



QUEENSLAND FARMERS' FEDERATION

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Submission

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Department of Employment, Small Business and Training
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Via email: vet.strategy@det.qld.gov.au

To Whom It May Concern

Re: Skills for Queensland

The Queensland Farmers' Federation (QFF) offers the following response on behalf of the Rural Jobs and Skills Alliance (RJSA).

RJSA developed from the agricultural sector's need to engage more with the education and training sectors, and the Queensland Government's commitment to create and support jobs across the state.

The purpose of the Alliance is to address mutual goals for our member organisations that focus on the attraction, development and retention of new entrants and existing workers to underpin the prosperity of Queensland's agricultural sector now and into the future.

The Alliance provides advice to government, service providers and other organisations with respect to employment, skills, industry training and workforce planning on behalf of Queensland's agriculture and related industries.

RJSA members, together with the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training (DESBT), are interested in strengthening the Queensland VET system to deliver relevant, quality training to produce a skilled workforce to fulfil the needs of the agricultural sector particularly in rural and remote regions.

QFF is currently contracted by DESBT, to provide advice on behalf of its industry members, as a VET Industry Advisory Organisation (VET IAO).

We have collated industry feedback on the Discussion Paper and summarized the responses, by theme, as follows:

Industry Engagement

Amongst the stated key objectives of the Queensland Government's VET Quality Framework is the ongoing stakeholder consultation with VET IAOs to ensure industry input into the determination of priority training areas and skills requirements to address industry needs. The shared goal is to be responsive to new priorities and to adjust policy settings to manage investment levels and send price

The united voice of intensive agriculture



signals to the market, redirecting investment to new and emerging industry and regional priorities. It is a crucial partnership that exists between industry and government as we strive to create a more flexible and responsive VET system that meets the needs of industry to sustain innovation and the competitiveness of the Queensland economy.

Last year, QFF participated in consultations led by ACIL Allen Consulting (on behalf of Jobs Queensland) to inform advice to the Minister on the current and future composition of the VET IAO arrangements. The input provided at that time, and here reiterated, strongly supported the engagement necessary between industry and government and encouraged a longer-term view towards liaison to provide greater continuity and to build capacity through appropriately funded resourcing. Based on our experience over the years, the relationships developed have been mutually beneficial to industry and government. Given the potential in the coming years for disruption across the economy that will affect industry and the tertiary education and training sectors, industry is especially keen to work collaboratively in assessing the likely impact on agriculture, as a key element of the state economy, integral to rural and regional areas and communities.

Industry perceives the following benefits as a result of this effective engagement with industry stakeholders via VET IAO:

- Raised industry awareness and participation in government skilling initiatives, particularly those directly capable of helping rural industries access and use Queensland VET services to improve workforce performance. The VET IAO arrangements have provided us with resources to effectively engage and communicate VET services with increasing effect and credibility – as borne out by the increased level of take-up in the data.
- Developed expertise in interpreting DESBT and NCVER data sets to understand and validate enabling provision of timely advice on training delivery issues.
- Development of industry business cases to support VET program changes where industry requirements are changing or not being adequately addressed. This is key to the partnership between industry and government as we strive for a more flexible and responsive VET system.
- Understanding the training providers, their interaction with the VET financial incentive systems and monitoring of their activity so we can build relationships in order to provide appropriate levels of advice underpinning the PQS system. The Training Market Health Check reporting is working well in this regard.
- Providing relevant advice on product development and delivery to the Australian Skills Industry Skills Council (ASIC) and Skills Services Organisations (SSO) processes through engagement with relevant Industry Reference Committees (IRCs). There is a large body of work being undertaken in this sphere, and it is important to ensure that Queensland remains an active and influential participant in the national product development review and development cycles.
- Established a solid framework for identifying changing industry market conditions that affect Queensland training markets. This has enabled us to provide accurate and relevant advice to both industry and government and helps the training market respond more effectively at the local and regional level.
- Accessing, analysing and reporting on market data and intelligence. This is an important benefit to the industry because it helps produce more meaningful information that can be benchmarked and leads to informing sound advice and policy options in an ever-changing environment.
- Active engagement with the development of Jobs Queensland's work program which we see as significant for industry engagement with the VET system into the future.

