



## Employment and Training Research-Action

### Process

The Qld Community Alliance has heard thousands of stories about people in our 27 members organisations being exploited at work, struggling to find work, or facing poor quality training that doesn't lead to jobs.

We decided to work on this issue through a discernment with 340 leaders across our Alliance in March.

Since then our Research-Action team has met with academics, interested organisations and other experts. We have also done further listening to our own members.

We are putting forward these areas of possible action for negotiation.

### Principles

- That our society should be so structured and managed that there are opportunities for all people to find gainful employment.
- That the government has an important role to foster the creation of jobs and make accessible the matching vocational training.
- That the government and private sector recognise and respect the dignity of work and its importance in maintaining a healthy community.
- That we end modern slavery and all forms of labour exploitation.
- That vocational education is critical for skilling people to be ready for work and should not be corrupted as a vehicle of furnishing public monies for making private profit through the mere issue of certificates.
- That clear, accessible and affordable pathways exist to allow new Australians to have their overseas qualifications and/or skills and experience recognized.
- That the primary function of vocational education and training is to provide opportunities for individuals to develop the skills and knowledge that enrich our community and make our economy more sustainable and resilient.

### Training

1. Commit to addressing quality concerns regarding Delivery and Assessment as well as acting in restoring public confidence in the Vocational Education and Training sector.
  - a. Increase the average \$ figure per Annual Hour of Contact for VET delivery,
  - b. only provide Government subsidy available through providers who guarantee minimum 60% of recommended training hours as contact with students,



# QUEENSLAND COMMUNITY ALLIANCE

- c. Encourage improved quality levels in VET through introducing voluntary VET Educator accreditation with Qld College of Teachers (QCoT) linked to National standards and Currency requirements, and
  - d. Establish a 'Centre of Excellence in Vocational Education Practice and Future Skills' to facilitate state wide upgrade of VET educator currency.
2. Make TAFE financially accessible for people seeking asylum who live in Qld.
  3. Expand and support skills recognition for refugees and migrants including integrated approaches to:
    - a. Recognition of Prior Learning / skills recognition,
    - b. Gap training,
    - c. Internships, placements and or work experience/familiarisation, and
    - d. English language programs
  4. Commit to maintaining overall funding envelope of Qld Government contribution to training (\$810.7M in 2016/17)

*For more detail see table attached at Appendix One.*

## Employment

1. Increase inspections and compliance to expose exploitative employment practices for Qld's most vulnerable workers by:
  - a. Having state inspectors (such as such as Workplace Health and Safety *Queensland*, or Workcover) actively document and report any exploitative practices they encounter to Fair Work Ombudsman for further action.
  - b. Increasing number of inspectors to a level sufficient to expose exploitative practices and create a level playing field for employers who do the right thing.
  - c. Having inspectors (existing and new) give priority to the most vulnerable industries, especially contract cleaning, seasonal farm work and hospitality.
2. Commit to a government-led apprenticeship program that will build for the direct employment of apprentices in building trades. This will assist in building capability in regions and in Logan through more qualified tradespeople to support the industry and the community.
3. For Qld Government to work with the Qld Community Alliance to ensure training remains an effective vehicle for skill development and an important pathway to sustainable employment.

*For more detail see table attached at Appendix Two*

### Appendix One: Training Asks Table

Asks	Responds to Stories	Why
<p>1. Commit to addressing quality concerns regarding Delivery and Assessment as well as acting in restoring public confidence in the Vocational Education and Training sector.</p> <p>a. Increase the average \$ figure per Annual Hour of Contact for VET delivery,</p> <p>b. Government subsidy available only through providers who guarantee minimum 60% of recommended training hours as contact with students.</p> <p>c. Encourage improved quality levels in VET through introducing voluntary VET Educator accreditation with Qld College of Teachers (QCoT) linked to National standards and Currency requirements.</p> <p>d. Establish a 'Centre of Excellence in Vocational Education Practice and Future Skills' to facilitate state wide upgrade of VET educator currency.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stories from students of minimal contact and qualifications that are meaningless for getting a job.</li> <li>• Stories from VET Educator of just ticking and flicking, not educating.</li> <li>• Stories from industry employers who find that graduates don't have the skills they need or should have.</li> <li>• Poor standards of delivery and assessment amongst RTOs. Stories as above.</li> <li>• VET Educator stories of bearing brunt of cost cutting and under investment which they deal with.</li> <li>• Stories of aspiring trainers receiving the entry level qual to be a VET educator, the <i>Cert IV in Training and Assessment</i>, cheaply and in unduly short timeframes leaving students with no or suboptimum skills as trainers and teachers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VET funding is an investment in the resilience and capacity of our community and Government must act to improve the return on investment.</li> <li>• Increased funding reduces student cost &amp; VET students are cost sensitive. Increased subsidy increases potential student's participation.</li> <li>• RTO's respond to lower prices by increasing class sizes and reducing class time, minimising student / teacher contact. This increases the profit margin.</li> <li>• Ensure that students are not left to teach themselves and that there is support to maximise student success</li> <li>• Many VET students need face to face support to succeed. Minimising contact sets up students to fail.</li> <li>• Support recent research findings by ASQA in their report "<i>A review of issues relating to unduly short training</i>"</li> <li>• Nationally VET student numbers are dropping. Low SES students are less likely to take out loans or have the funds to pay fees</li> <li>• Improved teaching means better Voc Ed outcomes and higher rates of graduation.</li> <li>• VET has the most culturally diverse student cohort of any education sector. VET educators need to be prepared for that.</li> <li>• The nature of work and industry is changing and VET educators need to be prepared to assist students to deal with an increasingly disruptive digital future.</li> </ul>

