



# Future work, future jobs

Preparing Queensland for  
the evolution of work





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Preparing Queensland for the evolution of work

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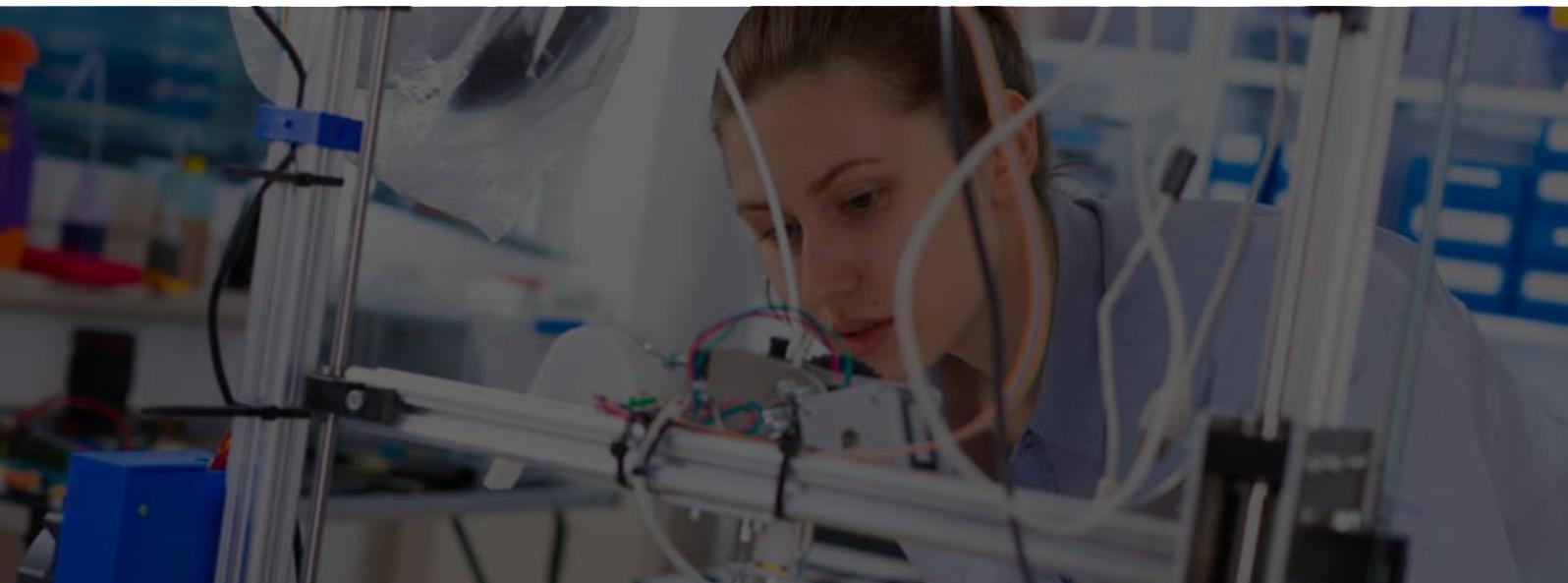
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# Executive summary

The Queensland economy and labour market are changing; our population is growing and new industry sectors are emerging. We are also living and working longer and alternative ways of working offer new possibilities for jobs and skills.

The outlook for employment across Queensland is overall strong. Industries such as mining continue to underpin employment across many parts of our economy. In the coming years the most significant employment growth is expected in industries focussed on the provision of services. These include health care, social assistance, professional services and education. Total employment in traditional industries such as agriculture and manufacturing is also projected to grow.

This report outlines emerging findings and recommendations relevant to future work in Queensland. It builds upon an extensive literature review that identified changes driven by technology, demographic and social factors, and institutional and policy influences. While these drivers are not new, what is unfamiliar is the speed and extent of change.

A Queensland-specific perspective has been developed through state-wide consultation and social research. Queenslanders recognise that change is occurring and it can bring both opportunities and some challenges. Many are unclear about how this change will play out in the coming decade.

While many of Queensland's industries, regional economies and communities are resilient, some are facing significant challenges. Factors such as where we live, our age, our education level and our occupation and industry of employment all influence the impacts of change. The challenges faced by rural communities require particular attention.

Employment and skills policy must respond to our changing economy and labour market. Jobs Queensland's work to date has identified five key areas where the Queensland Government can act to shape a positive future to 2030. 'Business as usual' is not an option.

## KEY ACTION AREAS



**Empowering employers and individuals to navigate change and take advantage of opportunities.** Accurate, timely and objective information underpins effective planning.



**Driving job creation through forward-looking economic development strategies underpinned by workforce planning and development.** A skilled workforce enables opportunities to be harnessed and underpins social prosperity.



**Balancing opportunities provided by the changing nature of work with protecting the most vulnerable.** Equity of opportunity to fully participate in quality work is essential.



**Supporting regions to strengthen their economies and promote inclusive growth.** Regional leaders are best placed to drive their region's economic and social development and inform local service delivery.



**Emphasising the critical importance of lifelong learning.** Policy frameworks need to underpin initial job pathways and support individuals to engage in ongoing learning with confidence throughout their lives.

The role for government is important, but essentially facilitative. As Queensland evolves, industry, regions, communities and individuals all have an important role. Shared priority, purpose and responsibility towards a positive vision for skills and employment in 2030 will underpin our future prosperity.

# Background and context

*There has been extensive research and commentary on the future of work in the 21st century.*

Jobs Queensland is undertaking a project on the Future of Work and the implications for employment and skills policy in Queensland.

The project commenced with an extensive review of national and international literature. This review identified three major drivers of change:<sup>1</sup>

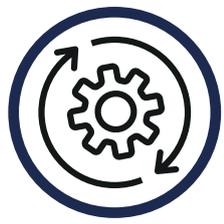


To better understand how the future of work is playing out across Queensland, extensive consultation was conducted across the state in early 2019 underpinned by a discussion paper. Jobs Queensland sincerely thanks the people and organisations that generously contributed their time and expertise to inform this work. Social research has also been undertaken to better understand how work is changing for Queenslanders.

Our work on this project is continuing. Further research in relation to building business capability and promoting lifelong learning will be delivered in December 2019.



1. Jobs Queensland, 2019, *The Future of Work Literature Review*, Jobs Queensland, Ipswich <https://jobsqueensland.qld.gov.au/projects/future-of-work/>



# Change is inevitable, however we can manage transitions

**2030 vision**

Transitions in the Queensland economy provide a more prosperous and sustainable future for all Queenslanders.

## KEY FINDINGS



The overall outlook for employment in Queensland is strong.



Work is changing in Queensland and opportunities for new or different work are emerging. When, how and to what extent change will occur is not always clear.



All Queenslanders need to adequately prepare for and respond to change. The time for action is now.



Collaboration and planning are essential.