The need for strong partnerships between the VET sector and industry to ensure the sector is prepared for the future is highlighted in the state government's 10-year Roadmap and Action Plan for Agriculture and Food Research, Development & Extension (Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, 2018), which

tasks industry stakeholders to engage with the whole-of-government plan and notes that the agriculture and food industries are a 'key strength of the Queensland economy'. The Roadmap acknowledges the challenges of identified capability and skills gaps and recognises the strength of having 'strong partnerships with industry' in order to deliver on the government's aim to grow the economy, to raise living standards and generate high-value, high-skilled jobs.

QFF welcomes an ongoing opportunity to work collaboratively with DEBST and Jobs Queensland under the VET IAO arrangements to help deliver on these aims and contribute further towards the VET Quality Framework and investment programs into the future, to ensure the effectiveness of outcomes for industry and government. There is obvious and considerable value for the industry from an active, ongoing engagement with the VET sector. The benefits noted above are assisting industry to develop productive arrangements with training service providers and serving the mutual goals of industry and government to have a highly responsive and flexible VET system that helps all industries develop a productive workforce. The challenges of a more rapidly changing digital, technologically advanced world require even greater effort to work closely and transparently together.

Market Settings

To remain relevant and continuously adapt to the advancement that technology and innovation brings, government, industry, RTOs and those developing training packages must embrace the concept of continuous learning. This will be important because the ever-changing landscape requires these stakeholders to be up to date with the latest knowledge and be flexible to any change required, including the lead-times necessary in order to implement appropriate responses.

From industry's perspective, the VET sector should be equipping students with skills that improve their prospects of employment across various agriculture sectors and to achieve this, strong industry links are essential. It is recommended that VET funding investment shifts from the traditionally narrow focus on full qualifications to those 'streams' of broader skills (skill sets) that apply across industries. This shift in focus would better align investment to current and emergent industry priorities and would also produce better student outcomes, for rural and regional employability (job-readiness) in particular.

Workers in agriculture are considered particularly exposed to the effects of automation, emphasising the importance of increased investment in lifelong learning and retraining. Boosting education and skills levels helps people adjust to new technologies or methods of better practices. Less skilled workers will generally bear more of the costs of increased automation, so improving their adaptability and transferable skills is crucial to enabling workers to more easily navigate disruptive or structural changes within or across industries over time. This is particularly relevant in regional and remote rural areas and has implications for the health of local communities and the state economy.

Students benefit from training that includes more generic competencies that can be used across a wide range of occupations, delivering skills that can be used in multiple roles. The training system must continue to support students to move more easily between related sectors, and the incorporation of units of competency that are owned and used by a range of industry sectors is a preferred model. This model would also mitigate a major factor affecting workforce attraction and retention issues for agricultural communities (predominately located in rural and regional areas) whereby a regional pool of labour is created so that skills are able to be utilised/shared across industries rather than leading to competition between them.

The report '*Perceptions Are Not Reality: myths, realities & the critical role of vocational education & training in Australia*' (Skilling Australia Foundation, 2017)¹ provides ample contemporary evidence that this is the funding direction our VET investment needs to follow. The evidence they presented can be summarised as:

“In a multi-career era, it is upskilling and retraining that will create a nimble and relevant workforce. In this technologically transformative society, today’s (new) workers will have to be life-long learners, with hands on skills not just academic qualifications, and a focus on productivity not just theory the changing nature of entire industries and the increasing need for specific skills and training a distinct feature of the emerging Australian economy is the speed of change it is predicted that today’s school leaver will have 17 jobs across 5 careers in their lifetime the bulk of Australia’s workers will be retraining, upskilling, career changing or shifting from employment to self-employment¹ and then back again several times over the course of their working lives”

