

Review of support provided to Queensland Apprentices and Trainees, with a focus on female apprentices in male dominated occupations

Report to the Minister for Employment and Small
Business and Minister for Training and Skills
Development

January 2022

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Executive Summary

Employment based training offered through apprenticeships and traineeships provides a critical supply of skilled workers to Queensland industries. Ensuring that apprenticeships and traineeships are valued pathways and deliver quality outcomes for individuals, businesses, industry, and the community is a joint responsibility between government, regulators, industry, employers, Supervising Registered Training Organisations (SRTO), apprentices and trainees.

This Review (*Review of support provided to Queensland Apprentices and Trainees, with a focus on female apprentices in male dominated occupations*) examined:

- the effectiveness of current support arrangements in place, through the joint responsibilities of stakeholders, to deal with issues such as bullying and harassment in the workplace
- whether outcomes of the system differ based on gender
- enhancements that could be made to existing processes to improve outcomes.

This Review explored issues that have been raised with the Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development, complaints received by the Office of the Queensland Training Ombudsman, analysed apprenticeship and traineeship data, and considered feedback from a range of stakeholders and support service providers.

The key findings from this Review indicate that, whilst major systemic changes are not required, enhancements can be made that focus on:

- preparing prospective employers and apprentices and trainees
- supporting apprentices, trainees, and their employers throughout their training contract
- ensuring that where intervention is required it happens in a co-ordinated manner and as early as possible.

To address these findings, the Review proposes the following recommendations:

1. The Department of Employment, Small Business and Training (DESBT) should urgently implement a Train to Retain Strategy 2.0.
2. DESBT should enhance communication with apprentices and trainees through the provision of a Digital Card (similar to that used for Containers for Change).
3. DESBT should provide a seamless triage service to all callers to the Apprentice Info Line to ensure the required level of support is provided and not just refer callers to other agencies without appropriate assessment of who is best placed to provide support.
4. DESBT should provide advice to small employers on the benefits of diversifying their workforce.
5. Construction Skills Queensland (CSQ) should be engaged to develop a Queensland Women in Construction Strategy.
6. DESBT should engage the recently announced Manufacturing Skills Queensland (once operational) to develop a Queensland Women in Engineering Strategy.
7. DESBT should engage Motor Trades Association Queensland to develop strategies to narrow the gap in completion rates between male and female apprentices, and to increase the uptake and completion rates for trainees:
8. DESBT should engage with the Furnishing industry to develop strategies to increase the commencement of female apprentices and trainees and to narrow the gap in completion rates between male and female apprentices.
9. DESBT should engage with Energy Skills Queensland to develop strategies to increase commencements of female apprentices and trainees in the Utilities industry (noting this industry is currently not an industry covered by the Gateway to Industry Schools program).

10. DESBT should work with the Queensland Public Service Commission and the Local Government Association of Queensland to promote the uptake of female traineeships in the Government sector.
11. Consideration should be given to creating an Apprenticeship Advisory Committee to identify the reasons for low completion rates for apprentices in the Community Services, Food Processing, Hospitality and Retail sectors (noting that over 85% of commencements in Community Services and Retail are females), and to develop strategies to increase completion rates or the use of complementary models to deliver the skills required by those industries.
12. DESBT should review administrative arrangements (including Employer Resource Assessment requirements where appropriate) to ensure they are not an enabler of real or perceived conflict in the workplace.

Additional information relating to a number of recommendations is outlined in the Recommendations section of this report.

Background, Purpose and Scope of the Report

In July 2021, the Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development requested a review be undertaken of the support measures available to apprentices and trainees in Queensland and specifically the support for female apprentices and trainees in male dominated occupations. In particular, the review is to identify improvements or gaps in current arrangements and the inclusion of additional support measures, if needed, to ensure Queensland has safe and productive workplaces with adequate support arrangements for apprentices and trainees.

The Terms of Reference for this review are at **Attachment 1**.

