

## Comment – Department of Trade, Employment and Training

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A key focus of DTET is to work with industry to prepare Queensland's workforce for current and future demands. DTET closely engages with the construction sector, through Construction Skills Queensland (CSQ) and other peak bodies in the sector, to deliver effective training and skills responses that contribute to the sector meeting its workforce needs.

There are several elements of the inquiry's Terms of Reference directly relevant to DTET-led programs and initiatives. This submission provides an overview of the current support DTET provides to the construction sector in Queensland through workforce development initiatives.

Through DTET, the Queensland Government is investing \$1.5 billion in training and skills in 2024–25. DTET's annual Training Priorities Plan (TPP) outlines how the Queensland Government is supporting skills development across the state.

The TPP maps Queensland's skilling priorities and how those priorities inform investment decisions, including training subsidies and the delivery of programs and initiatives developed to maximise outcomes for Queensland workers, job seekers, industries, and employers.

The 2024–25 TPP doubles as Queensland's jurisdictional action plan to deliver on the objectives, outcomes and priorities of the National Skills Agreement.

Key drivers of the TPP include:

- supporting economic growth through the supply of skilled workers aligned to employment opportunities.
- skills needs in priority and emerging industries – care and support, clean energy transition, manufacturing, agriculture, construction, digital and technology, and more.
- increasing workers with the necessary skills for future jobs.
- growth in apprenticeship and traineeship participation.
- addressing skills needs in rural and remote communities and economies.
- enabling workforce participation for diverse and under-represented Queenslanders; and
- opportunities and commitments under the five-year National Skills Agreement, which started on 1 January 2024.

Key TPP initiatives supporting the construction industry, include:

- Free Apprenticeships for Under 25s in high priority apprenticeships or traineeships which include Construction and Civil qualifications.

- Free Construction Apprenticeships for Over 25s program (covering the cost of training with TAFE Queensland or CQUniversity for eligible apprentices who commence between 1 July 2024 and 30 June 2026).
- Trade Skills Assessment and Gap Training.
- The Industry Skills Solutions program, which is fast-tracking skills development in four priority industries, including construction. The program supports industry-led solutions in areas such as vocational education and training (VET) products, skills gap training, and workforce development. In 2023-24, the Queensland Government invested more than \$87 million in construction specific training



Department of  
Trade, Employment  
and Training

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Angela Moody  
Productivity Commissioner and Chair  
Queensland Productivity Commission  
Email: [enquiry@qpc.qld.gov.au](mailto:enquiry@qpc.qld.gov.au)

Dear Ms Moody

The Department of Trade, Employment and Training (DTET) welcomes the opportunity to provide input into the Queensland Productivity Commission's *Opportunities to Improve Productivity of the Construction Sector* inquiry.

DTET remains committed to working closely with Queensland's construction sector to deliver effective training and workforce initiatives that support the sector meeting its workforce needs. We recognise the significant and ongoing demand for skilled construction workers, and we welcome the Queensland Productivity Commission's focus on identifying opportunities to improve productivity of the construction sector.

DTET's submission provides the Commission with an overview of the support the department offers to the construction sector through various training and workforce focused programs and initiatives, all of which are underpinned by the department's strong focus on industry engagement.

To further support meaningful and strategic industry engagement, the department is establishing the Strategic Dialogue Series, providing a forum for government and industry to collaboratively develop responses to existing and emerging workforce challenges. The first Strategic Dialogue Series will be held on 8 July 2025 and will focus on Queensland's construction sector – noting the importance of this sector to Queensland's economy. This event will involve key stakeholders of the construction sector, including peak bodies, employers and key government agencies. The department would welcome the attendance of a Queensland Productivity Commission representative.

In the meantime, should the Commission require any further information regarding DTET's submission, or would like further detail on the Strategic Dialogue Series event, please contact Mr Adam Pennicott, Executive Director, Priority Industries and Initiatives, Department of Trade, Employment and Training by email at [REDACTED] or on telephone [REDACTED]

I look forward to the chance to discuss these issues further when we meet next week.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]  
Peter McKay  
Director-General

29/05/2025

Enc: DTET input to the Queensland Productivity Commission  
construction sector productivity inquiry – May 2025

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## Department of Trade, Employment and Training

### *Initial input to Queensland Productivity Commission construction sector productivity inquiry*

#### **Introduction**

The Department of Trade, Employment and Training (DTET) acknowledges the current Queensland Productivity Commission (QPC) inquiry into the opportunities to improve productivity of the construction sector in Queensland.

DTET has a key role in strengthening economic opportunities for individuals, industry and communities through a skilled workforce; industry engagement; and trade.

A key focus of DTET is to work with industry to prepare Queensland's workforce for current and future demands. DTET closely engages with the construction sector, through Construction Skills Queensland (CSQ) and other peak bodies in the sector, to deliver effective training and skills responses that contribute to the sector meeting its workforce needs.

There are several elements of the inquiry's Terms of Reference directly relevant to DTET led programs and initiatives. This submission provides an overview of current support DTET provides to the construction sector in Queensland through workforce development initiatives.

#### **Training and skills investment**

Through DTET, the Queensland Government is investing \$1.5 billion in training and skills in 2024–25. DTET's annual Training Priorities Plan (TPP) outlines how the Queensland Government is supporting skills development across the state.

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- The Industry Skills Solutions program which is fast-tracking skills development in four priority industries including construction. The program supports industry-led solutions in areas including vocational education and training (VET) products, skills gap training and workforce development.