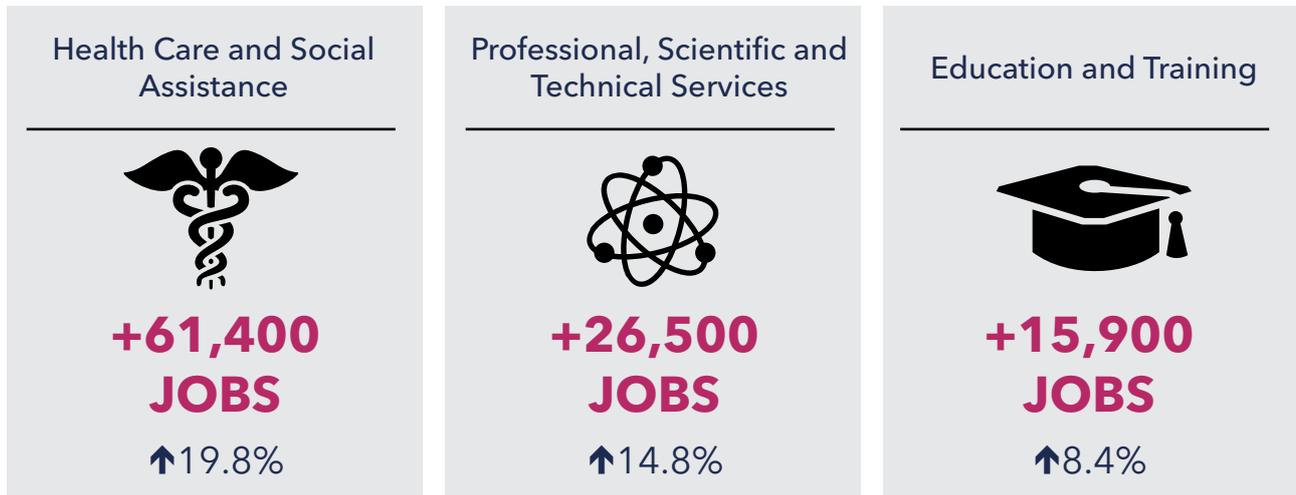
Change is inevitable and continuously shapes our economic and social landscape. In many instances, change can be foreseen and managed.

Under a baseline scenario, employment in Queensland is projected to grow by around eight per cent from 2017 to 2022.

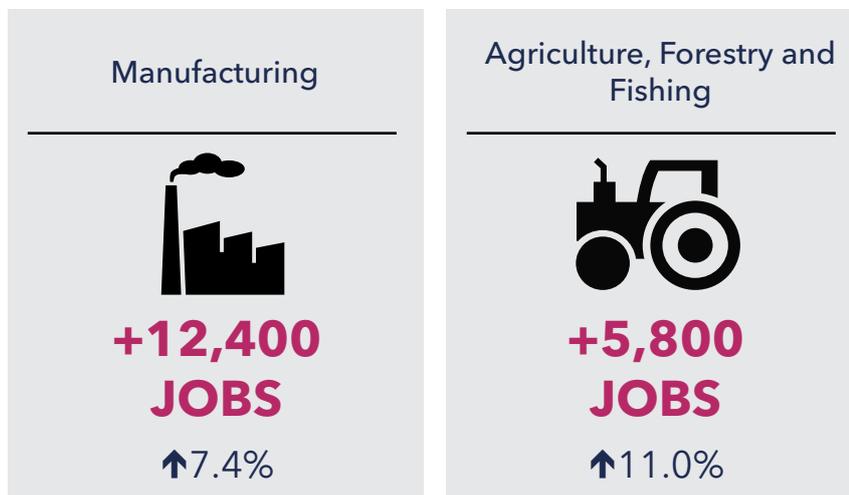
It is evident that work is changing in Queensland but overall the outlook for employment is strong.



## Over half of new jobs in three industries by 2022



## New opportunities in traditional industries



% growth from 2017 to 2022

The highest rates of growth are projected to be in services industries and in the south-east corner of the state. More than 50 per cent of new workers in Queensland are predicted to be employed in three industries; Health Care and Social Assistance, Professional, Scientific and Technical Services

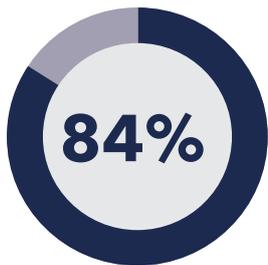
and Education and Training. Total employment in traditional industries such as Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing and Manufacturing is also projected to grow. There are regional differences which will see other industries dominate employment share.<sup>2</sup>

2. Jobs Queensland, 2018, *Anticipating Future Skills: Jobs growth and alternative futures for Queensland to 2022*, Jobs Queensland, Ipswich <https://jobsqueensland.qld.gov.au/anticipating-future-skills/>



While change to the composition of employment has been occurring for decades, the speed and extent of change is increasing. There is general agreement that technology will primarily transform occupations rather than eliminate large numbers of jobs. A benefit of this change is improved efficiency and productivity in the workplace, allowing workers to engage in more valued and satisfying work.<sup>3</sup>

Technology is playing a part in the restructuring of the Queensland economy and benefiting industries in a variety of ways.



**84%**  
of businesses surveyed had adopted new technology in the last three years.<sup>4</sup>

The reasons vary, with 58 per cent of businesses citing increased efficiency/streamlining as the primary reason.<sup>5</sup>

Government policy is also driving change in Queensland's economy. For example, the Queensland Climate Transition Strategy is setting a path to a low carbon future for Queensland, and the planned Just Transition policy framework will support equitable industry and regional responses to future workforce requirements.

The understanding, experience and impact of change is uneven and reflects the diversity of Queensland's industries and regions. The impacts experienced by industries and regions can be due to factors that cannot be easily controlled. Some regions and communities will be less resilient to the impact of change than others. Resilience can be developed or enhanced through proactivity and planning.

Queenslanders must prepare for change now or risk being left behind. 'Business as usual' is not an option. Government, industries, enterprises, regions, communities and individuals all have a part to play.

Many Queenslanders are already preparing for the future and taking advantage of emerging opportunities. There are some Queenslanders who are not aware of the opportunities and challenges ahead, or lack the capability, confidence or access to resources to make successful transitions on their own. These people will require support to help them access a prosperous future.

Stakeholders agree that planning and collaboration will help manage transitions and mitigate many of the adverse impacts of change. A lack of certainty about when, how, and to what extent change will occur makes planning challenging, but critical. While state-wide and industry sector level planning is important, it is necessarily high-level. Tailored action is also needed to transform these plans to meet the workforce needs of local industry. Strategies developed to manage transitions will need to clearly identify and support the role and contributions of each stakeholder.

### Managing transitions requires:



3. Jobs Queensland, 2019, *The Future of Work Literature Review*, Jobs Queensland, Ipswich <https://jobsqueensland.qld.gov.au/projects/future-of-work/>  
4. Enhance Research, 2019, *Future of Work*, Jobs Queensland, Ipswich  
5. Ibid.

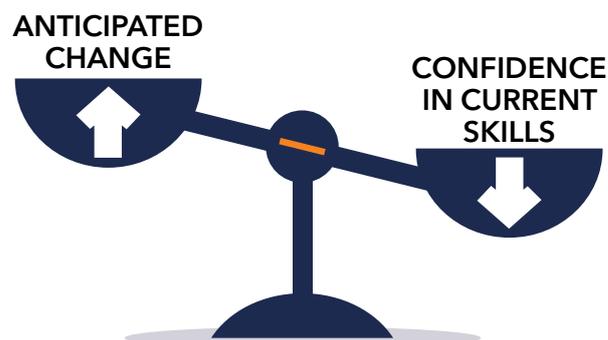
Industry leaders and enterprise owners want to lead transitions affecting them and harness available opportunities. Strategies are needed that build and facilitate effective industry leadership and develop workforce planning capabilities where these do not exist. Access to accurate, timely and relevant information is vital for effective planning. Information sharing, open communication and collaboration across government and with multiple stakeholders is essential.

