



CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY QUEENSLAND SUBMISSION

- *Skills for Queensland Discussion Paper*
Department of Employment, Small Business and Training

October 2018

Introduction

1. The Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland (CCIQ) welcomes the opportunity to provide comment to the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training on the *Skills for Queensland* discussion paper.
2. CCIQ is Queensland's peak industry representative organisation for small and medium-sized businesses. The Chamber represents over 426,000 Queensland businesses on local, state, and federal issues that matter to them with its guiding focus to develop and advocate policies that are in the best interests of Queensland businesses, the Queensland economy, and the Queensland community.
3. Queensland needs a robust vocational education and training (VET) sector capable of delivering quality outcomes that meet the skills needs of industry, and boost workforce participation and social engagement.
4. The State needs a strong system of public and private providers, underpinned by a well-resourced national regulator operating in a competitive environment focused on industry and students. Learners and employers must be given every opportunity to exercise choice in accessing training where and when they need it.
5. CCIQ believes that increasing the skills of Queensland workers across all occupations is crucial to long-term productivity growth. Together with the Federal Government, the State Government must commit to a system where occupational skill standards are developed by industry, and which a focus on jobs existing in the economy continue to be the basis for VET.

Training quality and development

6. The State Government must work cooperatively with the Federal Government to ensure training packages are responsive to industry, and that the VET system is agile and flexible in its implementation so as to deal with the needs of each industry sector. At the same time, industry urges the government to be mindful of the considerable cost of frequent change.
7. There must remain support for student and employer choice of VET provider to ensure providers perform to the standards required by industry and remain responsive to the needs of students.
8. A strong focus must be placed on quality across the education and training system, through the professional development of teachers/trainers, strong institutions and effective regulators. A performance and excellence criteria for RTO's via an industry-driven star rating system can assist in lifting standards and potentially cutting red tape for those who perform well.

Micro-credentialing

9. CCIQ believes there needs to be greater awareness and product development around micro-credentialing, an approach which businesses are increasingly believing to be more beneficial to them than the traditional approach to qualifications.

10. Micro-credentials offer numerous benefits for employees, employers and organisations of all sizes. When well-designed, they can be flexible, portable and cost-effective to implement, but also boost employee engagement.
11. The growing interest in micro-credentialing is largely due to the need for workplaces to remain competitive by ensuring employees are continuing to develop new capabilities. Micro-credentialing gives a way to map these career paths and quantify any types of skill.
12. In dynamic business environments, the ability to train staff quickly to fill new, emerging skill gaps can be invaluable. Whether it's driven by a new market opportunity, technology or product strategy, organisations may need to draw on new skill sets not currently in the workforce.
13. Traditional credentials often take too long to implement, or not provide coverage for the skill sets businesses require. Micro-credentialing offers a way to train individual staff members in specific areas quickly, allowing businesses to take advantage of emerging market opportunities or respond in a timely way to technology trends.
14. This approach is also beneficial for bridging the skills gap, an ongoing challenge for employers and employees in any industry. Through micro-credentialing, businesses can leverage their existing workforce more effectively by ensuring their skills are up to date.
15. Staying ahead of the competition requires businesses to ensure employees are competent, engaged and productive. Scalable training programs like micro-credentialing offers a cost-effective way to maintain competitiveness and respond to changing market demands.

Funding and employer incentives

16. Funding for the sector has long been an issue, dramatically declining over the last decade, and exacerbated by a lack of consistency in national policy leadership. There has also been a lack of cohesion between the States on VET funding amounts, licensing and registration.
17. An increase in funding is vital, including through cooperation on the National Partnership Agreement regarding the Skilling Australians Fund, to recognize the sector's important role in meeting labour market needs and improving workplace productivity.
18. Employer incentives play a role in ensuring hosting an apprentice is a viable commitment in terms of time and resources for an employer. Efforts are needed to bring in more employers within the system who are willing to take on apprentices, thus increasing the opportunities and choices available to potential apprentices.
19. Incentives have contributed to the growth of apprentices and the removal of a number of incentives over the years was a major reason for the decline in apprenticeships.
20. New incentives, especially any offered as part of any Skilling Australians Fund projects under the National Partnership Agreement, would go a long way in creating apprenticeships in high growth sectors such as hospitality and tourism.

Further enquiries

21. If you wish to discuss any of the contents contained herein in further detail, please contact Catherine Pham, Senior Policy Advisor, at cpham@cciq.com.au.