In 2023-24, the Queensland Government invested more than \$87 million in construction specific training industries, supporting over 28,000 students.

Increasing the size of the VET workforce in Queensland is another focus of the TPP which is being supported through an investment of \$2 million to drive recruitment of the next generation of TAFE teachers as well as a pilot initiative to increase the number of qualified trainers and assessors for the electrical industry.

In addition, skilled migration from both interstate and overseas are considerations for the construction sector to meet its workforce needs.

### **Apprenticeships and traineeships**

DTET is the state training authority (STA) in Queensland responsible for the operation of the Vocational Education and Training (VET) system in accordance with the *Further Education and Training Act 2014*. It has regulatory oversight of Queensland's apprenticeship and traineeship system and the delivery of public investment in apprenticeship and traineeships through the User Choice program.

In addition, the department delivers and administers a range of programs and initiatives to support apprenticeship and traineeship commencements and completions. Key activities include:

- the Apprenticeships Info service (online and telephone) to provide information and advice for apprentices, trainees and employers, including guidance on addressing personal and workplace issues.
- Administration of the Queensland Government Building and Construction Training Policy which supports employment opportunities and skills development in Queensland's building and construction industry. It also focuses on increasing economic outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders in the industry.
- Public awareness campaigns around apprenticeships and traineeships including the recent Apprenticeships Work for Everyone and Let's Protect Respect campaigns.
- Tools, resources and initiatives targeting apprentices, trainees and their employers to help overcome workplace challenges and to support completions.

DTET is delivering the \$4.6 million Women in Trades Mentoring Program, with \$1 million allocated to support female apprentices in the construction sector. Master Builders Queensland (MBQ) and Housing Industry Association are delivering the construction portion of the program.

DTET also delivers the Group Training Organisation (GTO) Pre-Apprenticeship Program which provides funding to GTOs to recruit, screen, induct and deliver tailored support to individuals placed with host employers to undertake employment-based, pre-apprenticeship training to prepare for entry into an apprenticeship in either the hospitality, construction, engineering or automotive sectors.

In addition, through the Workforce Connect Fund, DTET partners with the Housing Industry Association to provide a holistic mentoring service to apprentices within the housing industry at risk of dropping out. Through the same program, DTET is funding the Civil Contractors Federation Queensland to increase awareness and opportunities in the sector for groups in the community who have had little to no exposure to the industry.

The Queensland Government will also deliver a \$19 million Apprenticeship Pilot Program to support small and family businesses to take on apprentices, including construction businesses.

Queensland will also look to leverage apprenticeship support announcements made within the Federal Budget 2025-26, which included:

- \$626.9 million over four years from 2025-26 to reframe the New Energy Apprenticeships Program as the Key Apprenticeship Program and expand it to capture critical residential construction occupations.
- \$77.8 million over four years from 2025-26 to extend the current interim Australian Apprenticeship Incentive System program settings to 31 December 2025.
- \$11 million over four years from 2025-26 to increase the Disability Australian Apprenticeship Wage Support subsidy.
- \$7 million over four years from 2025-26 to increase the Living Away from Home Allowance.

## **Construction industry partnerships and engagement**

### **Construction Skills Queensland**

The Building and Construction Industry Training Fund (BCITF) (Qld) Limited (trading as Construction Skills Queensland - CSQ) is an independent, not-for-profit, industry-funded body that provides the sector with skills support, information, advice, and funding assistance. The Minister responsible for the training portfolio in Queensland (Minister for Finance, Trade, Employment and Training) is the sole member of the Company.

CSQ is a key industry partner of DTET and provides regular intelligence on skills and training priorities for the sector. This collaboration ensures alignment on key priorities, including regional engagement, industry insights, training policy compliance.

CSQ develops an Annual Training Plan (ATP) which captures current and future training and workforce development requirements in Queensland's construction industry. The 2024-25 ATP allocated \$52 million for training and workforce initiatives to further boost the capability and agility of Queensland's building and construction industry. The Minister is required to approve the ATP in advance of the following financial year.

CSQ conducts research and forecasting activities which serve as critical workforce planning tools for the sector. This includes its recently released *Queensland Construction Industry: Horizon 2032 Report*.

CSQ also delivers the Building and Construction Gateway to Industry Schools project, which is one of 12 industry led projects under the DTET's Gateway to Industry Schools Program.

The Program builds partnerships between schools and industry to enable young people to acquire the knowledge, skills and attributes through a range of learning experiences to assist them in their career choices and pathways to employment.

### **Construction sector industry engagement**

DTET has a strong focus on partnering with industry to enhance industry input on public VET investment priorities as well as informing broader workforce development initiatives. This includes addressing key workforce challenges such as increasing participation of diverse and under-represented community groups and strengthening retention and attraction of workers in targeted industries such as construction.

In early July, DTET will host the first meeting of its Strategic Dialogue Series with key stakeholders in the construction sector, including peak bodies, employers, and key government agencies. The Strategic Dialogue Series enables proactive collaboration between government and industry stakeholders to develop actions to address key workforce challenges.

DTET extends an invitation to QPC to attend and participate in the Strategic Dialogue Series focused on the construction workforce, scheduled for 8 July 2025.

### **Further information**

Should the Commission require any further information on DTET's initial submission or the Strategic Dialogue Series, please contact Mr Adam Pennicott, Executive Director, Priority Industries and Initiatives via email at [REDACTED] or on phone [REDACTED].