Government should also draw upon forward-looking advice and evidence (both qualitative and quantitative) from a wide range of industry sectors to assist in identifying current and emerging changes relevant to employment and skills. This will enable proactive policy responses to be implemented in a timely manner when they are required.

Stakeholders describe government information and resources as poorly coordinated and difficult to access. Improved coordination between government agencies and consistent promotion would help stakeholders locate and use the range of information and support that is available. Industry and community engagement undertaken by government also needs to be better coordinated to maximise impact and reduce duplicated effort.

Change can at times be daunting. Stakeholders have reported that the wide variances in

**For both workers and employers, confidence in their current skills decreases as the amount of anticipated change increases.<sup>6</sup>**



viewpoints reported on the future of work is leading to confusion and, at times, anxiety across communities in Queensland.

A realistic, objective and unifying narrative and vision in relation to future work in Queensland is essential. That said, it will not be effective if undertaken by a single stakeholder in isolation. Industry and regional leaders, enterprise owners, community associations, unions and government all have a role to play in developing and communicating this message. Consistent messaging can help dispel and actively counter reporting that contributes to confusion and inaction. This will help prepare Queenslanders for change and assist them to capitalise on emerging opportunities.

## Recommendations

1. Collaborate with industries, regions, communities and unions to proactively plan for and collectively respond to work and workplace change and significant transitions in the economy.
2. Implement strategies that build and enhance industry leadership and workforce planning capability to support transitions in Queensland.
3. Implement an information campaign that provides an objective and realistic view of future work in Queensland in partnership with industries, communities, employers and unions.

6. Enhance Research, 2019, *Future of Work*, Jobs Queensland, Ipswich



# Skills drive economic and social prosperity

**2030 vision**

Effective skills policy supports the objective of inclusive growth within Queensland, underpinning economic and social prosperity.

## KEY FINDINGS



Skills development underpins both economic and social prosperity and enables inclusive growth.



A skilled workforce is essential for capitalising on Queensland's future competitive advantages and economic opportunities.



Vocational education<sup>7</sup> and Queensland's vocational education and training (VET) system are critical to shaping our future workforce.



The development of English language, literacy, numeracy and digital literacy (LLND) skills, complemented by employability skills, underpins meaningful contributions to workplaces and society.

Queenslanders want to share in the benefits of a strong and growing economy. There is a clear link between economic and social prosperity. As the economic prosperity of a region fluctuates, so does the social prosperity of local communities.

As an advanced economy in a global marketplace, Queensland often cannot compete on price alone. As such, human capital can be an important source of competitive advantage. The skills of our workforce and the quality of our goods and services can differentiate Queensland's economy from our competitors and drive our strategic competitive advantage in future years.

Skills development is a key enabler of economic and social prosperity.<sup>8</sup> It is an investment in the

ongoing prosperity of the individual, an enterprise and its supply chain, and the Queensland economy. It is also a mechanism for ensuring that Queenslanders are equipped to participate in work and society more broadly, regardless of their background.

Formal and informal education and skill development across an individual's lifetime are the responsibility of a vast and complex skills ecosystem that includes VET, schools, universities, workplaces, educators, trainers and individuals.

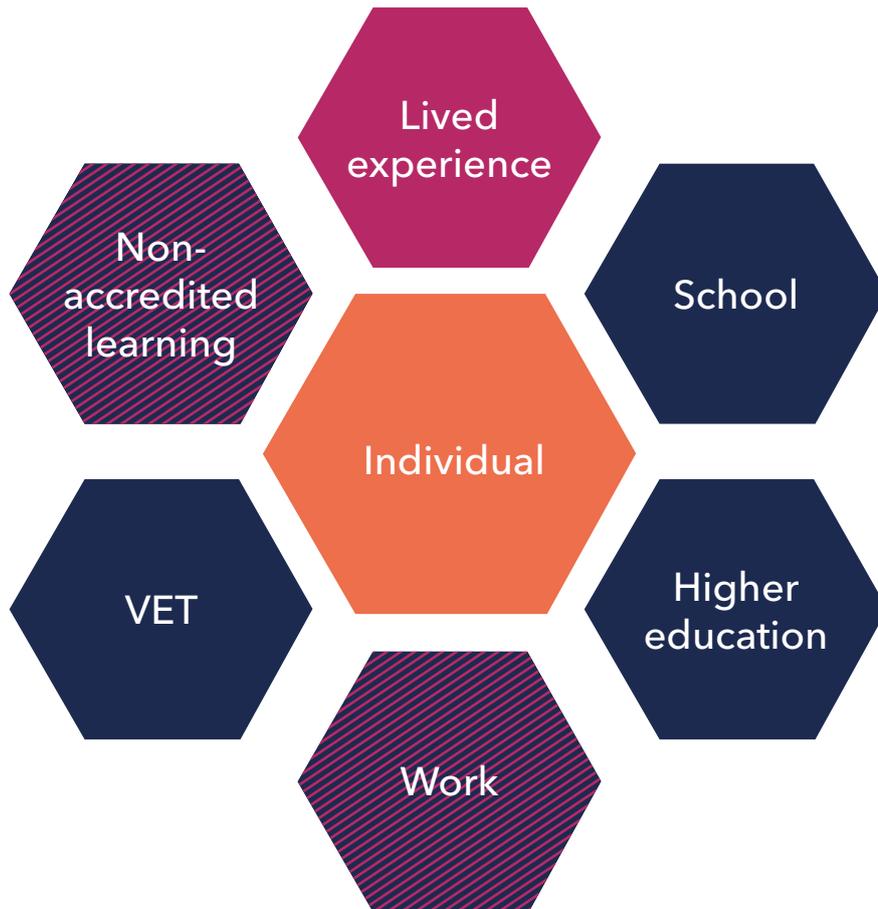
People no longer follow a linear path from school through further education to work. Instead they will enter and exit these channels at multiple points.

7. In this report the term vocational education is used to describe learning experiences and objectives broader than on-the-job or accredited training. The term is inclusive of formal and informal learning that contributes to an individual's employability, career decision or vocational readiness and technical skill competence throughout their lifetime.

8. Deloitte Insights, 2019, The path to prosperity: Why the future of work is human, *Building the Lucky Country #7*, Deloitte Australia, Melbourne <https://www2.deloitte.com/au/en/pages/building-lucky-country/articles/path-prosperity-future-work.html>

## Vocational education ecosystem

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Formal education



Informal education

'Fluid' relationships exist between all elements.  
They are all multi-directional and dynamic.



A skilled workforce that meets the needs of industry is central to industry development, building regional economic resilience and promoting inclusive economic development.

Forward-looking economic development strategies underpinned by workforce development can drive the creation of new jobs. Government is already supporting industry sectors where Queensland has competitive advantages through a range of initiatives. It is important to ensure that relevant industry and economic development strategies and priorities are closely aligned with workforce development strategies at both strategic and operational levels. Alignment in goals and effort can assist in reinforcing their impacts so as to harness both industry opportunities and relevant employment and skills development opportunities.<sup>9</sup>

The objectives of economic development and workforce development initiatives, while similar, are not identical. In aligning these initiatives, it will be important to clearly identify the intended outcomes from each relevant initiative and how these will be measured. Identification and implementation of improved mechanisms to measure economic development outcomes and impacts in the context of workforce development initiatives can also underpin ongoing policy and program improvement in this area.