Industry concurs with this description of current and future job markets, and therefore training needs priorities, because this is what industry has been telling us, and continues to inform us, as we have reported to DESBT in each of our recent responses to the Annual VET Investment Review:

“there is strong business demand for funding of skill sets and individual units of competency in addition to full qualifications. Often these demands are from owner-managers and experienced workers who require specific skills that will complement their existing skill set, support increased productivity and profitability, and help them to keep up to date with their changing work environment in addition, skill set funding is restricted to learners who have a Certificate III, which more often than not precludes the very people who need the skill set. Suggested solutions: DET funding policy should cater for upskilling existing workers and owner managers of agribusinesses in higher level qualifications, skill sets (both accredited and tailored local skill sets) and individual units of competency Eligibility to access funding should not be limited to those who already hold a Certificate III qualification as this would eliminate many within rural industries”.

The main benefit of less restrictive eligibility criteria to access skills training is that barriers to participation are reduced; imposing restrictions on the type of skills or qualifications a student can also pursue potentially prevents re-training and movement of labour between occupations. For RTO providers, increasing the prospective number of students will help to make the provision of those skills or qualifications more commercially viable for them – especially when delivered in rural and regional areas (‘thin markets’).

The reality is that skills training is more often than not undertaken in a non-linear pathway. Students do not always follow a ‘traditional’ training pattern of a Certificate III followed by Certificate IV then progress to a Diploma. Careers in our modern society may require doing qualifications (in part, or full) in a variety of different areas and are therefore unlikely to follow such a rigid progression. A more ‘modular’ learning process, featuring ‘micro-credentialing’, seems likely to represent less of a trend prediction but rather a near-future reality.

In the VET investment context of training subsidies, the argument for allowing people to undertake qualifications in multiple areas of skills needs is not one of “double-dipping”, but instead ensuring that our economy is able to re-skill its workforce to meet the rapidly changing demands of industry. Any policy that creates barriers to participation needs to be balanced against other policy objectives, especially in rural and remote regions where people may be facing challenges such as industry structural adjustments, natural disasters and recovery support, technological disruption or changing regional priorities affected by the foregoing or other factors. This aligns with the national and global push that emphasises lifelong learning. Recent Australian Intergenerational Reports have also stressed that mature-age workers (ABS defined as >45yo) should be given the same opportunities for recruitment, training and professional development as those younger.

Role of Providers

A number of RTOs, both public and private providers, actively engage with industry and look for alternative ways to improve service delivery for our industry. They are aware of the particular challenges we face and the need to change the way they do business in order to adapt to industry needs; strategic partnerships have been formed to deliver programs better suited to our industry's requirements and profile. There has been an increased focus on the quality framework under-pinning the provision of training. The model to improve the consistency and supply of quality training is an evolving one and allows more active involvement of industry in the process, of which we are always supportive. The VET system provides subsidies for those in need and provides support for fee-free training post-year 12. These benefit the economy in the long term by improving employment opportunities to those that need it.

Thin training markets have meant fewer RTOs servicing regional areas (e.g. Mackay/Whitsundays, Gayndah/Mundubbera, Emerald, Western Downs, Bundaberg) making it expensive for those who are interested in training packages. The allocation of increased funding for those RTOs delivering training to regional areas where the cost would otherwise prove prohibitive would be our continuing strong recommendation.

Cost, time commitments and accessibility continue to be the significant reported barriers to accessing training across all agricultural sectors and regions. Most RTOs currently only deliver full qualifications, whereas providing training in skill sets should assist to address these issues. In addition, employees would have greater motivation to complete a few units rather than an entire qualification especially if the opportunity existed to do a tailored accredited skill set in blocks of training. As previously detailed, DESBT must consider providing funding for more skill sets that can contribute to certificate level courses. This will provide an incentive for industry to use the VET system to update their employee's knowledge in the particular competency needed to perform their role. This benefits both the individual's personal development and meets the need of employers whilst inculcating the merits of training in the workforce, on the job.

