise

[Cyber Security Awareness Month](#) in October is a great reminder for small businesses to stay secure online. The theme for 2024 is 'Be cyber wise – don't compromise'.

Here are 4 simple steps you can take to be cyber wise that will significantly boost your cyber security:

1. Update your devices regularly
2. Turn on multi-factor authentication



Don't be caught out by 3G switch-off

Small, family and farming businesses need to act to avoid being impacted by the [3G switch-off](#) on 28 October 2024.

This isn't just about replacing old phones—the switch-off could disable older EFTPOS terminals, security systems, remote monitoring equipment, and more. Check your technology to ensure you're not caught off guard.

3. Back up your important files
4. Use passphrases and password managers.

The [Cyber Wardens program](#) is a free simple education tool designed to build a cyber-smart small business workforce. They have tools and videos that you can use with your staff and suppliers to ensure your small business has the best level of protection from a cyber attack.

Systems like tap-to-pay pads, dam monitors, and asset tracking tools may rely on 3G. Contact your telecommunications provider today and ask, "Will the end of 3G affect my business?"

[Find out more.](#)



New accessibility resources from Guide Dogs Queensland

Using a Queensland Government [Accessible Tourism Enablers Grant](#), the team at Guide Dogs Queensland has developed a new online toolkit.

This [free resource](#) promotes accessibility by helping people understand how to guide and interact with those who have low vision or blindness.

This toolkit provides a great opportunity for businesses to expand their reach and improve customer experiences. By leveraging this and other resources funded under the [Accessible Tourism Enablers Grant](#), businesses can improve their accessibility and inclusivity.



TAX update - Personal services business webinars

If you earn [personal services income](#) (PSI) and meet the requirements to be a personal service business (PSB), there are a few things you need to know to make sure you're meeting your tax obligations.

The ATO has set out to address common misconceptions about how to manage your PSI when you're operating a PSB. They've released two webinars ([part 1](#) and [part 2](#)) that cover the basics of the PSI rules and PSB tests as well as more detailed information about operating a PSB to help you get it right.

New workplace laws

At the end of August 2024, a series of federal workplace legislation amendments came into effect. Here is a snapshot of what's changed.

Right to disconnect

Employees in organisations with more than 15 staff will now have the right to refuse to monitor, read or respond to contact from their employer after hours, unless doing so is 'reasonable'. This change will not apply to small business employers (that is, those with less than 15 employees) until 26 August 2025.



Casual employment changes

There is also now a new definition of 'casual employee' and a new pathway for casuals wanting to convert to more permanent work. Casual employees will now have the discretion to convert to permanent employment after six months of employment (12 months for small businesses) if they believe their employment status no longer meets the casual definition. Again, this change applies to businesses with more than 15 employees now and will apply to small businesses from 26 August 2025.

New definitions, minimum standards for gig workers

In other changes, new definitions of 'employee' and 'employer' have also come into effect. The new definitions address the differences between employees and contractors based on a 'whole of relationship' test.

Plus, the [Fair Work Commission](#) will also now be able to apply minimum standards to certain 'employee-like' workers in the gig economy and contractors in the road transport industry. And independent contractors earning less than the 'Contractor High Income' of \$175,000 per year will be able to apply to the Fair Work Commission if they think contract terms are unfair.

Events and programs



Free Workforce Planning courses

[For regions course – starts 8 October 2024](#)

This course is suitable for local government economic development teams to learn how to develop a regional workforce plan. The course is delivered as a series of 7 weekly workshops at UniSC Sunshine Coast and online, or it can be completed as a 2-day intensive course in Brisbane in late November 2024. [Register now.](#)

[For businesses course – starts 11 October 2024](#)

This course is suitable for business owners, managers, HR specialists or business administrators who are developing workforce plans for small to medium enterprises. The course is delivered as a series of 7 weekly workshops at Robina Events Centre and online. [Register now.](#)

This initiative is powered by the [Queensland Workforce Strategy 2022-2032](#).



Tourism Business Digital Adaption Program

The Tourism Business Digital Adaption Program provides tourism industry businesses with a rebate of up to \$2,500 and free support to improve your digital capabilities.

The program offers a suite of benefits for your tourism business and helps you invest in online booking platforms, social media managements tools and payment gateways.

[Applications close 30 November 2024](#) or until funds are exhausted.



Kickstart your film and TV career

Screen Queensland will expand its Film Intensive Script to Screen (FISS) program to Brisbane and Cairns in 2025 after many of the 2024 cohort landed paid industry jobs, including the reality series Aussie Shore, filmed in Cairns.

The 6-month program includes training and mentorship concluding with the production of three short films.

Participants also learn practical skills and industry experience in areas like camera, costume, lighting, production, and locations.

Screen Queensland CEO Jacqui Feeney said that with growing demand for skilled crews, expanding the FISS program is a major boost for the state's screen industry, which generated 5,900 jobs last year.

The program aims to build a diverse and inclusive screen workforce, encouraging applications from Indigenous people and people with disability.

The FISS program is funded through the Workforce Connect Fund, powered by the Queensland Government's [Queensland Workforce Strategy 2022-2032](#).

[Applications close 29 November.](#)

Image: Film Intensive Script to Screen 2024 participant, courtesy of Screen Queensland.

The Queensland Government respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the lands and seas from across Queensland.

We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and hopes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across the state.



This email was sent by the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training
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