Through a review of previous reports, current services available, data analysis and extensive consultation, opportunities for improvement will be identified:

- to ensure apprentices and trainees, like other employees, have access to workplaces free from bullying and harassment
- to ensure support provided to apprentices and trainees is timely, relevant, and accessible
- to understand the barriers or enablers for female participation in male dominated occupations and ensure all apprentices and trainees, irrespective of gender, are able to succeed in their chosen career.

The following data provides some context for the importance of this review:

- in 2010, the Productivity Commission found workplace bullying and harassment costs the Australian economy between \$6 billion and \$36 billion every year
- in 2020, Mates in Construction released a report that identified over 27% of apprentices in the construction industry experienced bullying and/or harassment, and over 30% had suicidal thoughts, in the previous 12 months
- the Discussion Paper released in 2021 to inform the development of the new Queensland Women's Strategy identified that closing the gap globally for economic participation and opportunity is estimated to take 267.6 years, compared to closing the gap for educational attainment which is estimated to take 14.2 years
- Queensland's gender pay gap of 13.4% is the second largest gender pay gap in Australia

The importance in ensuring gender equality and support and assistance provided to apprentices and trainees in all occupations is highlighted in the *Journal of Industrial Relations Volume 63 Number 4 September 2021 – Workplace gender equality: Where are we now and where to next? The (under)valuation of Feminised industries and occupations – pages 465-466*.

“The COVID-19 pandemic exposed chronic gender segregations in the workforce, with women overrepresented among many of the industries and occupations deemed ‘essential’ to the functioning of the economy and society through the crisis. In Australia, as elsewhere, women comprised a significant majority of the workers risking their lives to provide healthcare, early childhood care and education, retail labour and other essential services. At the onset of the pandemic, women accounted for 88% of registered nurses and midwives, 85% of aged care workers, 96% of early childhood educators and 55% of retail and food and accommodation services.

The disproportionate exposure of women to the risks associated with frontline work also underlined the persistent undervaluation of feminised industries and occupations. In Australia, women are disproportionately represented among workers earning the national minimum wage or modern award minima. The COVID-19 crisis has raised questions about whether and to what extent the pandemic will force a re-evaluation of the way in which we assess the value of highly feminised industries and occupations”.

Previous Reports and Reviews

Jobs Queensland undertook a comprehensive review of existing literature on behalf of the Queensland Training Ombudsman. The review highlights that global challenges in relation to apprenticeship systems are:

- the under-representation of women in engineering and technology apprenticeships
- high non-completion rates for both men and women
- the need to change workplace practices and workplace cultures to support diversification of the workforce
- lack of defined career pathways following completion of an apprenticeship, in some industries
- the changing nature of work and the ability of the system to respond to this.

The review also identifies that in 2010, the Productivity Commission found workplace bullying and harassment costs the Australian economy between \$6 billion and \$36 billion every year. Interestingly, BIS Oxford Economics identified that in 2017/18, the cost to the construction industry alone was \$6.1 billion¹.

Additionally, the review identified trade occupations are traditionally the domain of males and outlines the percentage of women in these occupations has remained relatively unchanged since 1988.

The review further identifies challenges related to women in trade apprenticeships, such as:

- overcoming societal and cultural norms
- lack of female role models
- lack of engagement through familial and social networks
- despite numerous STEM programs on offer, there is a view that school curriculums do not encourage female participation in trade-based classes or work experience
- employers that are resistant to employing female tradespeople
- workplace cultures that support and condone workforce bullying
- lack of or ineffective human resource policies and practices to respond to workplace bullying
- lack of appropriate facilities on worksites

Apprenticeships, women, and workplace culture – A Literature Review should be read in conjunction with this report and is included at **Attachment 2**.