There is a considerable amount of non-accredited training activity taking place, with many competing opportunities available for students to learn. Different advisors, vendors, manufacturers and training providers currently offer a large number and variety of workshops and in-house training. This training is usually delivered using traditional training delivery modes, which tend to be linear, inefficient and rarely personalised to the learner's specific needs. At the same time, students are exposed to and have embraced innovative social technologies in their everyday lives, which are under-utilized for professional skills development. There is clearly a need for a more effective process to provide awareness, skills and knowledge to improve methods and practices. Greater use of smarter and more innovative training approaches incorporating new technologies (for example smartphone apps) to be used by the training sector to meet the needs of the industry.

To be more relevant to industry requirements and support the current workforce to constantly update their knowledge, more flexible course structures should be encouraged that allow students to train in areas that might not be conventional agricultural subjects but of significant value to their career in agriculture. We need to be able to support business with the desire to develop the confidence to acquire the capabilities and capacity necessary to transition from the business of today into the business of tomorrow. In very practical terms therefore, RTOs and their trainers will be required to upskill to remain current and able to deliver up-to-date training that is relevant to the industry. It is essential that trainers are kept up to date with the latest innovations and best practice. To encourage RTOs to invest in the professional development of their training staff, it is recommended that the government investigate the potential to introduce a funding program for preferred suppliers. RTO's should also be encouraged to build partnerships with research and innovation organisations and be able to access experts in the field to make sure students are exposed to the most up to date knowledge.

Greater engagement between RTOs and industry bodies should be encouraged so that there is an improved understanding of the specific needs of the industry. The industry continues to work to foster such increased collaboration, and the RJSA are about to host a forum (November 2018) that will bring industry and RTOs together to review existing conditions of market performance and discuss opportunities to improve relationships and mutually beneficial outcomes.

Encouraging VET Participation

In response to the how to attract key stakeholders to participate in the VET sector, Queensland government and the VET sector could use more effectively the available programs in educating and promoting its benefits. An example of this in our sector can be the promotion of the VET sector through the programs that the RJSA alliance supports.

The RJSA within its strategic plan acknowledges the importance of attracting new entrants to our industry to ensure its sustainability. Therefore, RJSA supports the programs below that provide information to schools, parents, teachers and the community about the jobs in agriculture, the level of skills needed and the diverse career pathways available. The VET system is a vehicle to achieve the level of skills needed to be part of the industry, and its benefits should be promoted through the following programs:

- The School to Industry Partnership Program (SIPP) with activities such as Ag Inspirations and Moo Baa Munch/Ag Connect provide meaningful, interactive, 'real-life' engagement between industry and students and these activities have a great impact on students as they learn more about the vagaries and realities of life in the workforce from a 'real-life' perspective. RJSA believes that programs such as this can make a positive difference by giving students a much better understanding of the diverse and exciting job options available in the industry.
- Under the SIPP, the Food, Fibre and Agriculture Educators Conference is held (next event to take place in January 2019) to provide professional development for teachers and agriculture assistants interested in agriculture, science and technology. The program is designed to give teachers the currency needed to teach agriculture in schools, whilst ensuring they have the latest information and resources to promote agriculture as a career to their students.
- The Gateway schools program with 31 schools participating in the program. Students gain valuable experience in the industry while still at school, providing them with the tools and knowledge to make informed decisions about training and employment upon leaving school, and at the same time raising the profile of careers in the agribusiness sector. From these partnerships, opportunities for work experience, structured work placements and school-based traineeships or cadetships with agribusiness industries at all levels become increasingly possible.
- The Career Harvest portal is a program that has been led by The Primary Industries Education Foundation Australia (PIEFA), and RJSA is a current partner in its development. The Career Harvest is being developed as a one-stop shop for prospective students to discover rewarding careers. The portal started as a resource to provide advice about opportunities through higher education, and it is currently being redeveloped to include information about the VET sector.

