

The Queensland Cabinet and Ministerial Directory

\$20 million for three new programs creating thousands of jobs

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Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development The Honourable Di Farmer

- The Palaszczuk Government has announced almost \$20 million for three initiatives that will support thousands of new jobs as part of the *Good people. Good jobs: Queensland Workforce Strategy 2022-2032*.
- **Program 1:** \$12.5 million Workforce Connect grants that brings employers together with peak bodies and organisations with jobseekers that haven't traditionally been a source of employees.
- **Program 2:** A further \$5.9 million for the development and delivery of micro-credentials in critical and priority skills areas, supporting industry development of specialised and targeted training that addresses gaps or emerging skills needs that are not addressed through accredited training.
- **Program 3:** \$1.7 million Growing Workforce Participation projects. One-off grant funding of \$20,000 up to \$200,000 to boost workforce participation for at risk target groups.

Fixing workforce shortages is one of the biggest challenges facing the nation.

To meet this challenge the Palaszczuk Government, through its Workforce Connect Fund, has put in place a plan that connects employers to peak bodies and organisations with jobseekers that haven't traditionally been a source of employees.

Sixteen projects have been awarded a total of \$12.5 million from the Workforce Connect Fund. This will benefit almost 4,400 employers and support more than 20,000 Queensland workers, which includes the creation of more than 6,300 new jobs and the retention and/or upskilling of almost 14,000 existing workers.

We want to help diversify Queensland's workforce and the projects approved will support target groups including young people, women and mature-aged workers, people with a disability and First Nations peoples.

The \$5.9 million Micro-credentials Program is in addition to the \$5.5 million awarded between 2019 and 2022 to 18 Micro-credentialing pilot projects. The 2023 Micro-credentialing Program first funding round of \$2.9 million is now open giving access to grants of up to \$250,000 to develop short, just-in-time, non-accredited courses that can help address current and emerging skills needs.

The \$1.7 million available through the Growing Workforce Participation Fund provides one-off grant funding of \$20,000 to \$200,000 to increase workforce participation by at risk target groups in eligible areas of Queensland.

Quotes attributable to the Minister for Employment and Skills Development Di Farmer

"The Workforce Connect Fund is one of the flagship components of the Palaszczuk Labor Government's *Good people. Good jobs: Queensland Workforce Strategy 2022-2032*.

"It's a unique strategy, among our large suite of initiatives. There are 180,000 people in Queensland who face employment barriers and we have implemented an innovative approach to recruitment and retention which, if successful, can be expanded at scale. It has never been done before and our first funding round has been a great start.

"Projects include:

- \$1 million to Business Chamber Queensland for its project aiming to assist 1000 employers, 1000 jobseekers and 1000 existing employees.
- \$915,000 to Peakcare Queensland for a Workforce Hub to address the attraction, retention and participation issues experienced by the child protection industry in Queensland.
- \$1 million to the Housing Industry Association, which in part will provide a mentoring service to apprentices within the housing industry at risk of dropping out.
- Almost \$1 million to Motor Trades Association of Queensland for its program, largely aimed at migrants, First Nations and people with a disability.
- \$963,000 to the Queensland Resource Council to establish a digital hub that will assist the industry in attracting and retaining a more diversified and inclusive workforce.
- \$980,000 to Timber Queensland Limited for a training and career hub that will bring together industry, community, employers, training providers and employment agencies to deliver training and career education programs and work experience opportunities for school leavers, unemployed and existing staff looking to upskill or retrain.

“Through the micro-credentialing pilot program we saw some incredible examples of innovation. The Queensland Tourism Industry Council’s micro-credential program supported 400 tourism and hospitality businesses and 1,300 employees.

“The Queensland Farmers’ Federation developed a program that supported more than 200 individuals become ‘farm-ready’, with better knowledge of the sector, and health, and safety obligations to manage risk in a rural enterprise.

“The Workforce Connect Fund, the Micro-credentials Program and the Growing Workforce Participation Fund are further examples of how the Palaszczuk Government is helping good people get set for good jobs so they can enjoy our great lifestyle.”

For more information about the successful Workforce Connect Fund projects, go to

<https://desbt.qld.gov.au/employment/workforce-connect-fund> (<https://desbt.qld.gov.au/employment/workforce-connect-fund>)

For more information on the 2023 Micro-credentialing Program, go to

<https://desbt.qld.gov.au/training/employers/funding/micro-credentialing> (<https://desbt.qld.gov.au/training/employers/funding/micro-credentialing>)

For more information on the Growing Workforce Participation Fund, go to

<https://backtowork.initiatives.qld.gov.au/growing-workforce-participation-fund/> (<https://backtowork.initiatives.qld.gov.au/growing-workforce-participation-fund/>)

For more information on the Queensland Workforce Strategy, go to <https://desbt.qld.gov.au/employment/support-employers/workforce-strategy/about> (<https://desbt.qld.gov.au/employment/support-employers/workforce-strategy/about>)

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