A number of other reports and publications were identified by stakeholders during consultation, as outlined in **Attachment 3**. A number of key issues identified in those reports relevant to this review are:

- large employers are more likely to have implemented formal policies and procedures to deal with issues like domestic and family violence, whilst small employers are less likely to have formal policies in place and lack the money and time to proactively address these type of issues²
- 27% of apprentices in the construction industry experienced bullying and harassment, and over 30% had suicidal thoughts over a 12-month period³
- Victoria's *Women in Construction Strategy: Building Gender Equality* focusses on three key themes:
 - Attract – women need to be aware that construction is an attractive and viable career option
 - Recruit – women must be proactively recruited and have access to strong career pathways
 - Retain – workplaces must be inclusive and adaptive to ensure women want to stay

¹ The Cost of Doing Nothing Report – BIS Oxford Economics - 2021

² Domestic and Family Violence as a Workplace Issue – Small Business Social Impact Series 2021 - CCIQ

³ The impact of Workplace Bullying on Mental Health and Suicidality in Queensland Construction Apprentices – Mates in Construction and Griffith University - 2020

- Research⁴ which assisted in the development of Victoria's Women in Construction Strategy identified:
 - women are outsiders in the construction industry
 - consequence free behaviour is an enabler of inappropriate behaviour
 - a culture of silence with a lack of transparent processes for reporting inappropriate behaviour
- *Towards 2025 – An Australian Government Strategy to Boost Workforce Participation* identifies there are six groups of women with specific needs and experiences:
 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women
 - culturally and linguistically diverse women
 - mature aged women
 - rural and regional women
 - women with a disability
 - young women
- The central goal must be to address the culture within the construction industry which tends to exclude women, requiring careful and sustained attention from within the industry. Only construction employers and workers, not policy makers, administrators or diversity experts can create the necessary change⁵.

Following the release of the 2006 Queensland Skills Plan, the then Training Ombudsman undertook a review aimed at *Improving workplace practices to help reduce harassment of apprentices and trainees*. In response to the review, the Department of Education, Training and the Arts (DETA) released *Train to Retain – a fair go for apprentices in the workplace – An action Plan (Train to Retain) (Attachment 4)*. In broad terms, Train to Retain implemented strategies to deal with:

- education of stakeholders
- communication and engagement
- complaint management processes
- professional development for departmental staff
- skills programs focussed on safe and productive workplaces
- linkages with schools
- development of a Performance Management Framework
- establishment of a Reference Group
- improved relationship between DETA and Workplace Health and Safety
- review of regulatory mechanisms
- improved research methodology

Apprentice and Trainee Commencements and Completions

An analysis of Apprenticeship and Traineeship commencements and completion rates over recent years, using data provided by DESBT, is outlined below:

Apprentice new commencements

Year	Female Commencements	Male Commencements	Total Commencements
2018/19	2222 (14.6%)	12981 (85.4%)	15203
2019/20	2392 (16.5%)	12097 (83.5%)	14489
2020/21	3389 (16.9%)	16640 (83.1%)	20029

⁴ Women in Construction: Exploring the Barriers and Supportive Enablers of Wellbeing in the Workplace - RMIT

⁵ Women in Construction – An Opportunity Lost? – Construction Skills Queensland 2018

Apprentice new commencements by Industry – proportion of female commencements

Industry	Female Commencements		Total Commencements		% of Female Commencements	
	2019/20	2020//21	2019/20	2020/21	2019/20	2020/21
Arts and Entertainment	5	13	27	40	18.5	32.5
Automotive	205	242	2452	3171	8.4	13.4
Community Services	467	763	490	792	95.3	96.3
Construction	155	234	3915	5745	4	4.1
Engineering	132	141	2119	2420	6.2	5.8
Food Processing	108	123	411	528	26.3	23.3
Furnishing	23	44	428	771	5.4	5.7
Hospitality	230	366	661	925	34.8	39.6
Primary Industry	65	98	571	800	11.4	12.1
Retail	850	1148	996	1385	85.3	82.5
Sport and Recreation	7	14	13	17	53.8	82.4
Textile Clothing and Footwear	1	2	9	15	11.1	13.3
Utilities	143	202	2336	3085	6.1	6.5
Queensland	2392	3389	14489	20029	16.5	16.9
Queensland (excl retail, community services and sport and rec)	1068	1920	13165	18560	8.2	10.3

The above data indicates the proportion of female apprenticeship commencements has remained consistent, rising from 16.5% in 2019/20 to 16.9% in 2020/21.