RJSA provides support and guidance in the implementation of the above-mentioned programs, and as such, it is an important player to help create the connections needed and to attract different stakeholders to improve the participation of our industry in VET. However, to ensure the ongoing sustainability of the programs and their success, they need to be appropriately resourced and funded. An example of this is the statement by Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries Minister Mark Furner that funding for SIPP would not continue beyond the end of the year. RJSA members are

concerned that not having the program would hamper efforts to foster future generations' understanding of and enthusiasm for agriculture. Educational programs to inform the agriculture opportunities are very important to our industry.

Another related key aspect that needs to be considered, when attracting parents/influencers and potential students, is educating the available career advisors in schools about the benefits of the VET system. Career advisors play a vital role to ensure that students are properly informed of their career pathway opportunities. Therefore, it is important that these career advisors are provided with current, quality information. At the moment, many career advisors are employed on a casual and part-time basis with little time to be able to digest all information in order to provide proper, comprehensive career advice to young people. We had experiences with some career advisors that had either no awareness of current explosion in career opportunities in agriculture or had portrayed outdated stereotypes of the careers in our sector. Career advisors should be considered a full-time position, and they should be properly trained and aware of industry needs and future prospects.

The importance of the career advisors is also supported by the perception that school-based Apprenticeships and Traineeships (A&T) are not very effective unless you have a pro-active career pathways advisor at the School. This career pathways advisor must understand that the student may not always have the facility to source training or engage with an employer. Therefore, the officer will need to actively work with the student to commence a school-based activity.

In addition, the Agricultural industries see value in increasing the use of on the job training options provided through the VET system to prepare young people for work. On the job training should be encouraged particularly in high skill areas where innovation and creativity are needed and where future jobs are likely to be.

In summary, some suggestions to improve guidance to young people and improve the system works for our industry include:

- More focus on career guidance with increased awareness of career paths.
- Provide stronger mentoring and guidance services (especially for young apprenticeships). Linked to this is the issue of who is to provide supervision and mentoring, as well as ensuring mentors have the necessary skills to guide the (A&T), in skill development. This particularly important for the agriculture sector.
- Encourage closer links between to Queensland Department of Education and Training's School to Work Transition Programs such as Cultiv8 and A&T pathways.
- Use currently available programs that aim at providing career advice to promote VET as a vehicle.
- Expose young people to different industries and career paths. For agribusiness, it is important to expose them to the opportunities that are available across the value chain. The contribution of agribusiness to the economy is significant, and young people should be better informed of the multiple career options that they have. This information should be provided at a regional level.
- In rural settings, a review of financial support offered such as living away from home allowance, rental subsidies, student and travel subsidies can help to attract young entrants to the industry. A challenge with school-based A&T in rural areas is the difficulty faced by students in accessing reliable transport to the business.

In response to the identifying new ways to create connections between VET and higher education, ensuring there is a progression between the VET sector and university can provide value to the student. Where skills are recognised towards professional degrees can motivate VET sector students use VET qualifications as alternative pathways to university.

To promote the benefits of the links between universities and VET, the Queensland Government could highlight examples of how these entities are working together to address the needs of the industry. Dual programs offered through universities such as USQ and CQU for our industry have offered some flexibility and a path that allows a VET qualification to transfer to a degree. These links and examples can be very beneficial for students.

In response to recommendations to improve QLD government sharing information about the VET sector, the effective and active use of existing industry networks and communication platforms already available is encouraged.

There are already available platforms that provide rich information such as the training.gov site, and other industry sites (in our case career harvest is an example of this). The information provided on these sites is continuously improving. The Queensland Government can help by ensuring the information presented is accurate and reflects Queensland's needs. The Queensland Government can also help by improving and promoting access to the information available. The government should work to improve access to, and simplicity of, information and advice currently available about the VET system.