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# QUEENSLAND COMMUNITY ALLIANCE

<p>2. Make TAFE financially accessible for people seeking asylum who live in Qld.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stories from people seeking asylum who are forced to pay international students fees.</li> <li>• They can't afford it. Leads to increased isolation and mental health issues because not able to do anything constructive and social.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow people access skills &amp; knowledge.</li> <li>• Ensures capacity to earn and integrate.</li> <li>• Ensure work undertaken is to Australian Standards</li> <li>• Ensure that people can participate in mainstream economy.</li> <li>• Provide Skills assessment through challenge testing / skills auditing rather than relying on desk audit of third party reports and documentation that may not exist or is impossible to verify. Couple this with Gap training where necessary.</li> </ul>
<p>3. Expand and support skills recognition for refugees and migrants including integrated approaches to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Recognition of Prior Learning / skills recognition,</li> <li>b. Gap training,</li> <li>c. Internships, placements and or work experience/familiarisation, and</li> <li>d. English language programs</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stories of RPL process being slow, costly and bound in red tape.</li> <li>• Stories of refugees and migrants finding it easier to do a new course rather than go through RPL.</li> <li>• Stories of need for more practical challenge testing rather than paper audit to recognise skills from different international contexts.</li> <li>• Responds to stories of people with skills undertaking low or no skill jobs or engaging in underground cash economy and being exploited.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current RPL is not meeting needs of many communities, despite the fact it is supposed to be key to the Australian training system.</li> <li>• Improving this system through other types of skills recognition, challenge testing and gap training will have significant benefits in unlocking the skills of refugees and migrants.</li> <li>• This would be a win-win-win benefiting the individual, their community and the economy.</li> </ul>
<p>4. Commit to maintaining overall funding envelope of Qld Government contribution to training (\$810.7M in 2016/17)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All those above.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure level of resources in maintained or increased.</li> <li>• All other asks can not be achieved with a decreased funding envelope.</li> </ul>



## Appendix Two: Employment Asks Table

Ask	Responds to Stories	Why
<p>1. Increase inspections and compliance to expose exploitative employment practices for Qld's most vulnerable workers by:</p> <p>a. Having state inspectors (such as such as Workplace Health and Safety <i>Queensland</i>, or WorkCover) actively document and report any exploitative practices they encounter to Fair Work Ombudsman for further action.</p> <p>b. Increasing number of inspectors to a level sufficient to expose exploitative practices and create a level playing field for employers who do the right thing.</p> <p>c. Having inspectors (existing and new) give priority to the most vulnerable industries, especially contract cleaning, seasonal farm work and hospitality.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stories of exploitation of cleaners, especially from Latin American and African communities.</li> <li>• Stories of exploitation of seasonal workers from Pacific countries.</li> <li>• Experience of being underpaid, sham contracting, forced onto ABNs, OH&amp;S issues.</li> </ul> <p>Many existing rights that are not being enforced.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many stories we have heard are about lack of enforcement of existing rights and regulations.</li> <li>• These need to be better enforced rather than just creating new regulation.</li> <li>• While most employment enforcement is federal, the state still has a duty to fight for Qld workers.</li> <li>• The State should be using the levers they still have to get inspectors people through door of workplaces who can then document issues.</li> <li>• These inspectors would be able to give WorkCover fines or WHS notices, but also document other abuses which are referred to Fair Work Ombudsman and could be made public.</li> </ul> <p>Has worked in construction industry previously. This paid for itself through the fines. Could be re-purposed to address most vulnerable.</p>



# QUEENSLAND COMMUNITY ALLIANCE

<p>2. Commit to a government-led apprenticeship program that will build for the direct employment of apprentices in building trades. This will assist in building capability in regions and in Logan through more qualified tradespeople to support the industry and the community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stories of young people not finding jobs that fulfil their training – even when qualified.</li> <li>• Stories of young people not finding work.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meets the needs of quality training for quality jobs.</li> <li>• Direct commitment from state government. Using their own employment and their market power, not asking for more regulation.</li> <li>• Apprenticeships is the area of reform where government will get maximum return on their investment, and provide the greatest opportunities for young people and Australian workers.</li> </ul>
<p>3. For Qld Government to partner with the Qld Community Alliance to ensure training remains an effective vehicle for skill development and an important pathway to sustainable employment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Same stories as above in both employment and training sections.</li> <li>• Stories of people not finding work (young people, migrants, generational unemployed).</li> <li>• Stories of business owners not being able to find suitable people.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training and employment must work as an inter-related system.</li> <li>• As our economy transforms and is disrupted, civil society should have a voice at the table.</li> <li>• Our member organisations need to step up to build the relationships that play this role. But we need this role to be recognised by government.</li> <li>• Our local institutions such as churches, mosques and community centres have relationships with employers and with people needing work.</li> <li>• We can help organise locally to ensure this program works more effectively.</li> <li>• Puts an ask on us more than government.</li> </ul>