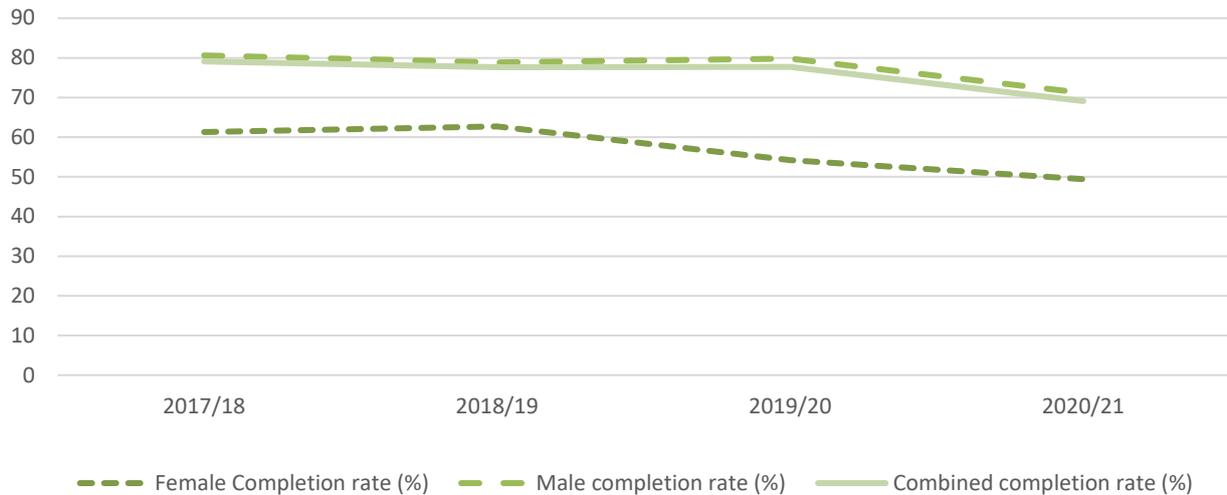
Additionally, to better understand the relative level of commencements in male dominated industries, further analysis was undertaken. If industries where female apprenticeship commencements were more than 50% were excluded, the proportion of female apprenticeship commencements in male dominated apprenticeships increased from 8.2% in 2019/20 to 10.3% in 2020/21. Commencements in the following industries are below that average:

- Construction
- Engineering
- Furnishing
- Utilities .

Apprentice completion rates

A breakdown of apprenticeship completion rates by industry and gender has also been undertaken. It is noted there were less than 20 female apprenticeship commencements in Arts and Entertainment, Sport and Recreation and Textile Clothing and Footwear industries. Completions for those industries have been included below for information purposes and will not be used for further analysis. It must also be noted that completion rates for 2020/21 will continue to rise as DESBT is notified of completions.

Apprenticeship Completion Rates



Apprentice completion rates by Industry and Gender

Industry	Female Completion Rate (%)		Male Completion Rate (%)		Difference – Male vs Female(%)	
	2019/20	2020/21	2019/20	2020/21	2019/20	2020/21
Arts and Entertainment	55.48	76.06	69.16	41.44	13.68	-34.62
Automotive	71.51	63.12	84.9	76.61	13.39	13.49
Community Services	43.7	43.53	48.2	18.7	4.5	-24.83
Construction	61.86	53.25	75.21	64.35	13.35	11.1
Engineering	87.59	74.4	89.68	87.87	2.09	13.47
Food Processing	45.41	46.25	54.38	38.85	8.97	-7.4
Furnishing	69.28	50.72	79.18	61.16	9.9	10.44
Hospitality	35.55	27.08	38.89	24.74	3.34	-2.29
Primary Industry	62.78	62.57	56.17	56.71	-6.61	-5.86
Retail	48.68	40.43	49.53	44.7	0.85	4.27
Sport and Recreation	72.13	36.36	98.72	34.78	26.59	-1.58
Textile Clothing and Footwear	0	0	17.39	8.13	17.39	8.13
Utilities	93.43	90.32	94.49	96.5	1.06	6.18
Queensland	54.2	49.41	79.79	71.14	25.59	21.73

