



Priority 1: Build a more skilled and diverse workforce

“ *Improvements to training and upskilling within a population provide a significant opportunity to increase workforce participation, improve productivity and create opportunities for growth by meeting the labour demands of industry now and into the future.* ”

Growing the Queensland economy requires an investment in skills. Training and skills development play an important role in increasing economic participation and enhancing productivity. They are also key drivers of economic growth and enable current and future labour demands of industry to be met.

However, some disadvantaged learners and job seekers, including Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people, need additional assistance to develop the skills and confidence to get on a path to training, skilling and future employment. The Queensland Government is committed to improving training and employment outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders, through an investment in skilling strategies, accredited training and assessment services that show value for money and clear pathways to employment.

These actions require a commitment to partnership and working together across community, employers, industry and all levels of government.

Actions

1. **Support Queenslanders who are under-utilised or under-employed in the labour market**, as well as building the skills of young people, Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people, people with disability, mature-age job seekers, women re-entering the workforce, and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and assist into work through a suite of targeted skills and training programs delivered through the Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative, with \$60 million available through 2016-17 (Department of Education and Training)
2. **Provide \$1 million per financial year to 2017-18 to support the Indigenous Vocational Education Training (VET) Partnerships** to enable funding for projects to assist Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people, that require support, to train for a real employment outcome, which is, which is linked to local industry need and identified skills gaps (Department of Education and Training/Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships).
3. **Create a more qualified and culturally competent early childhood workforce** by:
 - increasing the number of qualified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educators in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) services through initiatives such as the Certificate III Guarantee program and Higher Levels Skills Program
 - increasing the pedagogical and leadership capability of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educators through professional development and mentoring (Department of Education and Training).

4. **Partner across all levels of government to increase the economic participation of Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people in Queensland's economy** by:

- demonstrating greater cooperation between all three levels of government
- reducing the complexity for individuals accessing public services
- better meeting the needs of job seekers and Indigenous businesses (Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships).

The Queensland Government employs over 245,000 people, and is one of the largest employers in Queensland. Therefore, we have unique opportunity to model best practice in the attraction, recruitment, retention and development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and promote the Queensland Government as an employer of choice. Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people are underrepresented in Queensland public sector employment. This initiative provides the opportunity for the Queensland Government, to demonstrate its commitment to building diversity. Queenslanders deserve a public sector that reflects the diversity of our population. Diverse and inclusive organisations are high performing organisations that foster innovation and drive greater gains in productivity and efficiency.

The Queensland Government also has a responsibility to model best practice in cultural capability, to ensure policies and programs demonstrate the necessary respect for the cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders, and have the best chance of success.

Therefore, we will also:

5. **Implement a whole-of-government workforce strategy** to increase the proportion of Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people working in the Queensland Public Sector. Under the strategy, all Queensland public sector departments will be required to improve their existing practices in attracting, recruiting, retaining and developing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, and contribute to an aggregate 3% target on the direct employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff by 2022 (All departments).

6. **Implement Cultural Capability Action Plans** to ensure all Queensland Government departments have a plan to guide the culturally appropriate delivery of policies, programs and services (All departments).

7. **Develop an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce Strategic Framework (2016-2026) for implementation** to increase the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce across the Queensland Government health sector, including in clinical, non-clinical and leadership roles (Queensland Health).

Case study: Indigenous Career Progression Program

The Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry recognised that more qualified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff working in child protection improves the delivery of culturally appropriate services and supports families to live safe, healthy and strong lives. Therefore, it was recommended the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services implement the Indigenous Career Progression Program (ICPP). The ICPP aims to:

Assist Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people to attain the requisite tertiary qualifications to become Child Safety Officers (CSO).

Provide professional and career development opportunities for Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people within the department.

The ICPP has 2 components:

- The cadetships program engages with and supports final year Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

Bachelor of Social Work and Bachelor of Human Services students.

- The scholarship program provides support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander departmental staff to undertake a Bachelor of Social Work or Bachelor of Human Services.

ICPP participants receive financial and academic support, participate in a facilitated mentoring program, and are assisted to gain a CSO position, which they are asked to commit to for 2 years, post-graduation. The ICPP has successfully helped university students and staff to gain valuable knowledge and experience for rewarding careers as CSOs. The ICPP aims to recruit 15 scholarship holders and 10 cadets each year.

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