Currently, the information provided can, in some instances, have so many caveats and multiple links to other information that it becomes too difficult and tiresome to navigate. Employers are time poor, so the simpler and more relevant the information is, the more likely it will lead to engagement. A clear understanding of what is involved and the potential benefits for employers and students is essential.

It is also key that to improve the perception of VET, there should be an increased effort in improving the 'brand' perception of what VET is and the value it provides. Effort should be made in overhauling the reputation of the VET sector and its promotion.

It is also recommended that the government consider the provision of more industry-specific information and examples rather than generic information, this would greatly help improve understanding and potential uptake of VET qualifications. This information could be disseminated throughout the industry connections, to schools and to parents. The government should also look at targeted market campaigns for the target audiences. In designing the campaigns, the communication preferences of their target market should be considered. For example, if the current market is high school students, a very effective social media campaign should be included. However, there is a need to ensure that the communication preferences of stakeholders such as career advisors and parents are also considered.

In response to how to ensure that people have access to the right information about the training available through the VET system and the link to current jobs available, the industry information provided should not only highlight sectors based on previous employment performance but also highlight emerging careers available in growing and emerging sectors with such as agriculture. The agriculture sector is an important sector for the Queensland economy that provides lots of opportunities for new entrants. The information that is currently provided in various sites such as training.gov.au is based on ABS labour data that doesn't reflect the potential of agriculture accurately. Other sources of information and intelligence should be included to provide accurate information to potential entrants to the industry.

Currently, the data is incomplete to be able to provide an accurate picture of the current and future labour force in agriculture. Much of the farm workforce demand may exist in employment categories outside of the currently captured statistics. Emerging roles and agribusiness roles are not properly captured making it difficult to provide a complete workforce description. Agriculture provides great and exciting career opportunities.

In the United States, for example, the USDA estimates that the industry will add 55,000 new employees every year for the foreseeable future. A substantial portion of those positions will need STEM training particularly in non-traditional roles and are being driven by technology changes and by market changes. <https://monsanto.com/company/outreach/stem-education/articles/stem-careers-agriculture/>

To improve access to information to be provided about the VET sector and its links to Agriculture, it would also be important to have increase support of bodies such as the Australian Apprenticeship Support Network (AASN) and the support of a Group Training Organisation (GTO) that services Queensland agriculture. It is important for agriculture that the GTOs and the AAN do have good knowledge about the benefits of agriculture as a sector.

In response to how to help people to access the right information about the training provider and course that suits their needs in terms of interests, location, there are already available regional networks that support out industry disseminate that information. For example, RJSA supports the Queensland Agricultural Workforce Network (QAWN), which aims at helping the Queensland agricultural industries to secure a supply of local workers that are trained and skilled for local industry requirements. QAWN officers across Queensland are working with farmers to find labour solutions to help them grow their businesses. QAWN has created media and resources to assist our stakeholders to understand the VET system.

In response to suggestions on how we could help participation of those experiencing challenges to secure employment, some suggestions to improve diversity can provide some guidance to address these issues include:

- Offering flexibility in the delivery of training. For example, online delivery of theory so mothers can access training needs in the evening or out of standard work hours.
- Stronger links between vocational and tertiary education pathways could allow for additional options for people wanting to further their education or widen their skills base. This will allow for additional options to be considered by people wanting a career path.
- Offering ongoing literacy and numeracy training and tutorials. In the case of international students, it is important to ensure that a level of English and literacy is met to allow them to be able to perform their job.
- It would also help to provide transport assistance for rural areas. Regional farmers would be more inclined to participate if they had confidence that the student is able to attend work each day. Some students have limited access to transport, making it difficult to coordinate attendance to training and work.

In the case of the agribusiness sector, its preference is for slightly older workers (mid-twenties and over) with a level of maturity and experience. These workers are in most cases better prepared for the workplace and in many cases very reliable and highly committed. However, the system does not provide the same level of support for mature workers, but increasing the support for those workers is important. Allowing subsidised training for those that already have qualifications in other areas will help these workers better meet the needs of their employers, improve the regard and enthusiasm for training within the business and further foster uptake of the VET system.