The above data indicates the gap between female and male completion rates has narrowed from 25.59% in 2019/20 to 21.73% in 2020/21. It also indicates that over the two years, the following industries have completion rates of less than 50% for both male and female apprentices:

- Community Services
- Food Processing
- Hospitality
- Retail

In 2019/20, only Primary Industry had female completion rates that were better than male completion rates. In 2020/21, Community Services, Hospitality and Primary Industry all had better completion rates for female apprentices than male apprentices.

The biggest difference between male and female apprentice completion rates occurs in the following industries:

- Automotive
- Construction
- Engineering
- Furnishing

Trainee new commencements

Year	Female Commencements	Male Commencements	Total Commencements
2018/19	11184 (50.7%)	10891 (49.3%)	22075
2019/20	9035 (50.9%)	8718 (49.1%)	17753
2020/21	13559 (52.7%)	12192 (47.3%)	25751

Trainee new commencements by Industry – proportion of female commencements

Industry	Female Commencements		Total Commencements		% of Female Commencements	
	2019/20	2020/21	2019/20	2020/21	2019/20	2020/21
Arts and Entertainment	33	22	117	51	28.2	43.1
Automotive	5	16	154	298	3.2	5.4
Business	3157	5815	4563	8890	69.2	65.4
Communications	1	40	2	495	50	0.4
Community Services	1091	1658	1209	1878	90.1	88.3
Construction	242	234	1785	2103	13.6	11.1
Engineering	94	92	252	337	37.3	27.3
Food Processing	203	227	982	849	20.7	26.7
Furnishing	1	3	11	33	9.1	9.1
General Education and Training	0	40	0	55	n/a	72.7
Government	11	11	59	84	18.6	13.1
Health	244	572	264	643	92.4	90
Hospitality	1587	2157	2585	3482	61.4	62
Laboratory Operations	78	171	201	455	38.8	37.6
Mining	99	107	512	413	19.3	25.9
Primary Industry	410	512	571	810	71.8	63.2
Process Manufacturing	28	30	98	144	28.6	20.8
Retail	945	1339	1532	2063	61.7	64.9

Industry	Female Commencements		Total Commencements		% of Female Commencements	
	2019/20	2020/21	2019/20	2020/21	2019/20	2020/21
Sport and Recreation	90	138	168	274	53.6	50.4
Textile Clothing and Footwear	0	4	1	5	0	80
Tourism	500	48	631	56	79.2	85.7
Transport	181	310	1027	1575	17.6	19.7
Utilities	13	13	138	131	9.4	9.9
Queensland	9035	13559	17753	25751	50.8	52.7
Queensland (excl business, community services, general education and training, health, hospitality, primary industry, retail, sport and rec, tourism)	989	1280	5200	6973	19.0	18.4

The above data indicates growth in the proportion of female traineeship commencements from 50.8% in 2019/20 to 52.7% in 2021.