Jobs and economic growth on their own do not ensure inclusive growth. Government and industry have an important role to play in ensuring that investment in skills development supports the successful transition of existing workers in response to changing work arrangements. Government in particular has a role in facilitating access to employment and training opportunities for those on the margins of the labour market.

### Jobs Queensland’s research consistently identifies demand for:



business skills and capabilities, including management and leadership



more targeted programs and new delivery methods that meet the needs of small business owners and managers



English language, literacy, numeracy and digital literacy (LLND) skills



employability skills such as team work, problem solving and communication that are important to all workforces and to society more broadly.

Business skills and capabilities are critical for economic growth in a global market place with complex value chains and supply chains. Enterprises, particularly smaller ones, must

develop their business skills and capabilities to ensure their ongoing viability and assist their expansion. The importance of this suite of skills is also increasing for individuals engaged in alternative work arrangements.

9. Cheng, W-L., Dohrmann, T., Kerlin, M., Law, J., and Ramaswamy, S. 2018, *Creating an effective workforce system for the new economy*, McKinsey & Company, New York <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/public-sector/our-insights/creating-an-effective-workforce-system-for-the-new-economy>

The development of business skills and capabilities can drive productivity across the economy.<sup>10</sup> A consistent message from stakeholders has been that current skills development approaches in these areas do not support the full range of skills and capabilities needed for a transitioning economy. New and innovative approaches are needed to support a range of skills and capability development solutions to ensure that Queensland enterprises are able to take advantage of emerging opportunities. There is a case for government supporting (possibly through co-investment models) skills development in this area. This support will drive the advancement of these skills and capabilities across Queensland.

Employability skills such as team work and communication and LLND skills are vital for meaningful participation in both the workforce and society throughout an individual's lifespan.

Incremental improvements in employability skills and LLND skills are fundamental to progression along career paths. Queensland will need to lift the level of traditional literacy and numeracy skills as well as ensuring its workforce has a 'new literacy' in digital and technology skills that will be in high demand in the future. Increasing demand for a higher skilled workforce will drive the need for improved access to development opportunities in these skills for all individuals as they negotiate a rapidly changing labour market.

There needs to be a comprehensive strategy encompassing LLND to drive a renewed focus on the development of these skills and capabilities. This will support the ongoing development of high level technical skills and capabilities in Queensland.

## Recommendations

4. Drive enhanced linkages between economic development and workforce development policy and programs across the Queensland Government to promote inclusive economic growth and employment opportunities for Queenslanders.
5. Identify opportunities for enhanced measurement of outcomes and impacts in policy and programs that have complementary economic and workforce development objectives.
6. Collaborate with industry to pilot new approaches for building business skills and capabilities including management and leadership skills in Queensland.
7. Develop a comprehensive English language, literacy and numeracy, and digital literacy (LLND) strategy that complements technical skills and capability development and career progression.

## Further work

During the second half of 2019, Jobs Queensland will be undertaking further work in relation to the development of business skills and capabilities, including management and leadership.

10. The Australian Council of Learned Academies, 2014, *Maintaining Australia's advantage: Management & Skills*. PricewaterhouseCoopers, Sydney <https://acola.org.au/wp/PDF/SAF01/10.%20Management%20and%20Skills.pdf>



# Access to quality work is essential

**2030  
vision**

Queenslanders have access to quality work that meets their financial, social and welfare needs.

## KEY FINDINGS



The prosperity and social cohesion of regions and communities is dependent on access to quality work for all who seek it.



Use of alternative work arrangements is increasing and the reasons why individuals and enterprises engage in these forms of work are varied.



Maintaining access to sufficient quality work that supports financial wellbeing and the ability to invest in long-term assets is crucial.

Quality work is defined as ‘the extent to which a set of job attributes contributes to, or detracts from, workers’ wellbeing in their work and non-work domains.’<sup>11</sup>

Quality work will differ for individuals according to their personal circumstances and motivations. An individual’s prosperity is intrinsically linked to the health and wellbeing of their community and the broader economy. The important and critical role government plays in safeguarding the social, cultural and economic well-being of all Queenslanders was clearly identified by stakeholders across the state.

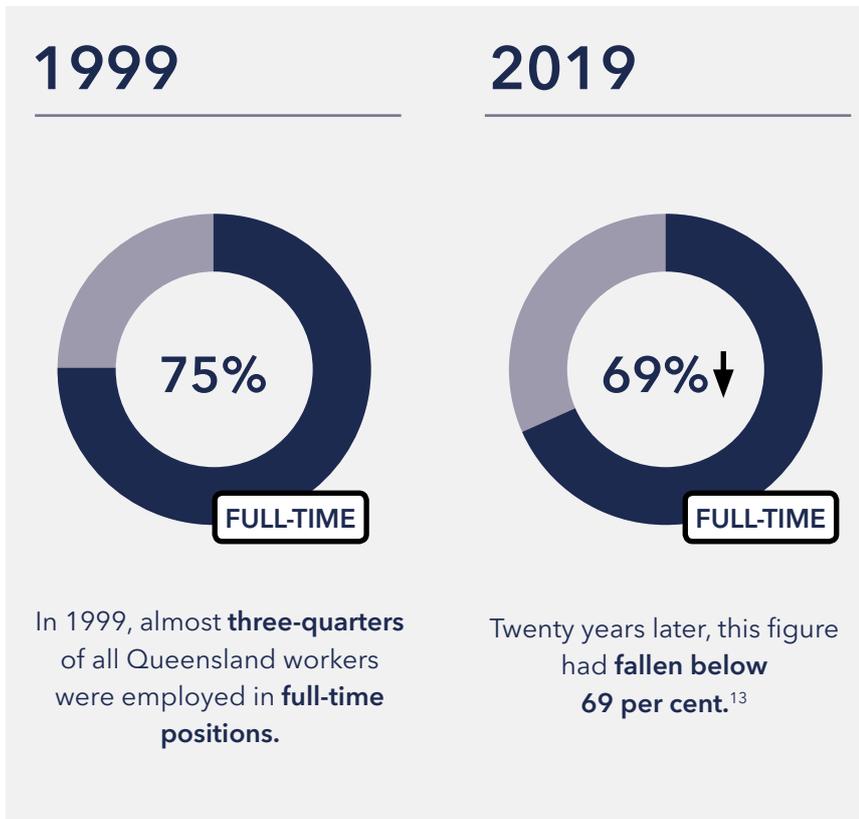
Over the last few decades, the ways in which Queenslanders work has changed. The standard employment relationship has partly given way to alternative forms of work.<sup>12</sup> Part-time employment has increased, flexible and remote work is a growing trend and the gig economy is an emerging labour market element.

### Quality work....

- ✓ is important because it provides workers with a sense of purpose and value.
- ✓ is safe and free from harassment or discrimination.
- ✓ provides stable or predictable work hours and income sufficient to live on, as well as the opportunity to build wealth.
- ✓ contributes to social prosperity and cohesion.

11. Burgess, J., Connell, J., and Dockery, M. 2013, *Quality of Work Research Project Report*. Commissioned by the Australian Workforce and Productivity Agency. Perth: Curtin University

12. ‘Alternative forms of work’ encompasses working arrangements such as flexible work, remote work and employment on a casual, ad hoc or task-based basis.