In response to how the VET sector can support skills utilisation, the future of work and job creation, the VET sector should be equipping students with a set of skills that improves prospects of employment across various agriculture sectors. To achieve this, strong industry links and industry intelligence are essential.

Providing appropriate data and intelligence on the future jobs and the skills required will help future students assess their options. For this to happen, data gaps regarding ABS statistics as previously

discussed need to be addressed. Students need to know not just what jobs are available nor but what are the emerging opportunities in the future.

Another aspect to consider is to ensure that Group Training Organisations (GTOs) and RTOs working with agribusinesses have knowledge of the technological changes within the agriculture industry so that they are able to train the student appropriately. RTOs should, therefore, invest in professional development to upskill their trainers in the most up to date technologies available. In the case of GTO, they also need to ascertain whether or not an employer has the capacity to sufficiently expose the apprentice or trainee to new technology and other emerging skills needed in agriculture.

If the employer doesn't have the capacity, then the GTO should consider a shared trainee option. This will allow the trainee to have the opportunity to gain the full range of agriculture technology skills necessary to achieve the qualification. This could also be achieved by the incorporation of study leave or similar into the workplace agreement for the trainee to undertake work experience with the supplier of technology. For example, a trainee in agriculture could undertake work experience with a drone company, a machinery company, a sugar mill or similar. Students should also be encouraged to attend field days and relevant conferences to learn more about changing the technological environment. Having a GTO servicing the particular needs of Queensland agriculture would improve this situation.

To try to encourage the uptake of apprenticeships, the move to enable employers to share an apprentice or trainee is a positive step forward, and we believe that uptake of A&T could be increased if the process of sharing a student was better promoted and understood by producers. This involves trainee sharing across businesses who might offer compatible seasons and production cycles to ensure continual employment, while also exposing the trainee to multiple sectors within agriculture. Apprentices and trainees would be more likely to engage in various tasks in agriculture and help employers in times when they are more useful. Consideration should also be given to widening the A&T programs to permit middle-level management and supervisory roles to be eligible.

The Queensland Government should consider providing funding for more skill sets that can contribute to certificate level courses. This will provide an incentive for industry to use the VET system to update their employee's knowledge in the particular competency needed to perform their role. This approach will benefit both the individual's personal development and meets the need of employers whilst inculcating the merits of training in the workforce.

Increased flexibility in funding would increase the engagement of all Queenslanders in training. Despite industry's ongoing call for the funding of more skill sets, this has still not occurred. The agriculture sector currently only has one funded skill set – the Farm Business Management Skill Set. Support of skills sets will benefit the current workforce by accessing training tailored to their needs. This will certainly incentivise their use of the VET system as a method to update their knowledge and therefore increase their ability in the uptake of new knowledge and technology. Increasing the options for those already in the workforce that require upskilling to due changes in their industry would be highly beneficial.

If you have any queries regarding this submission, please contact Diana Saunders at diana@qff.org.au.

Yours sincerely

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Chief Executive Officer

References:

Department of Agriculture and Fisheries. (2018). *Queensland Agriculture and Food Research, Development and Extension- 10 year Roadmap and Extension*. Retrieved from <https://publications.qld.gov.au/dataset/qld-agriculture-and-food-research-development-and-extension-roadmap/resource/5ab53e3a-b245-4271-aefc-774fcc560765>

Skilling Australia Foundation. (2017). *Perceptions are not reality; myths, realities and the critical role of vocational education and training in Australia*.

The current response build on previous submissions made by RJSA to related consultations by DESBT:

- Jobs Queensland Positive Futures: Apprenticeships and Traineeships in Queensland (November 2016)
- DET Advancing Skills for the Future: A draft strategy for consultation (February 2017)
- DET Annual Queensland VET Quality Framework (March 2017)