Stakeholders accept that alternative forms of work are necessary to create a strong and diverse economy and can provide benefits. Some noted that alternative work arrangements provide opportunities for those often precluded from the labour market, such as people with disabilities, carers and those in remote locations. Enterprises may offer flexible or remote work to attract and retain skilled workers. Research shows that such arrangements can have other benefits, such as increased productivity.<sup>15</sup>



13. Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2019, 6291.0.55.003 - *Labour Force, Australia, Detailed, Quarterly, May 2019*. Australian Government, Canberra

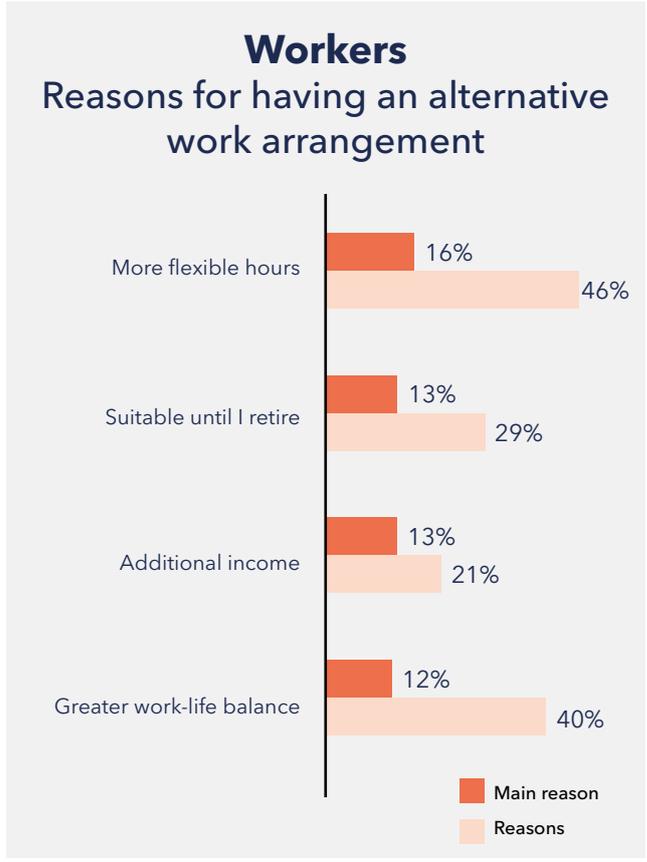
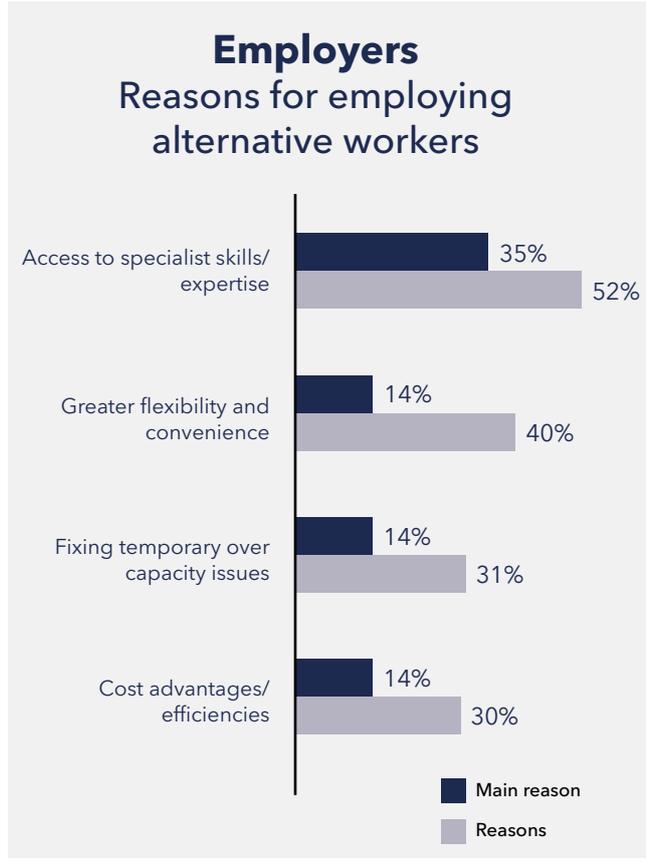
14. Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2018, 6333.0 - *Characteristics of Employment, Australia, August 2018*. Australian Government, Canberra

15. Nous Group, 2018, *Flexible work, good for business?*, commissioned by Victoria State Government  
[https://www.griffith.edu.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0031/548581/Final-For-public-release-Report-Flexible-work-return-on-investment.pdf](https://www.griffith.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0031/548581/Final-For-public-release-Report-Flexible-work-return-on-investment.pdf)



Jobs Queensland's social research project identified that reasons for participating in alternative work arrangements varied between the employer and the worker.<sup>16</sup>

Access to quality work is essential



## But there are challenges associated with alternative work arrangements



The prevalence of alternative work arrangements in Australia is unclear due to the lack of accurate data, often caused by the use of different definitions and different sources.



Some employers expressed uncertainty about implementing then managing a flexible or remote workforce.



Managers find it challenging to share information with remote workers while fostering worker engagement and a team culture.



Employers have to address expectations that flexible work arrangements increasingly form part of a recruitment package.



Remote or gig workers may feel isolated and lonely, due to non-traditional and long working hours.



Gig workers advised that many institutions, such as banks and government agencies, have not adapted to this type of work meaning accessing services can be difficult.



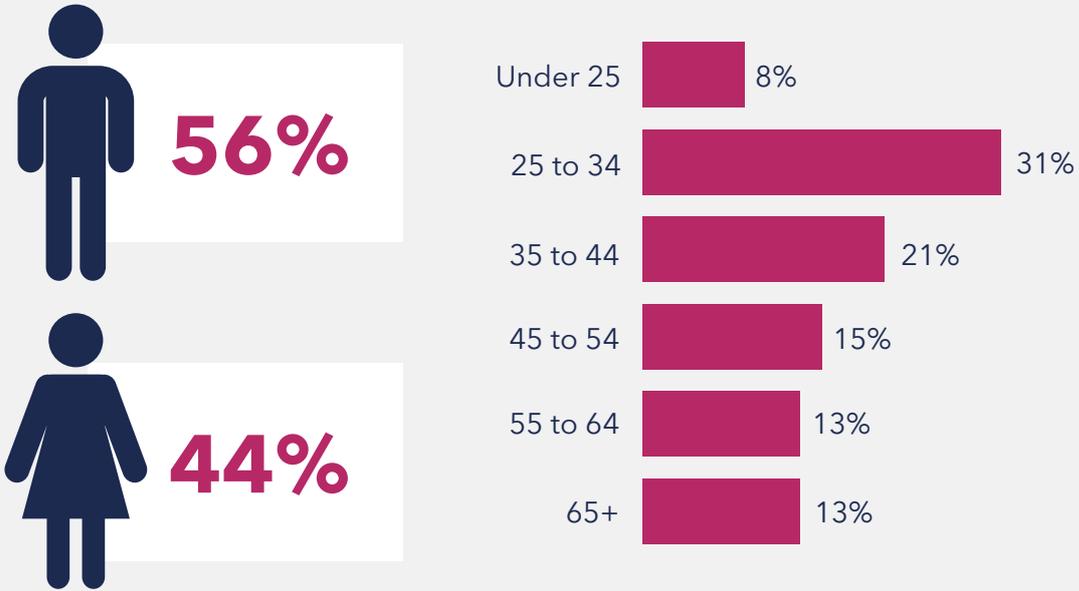
Lack of transparency around management algorithms used by digital platforms can undermine worker autonomy.

16. Enhance Research, 2019, *Future of Work*, Jobs Queensland, Ipswich: the categorisation of "alternative work" used in the social research report differs slightly from the use of the term elsewhere in this report.

In recent years alternative work arrangements underpinned by digital platforms (e.g. gig workers) have become more prevalent. Jobs Queensland's

social research indicated that, while men were more likely to work in this way, people across all age groups participated in these types of work.

### Gig economy workforces in Queensland are diverse<sup>17</sup>



Gig workers who participated in Jobs Queensland's social research project were generally positive about the quality of their work but did identify a number of challenges, particularly around personal well-being and institutional exclusion. Both industry stakeholders and gig work participants identified the need for career advice and small business management skills development including around regulation and compliance to support individuals aspiring to, or in, this form of work.

Challenges to employment definitions used by legislative and regulatory frameworks are creating uncertainty. Government has a role in supporting

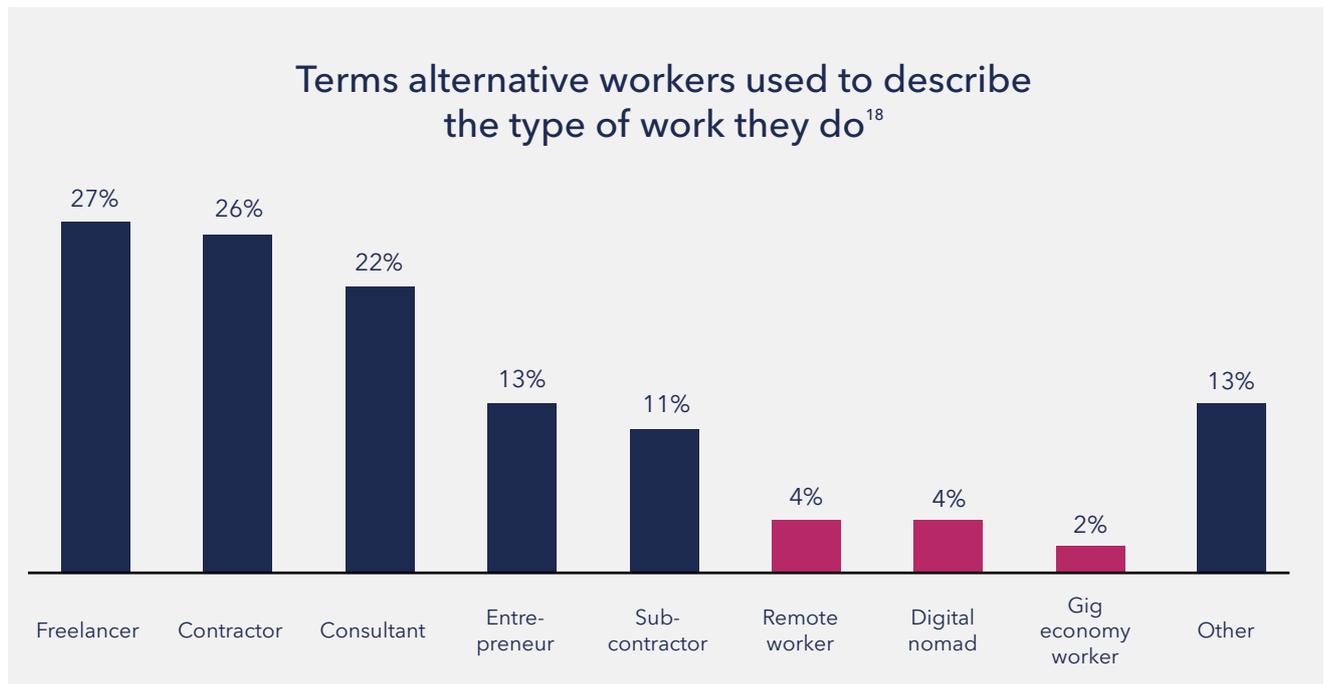
enterprises and employers to develop their capability to manage workers using alternative work arrangements.

Good policy requires good evidence. There is strong interest in gathering reliable data around alternative work arrangements and other impacts of technology on work. A number of research projects are currently underway into alternative work arrangements in Queensland and nationally that may provide further evidence in this area. Access to reliable and timely data to a suitably granular level is important to underpin effective policy relevant to new and emerging forms of work.

17. Enhance Research, 2019, *Future of Work*, Jobs Queensland, Ipswich



A key finding from the social research project was that defining alternative work arrangements is problematic given that many participants do not identify with current terms used. For example, despite recent commentary about digital nomads and gig workers, very few participants in the social research project identified with these terms.



The emergence of some alternative forms of work is raising concerns about insecure or precarious work and growing inequality across the state. There has been broad consensus that the legislative and regulatory frameworks for employment should be reviewed and, where necessary, redesigned to balance worker protections with enterprise flexibility.

Persistent high youth underemployment and unemployment in many regions across Queensland indicates that accessing quality work is difficult for young people. Globally there is research to suggest that the types of entry level jobs that can facilitate access to employment for young people are particularly susceptible to the impacts of automation.<sup>19</sup>

Stakeholders delivered a consistent message about the need for specific targeted support for young people and other cohorts on the margins of the labour market to transition to quality work. This should be an area of high priority for government. Industries and communities, supported by government, can play a critical role

in devising targeted strategies to support access to employment opportunities for all.

The Queensland Government is a major employer with a commitment to being an employer of choice and providing quality work, including through a commitment to flexible work. It can lead by example in showcasing good practice in this area, and particularly in demonstrating the benefits for workers and enterprises across the state.

The Queensland Government could further lead by example in this area by developing and adopting a framework of aims, principles and rights that makes a public statement about its commitment to quality work. It would support clear and consistent messaging around the value and beneficial outcomes of these arrangements for both employers and workers outside of the public sector.

Employment and skills policy must reflect changing work arrangements while supporting expectations of quality work.

18. Enhance Research, 2019, *Future of Work*, Jobs Queensland, Ipswich

19. Muro, M., Maxim, R. and Whiton, J, 2019, *Automation and artificial Intelligence: How machines are affecting people and places*, Brookings Institution, Washington, DC <https://www.brookings.edu/research/automation-and-artificial-intelligence-how-machines-affect-people-and-places/>

# Recommendations

8. Through skills investment and employment policies and programs, prioritise the development of industry and regional partnerships that promote workforce participation in quality work for young people and other cohorts experiencing difficulty in the labour market.
9. Investigate options to obtain reliable, timely and granular workforce data to support policy making and industry-wide and local workforce planning.
10. Lead by example through the development of a framework that sets out the principles that underpin quality work and alternative work arrangements for the Queensland public service, and promote the framework and benefits to industry leaders.





# Place-based leadership creates stronger regions

**2030 vision**

Queensland's uniquely regional nature is characterised by economic diversity, resilience, liveability and highly skilled workforces.

## KEY FINDINGS



The future economic opportunities of Queensland's regions will vary.



Community leaders want to drive regional economic and social development. Government's role is to support and facilitate regional communities to strengthen and diversify their local economies.



Workforce development is an essential part of regional economic development.



For regions to capitalise on future economic opportunities, quality skills development for individuals is critical.

Queensland is Australia's most decentralised state, with strong regional economies. Across the state, stakeholders highlighted the opportunities that are opening up as they work to diversify and strengthen local economies. Whether that is growing the space industry in Toowoomba through a collaboration with the higher education sector and NASA or developing a bio-fuel industry in Mackay, Queensland's regions are looking for opportunities to grow local skills, participate in global supply chains and attract new industries.

Opportunities arising from change are not evenly distributed. Many of Queensland's regional economies can be impacted by events outside of their control, such as globalisation and

supply chains or severe weather. Some regional communities need more and different support due to the underdevelopment or absence of key enablers of economic development such as digital, transport and social infrastructure. Understanding the needs of individuals in a region will be key in ensuring the support provided matches their unique needs and the needs of local enterprises.

Regional economic development requires a skilled workforce to attract new industries, support the development of new businesses and increase participation in supply chains. Workforce development is one of the keys to building the skills base of a region. Both at a regional and

enterprise level, there is opportunity to grow capabilities and skills in this area. Resources that support workforce planning and development, and clearly articulate the link between economic development and workforce development, are needed. Effective workforce development needs to focus on issues broader than training alone and consider the breadth of factors that impact workforce supply and demand within a region.

Regional leaders and their communities have a strong desire to take leadership in preparing for the future. Each region has different priorities, challenges and resources. While many regional communities want to take on this leadership role, some are unsure how to do this. Government can work to empower individuals and groups in each region to provide leadership. Support may be through access to targeted skills, employment or economic development programs or the embedding of appropriately skilled individuals into key organisations within regions.

Quality, real-time and accessible economic, social and workforce data and information underpins regional economic development and workforce planning. Local economic and labour market intelligence can be used to identify skills gaps and align skills development to regional economic development priorities and local competitive strengths.

While there is abundant information available, it is dispersed across multiple locations, may not be region-specific, or uses different regional definitions. Government is well-positioned to support real-time monitoring of multiple data sources and make the data available to communities in regions.

Collaboration with local leaders to identify economic strengths within a region and local assets that can support skills development opportunities has been identified by stakeholders as a priority. Industry hubs are already being implemented within some of Queensland's

## Place-based leadership

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regional manufacturing centres. This type of approach could be adapted and expanded to other regional industries. More Centres of Excellence would encourage regional industry-education partnerships and assist in addressing regional skills needs.

Employment and skills policy needs to not only align to state-wide needs, but also support the specific needs of individual regions. Facilitating place-based decision-making is a way that government can support local responses to change.



A partnership with government based on trust and empowerment, with clear avenues for local advice and identified priorities to be acted on and actioned, can promote proactivity and shared responsibility for solutions.

Existing programs such as the Regional Skills Investment Strategy (RSIS) provide a valuable starting point that can be built upon by local communities with the support of government. The strength and appeal of RSIS to regional communities includes the emphasis on bridging the gap between the strategic objective of government investment in skills and the workforce needs within regions.

An ongoing challenge for rural and remote communities is access to quality vocational education opportunities that support the development of the range of skills

needed to diversify the local economy. In many regions, distance between major urban centres, low population density and small cohort sizes result in unsustainable 'thin markets'. For some skills development markets, reliance on a demand-led market-based approach to skills investment presents challenges. New skills development solutions are required for these markets.

Transforming government skills investment policy and programs by partnering with local industry leaders, enterprise owners and other decision-makers will enable place-based decisions about investment in skilling of individuals or an enterprise workforce. This will support capacity and encourage local skills investment buy-in.



**Government can empower local community and industry leaders to drive their workforce priorities and shape the way employment and skills policies, programs and investment are implemented within their region.**

## Recommendations

11. Empower and support local leaders to lead localised and collaborative responses to workforce opportunities and challenges in regional economies in accordance with local priorities.
12. Develop and make available an economic and social wellbeing dashboard for each Queensland region comprising economic, workforce and social measures to inform regional planning efforts.
13. Tailor skills investment approaches to enable variation that responds to skills development needs within specific regions, empowers local leadership and decision-making and improves access to vocational education opportunities within thin markets.





# Lifelong learning and skills attainment underpin Queensland's future

**2030 vision**

Lifelong learning and skills attainment for all Queenslanders underpins our prosperity.

## KEY FINDINGS



Individuals require support to acquire the skills and knowledge they need to participate in lifelong learning.



Access to quality information and targeted assistance around skills development, career options and support programs are essential in planning for change.



Individuals, employers, unions, industry and government all have a role to play in sharing the costs and benefits of vocational education.



Skills investment policies and programs need to evolve and adapt to the pace and extent of change.

The skills base of Queensland's workforce in 2030 will be different to that of today. No longer can individuals expect that initial post-school vocational education alone will provide them with the skills and knowledge needed for a lifelong career. Instead they can expect to have multiple careers across different occupations. They are likely to enter and exit both work and vocational education several times during their lifetimes.<sup>20</sup>

To support this change to work, advice on careers and skills development options needs to be available to individuals at all stages of their life, not just as they leave school. Collaboration between industry and vocational education stakeholders is needed to provide accurate information and

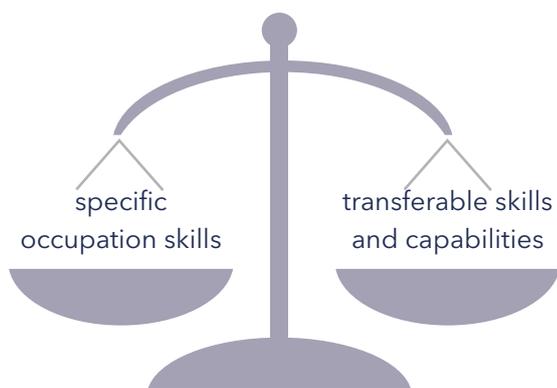
advice about skills development and future labour market trends. This will assist individuals to make informed career decisions within school and beyond.

Vocational education will be key to developing the skilled workforce for the future. Traditionally, vocational education has supported skills development needed for immediate employment in a specific occupation, such as the technical skills gained through an apprenticeship or traineeship.<sup>21</sup> It also provides a range of upskilling and re-skilling pathways for people who are already experienced in their fields, and pathways into the labour market for individuals not currently in work.

20. Jobs Queensland, 2019, *The Future of Work Literature Review*, Jobs Queensland, Ipswich <https://jobsqueensland.qld.gov.au/projects/future-of-work/>  
21. Stakeholders indicated a clear preference for work integrated learning, including apprenticeships and traineeships, and support for new approaches such as higher level apprenticeships and cadetship models

While developing skills for jobs today is important, consideration must be given to developing skills for jobs of the future to support inclusive economic development and 'future-proof' the lives of individuals.

**A balance between skills development needed for immediate employment in a specific occupation and the more transferrable skills and capabilities needed by an individual to succeed over the course of their working life is required.**



For individuals to engage successfully in lifelong learning, vocational education needs to expand its focus to build adaptability and the general capabilities of individuals.

Full qualifications and apprenticeships continue to be well regarded by stakeholders. There is also a need for shorter, more agile, modular skilling solutions to match the pace of change within industry and the restructuring of Queensland's economy. Funding has been allocated in the

2019-20 Queensland Budget for a micro-credentialing pilot project to support employers and their workers to gain the skills needed to adapt to workplace changes. This can provide a useful starting point.

Investment in skills development needs to anticipate and match the pace and extent of change. The demand for skills, like our economy, is more dynamic than ever. This poses a significant challenge for government investment in vocational education, skills development and the VET sector. An ongoing challenge for the VET system is to ensure that training packages respond to the pace of change and balance traditional skills with those emerging in importance.

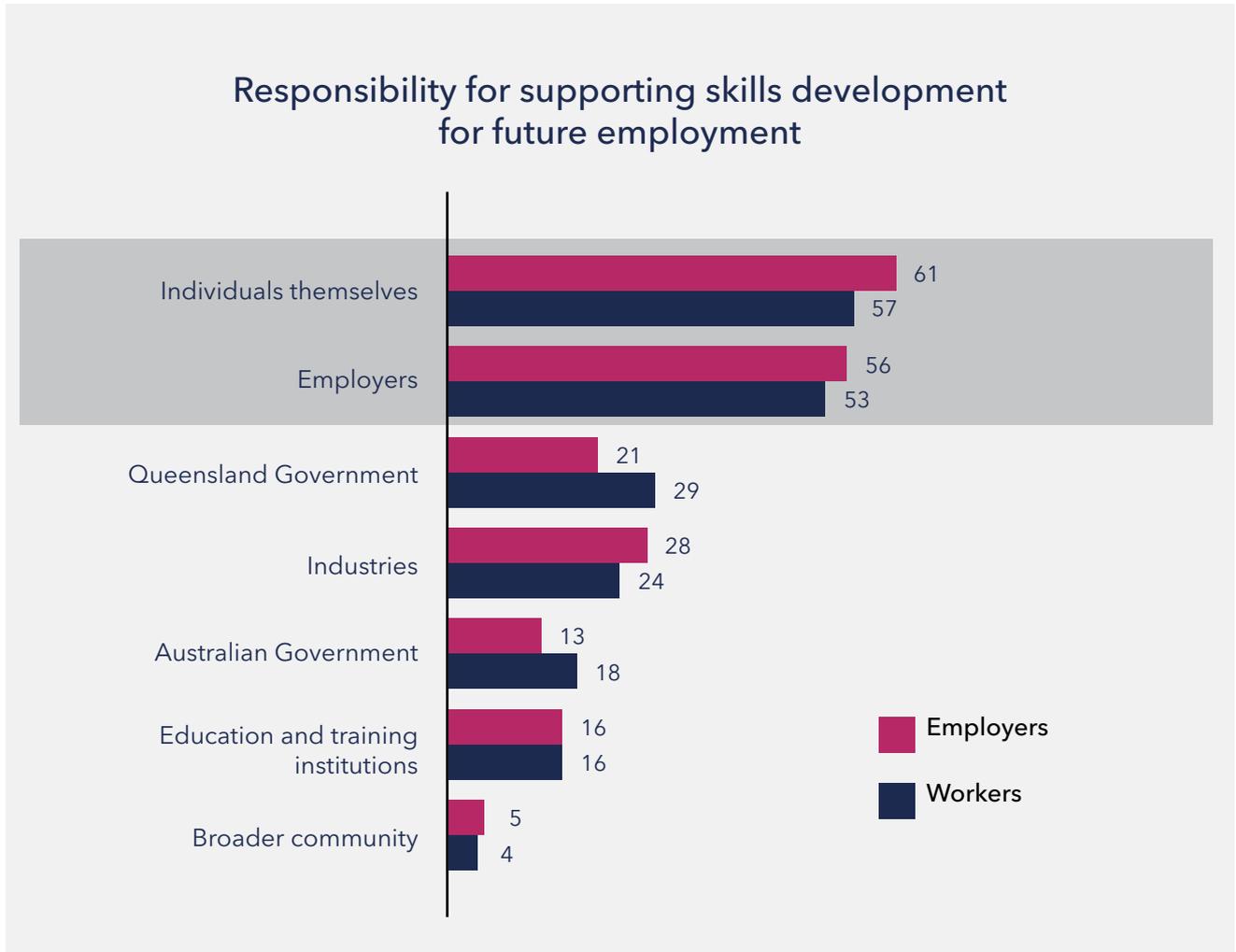
Across Queensland stakeholders acknowledged the need for continuous skilling and a 'lifelong learning mindset' both for employers and individuals. There is a broad spectrum of potential models of lifelong learning, each with their own advantages and disadvantages that could be considered in the Queensland context. These range from minimal intervention by government through to sophisticated policy frameworks such as 'learner accounts' and training credit systems seen in countries such as Singapore and Canada.

Vocational streams and occupational clusters have been suggested as potential approaches to underpin lifelong learning. These approaches recognise the likelihood of people moving both vertically within an occupational field of practice or laterally into related occupations. Demand for such skilling solutions already exists and is expected to grow. There would be benefit in further considering the potential application of these approaches for Queensland.



Meeting the changing skills demanded by Queensland's evolving economy is not solely the responsibility of government.

Social research undertaken by Jobs Queensland found that both employers and workers identified that primary responsibility lies with individuals and employers.<sup>22</sup>



Industry, enterprise owners and individuals also have a stake in skills investment. The costs and benefits of skilling are shared by all. Lifelong learning must be a partnership between government, industry, unions, employers and individuals. Government has a critical role in establishing frameworks and settings that enable individuals and employers to take ownership of their own lifelong learning.

There is also a need for stronger skills development partnerships between government and industry. Industry representative organisations consistently expressed willingness to actively work with government, but identified that they needed support from government to do this effectively. This interaction needs to extend beyond high-level

peak body engagement to effectively cater for the regional needs of any industry.

Stakeholders are concerned that vocational education in Queensland is not valued as a post-school option. Clearer understanding of vocational pathways within industries and possible complementary skill sets is needed.

In some cases, the most appropriate solution to meet specific skills needs may lie outside accredited vocational education. There is merit in broadening government investment in skills development to more readily include knowledge and skills outside accredited vocational education where a clear public benefit can be demonstrated. Clear guidance would also be required from industry about the utility of these investments.

22. Enhance Research, 2019, *Future of Work*, Jobs Queensland, Ipswich: rank score shown

Skills investment needs to become more inclusive of the many ways vocational education is conceptualised and delivered. To achieve this, government can:



broaden its current investment focus to include any skills and knowledge relating to competencies valuable to employment in quality work and with a demonstrable public benefit



improve the interaction and cohesiveness of skills development policies, investment strategies and institutions (i.e. enterprises, industries and vocational education) in promoting lifelong learning



provide access to data and analysis about public investment in skills development.

As industries change and the demand for skills continues to diversify, government's investment policy settings and programs need to ensure support for workers and enterprises affected, or likely to be affected, by industry transition and structural changes in the economy.

## Recommendations

14. Collaborate with industry to ensure that skills investment policy and program settings are responsive to the extent and pace of change being experienced in some industry sectors and some regions.
15. Collaborate with industry and other relevant stakeholders to make available accurate information and advice that assists individuals to make positive career pathway decisions within school and throughout their working lives.
16. Establish conditions for a Queensland Government subsidy for non-accredited vocational education.
17. Promote vocational education as a valued pathway to quality work for school-leavers and existing workers.
18. Reposition the current entry-level, single entitlement skills investment model to support iterative lifelong skills investment.

## Further work

During the second half of 2019, Jobs Queensland will be undertaking more detailed analysis of the ways in which employment and skills policy frameworks in Queensland can support engagement in lifelong learning.