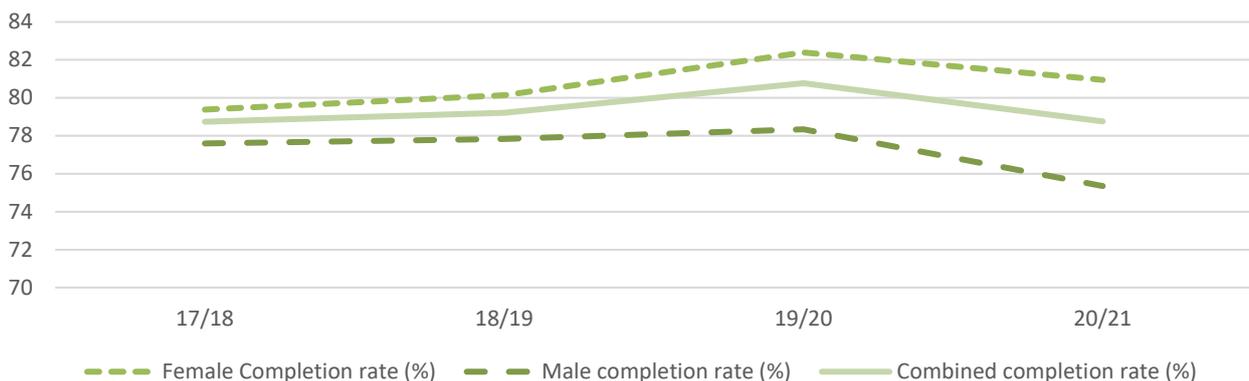
Additionally, if the industries where female traineeship commencements were more than 50% are excluded, the proportion of female traineeship commencements in male dominated traineeships declined from 19% in 2019/20 to 18.4% in 2021. Commencements in the following industries are below that average:

- Automotive
- Communications
- Construction
- Furnishing
- Government
- Utilities

Transport was below the average in 2019/20 but above the average in 2020/21.

Trainee completion rates

Traineeship Completion Rates



Trainee completion rates by Industry and Gender

Industry	Female Completion rate (%)		Male Completion rate (%)		Difference – Male vs Female %	
	2019/20	2020/21	2019/20	2020/21	2019/20	2020/21
Arts and Entertainment	99.77	97.62	99.73	97.86	-0.04	0.24
Automotive	44.04	33.76	47.85	59.46	3.81	25.7
Business	83.38	84.74	77.22	79.88	-6.16	-4.86
Communications	94.12	77.84	85.08	87.29	-9.04	9.45
Community Services	82.31	75.87	69.84	63.93	-12.47	-11.94
Construction	89.9	89.13	84.13	78.42	-5.77	-10.71
Engineering	71.15	63.48	81.08	52.12	9.93	-11.36
Food Processing	79.38	40.3	64.53	43.8	-14.85	3.5
Furnishing	0	0	0	19.05	0	19.05
General Education and Training	0	0	0	0	0	0
Government	0	0	0	0.14	0	0.14
Health	89.89	86.4	83.93	87.9	-5.96	1.5
Hospitality	77.66	76.16	75.01	71.52	-2.65	-4.64
Laboratory Operations	94.95	80	90.65	84.77	-4.3	4.77
Mining	90.42	72.78	82.57	70.66	-7.85	-2.12
Primary Industry	94.06	94.52	93.63	93.3	-0.43	-1.22
Process Manufacturing	97.61	92.85	92.22	93.67	-5.39	0.82
Retail	84.16	81.46	84.48	81.81	0.32	0.35
Sport and Recreation	90.53	84.05	87.91	87.06	-2.62	3.01
Textile Clothing and Footwear	100	0	0	0	-100	0
Tourism	90.68	72.66	86.64	73.88	-4.04	1.22
Transport	66.88	49.22	63.7	56.73	-3.18	7.51
Utilities	94.53	90.32	96.44	96.5	1.91	6.18
Queensland	82.39	80.94	78.34	75.35	-4.05	-5.59

Completion rates for traineeships are significantly higher than for apprentices, more than likely due to shorter durations and widespread acceptance of early completions. However, in industries like construction, a number of traineeships are 24 months or longer.

Interestingly, female completion rates are higher or equal to male completion rates across all industries, with the exception of automotive and utilities.

Additional data regarding each industry training group, together with a detailed list of apprenticeships and traineeships included in each industry training group is at **Attachment 5**.

Size of employer

Apprentices are more likely to commence their apprenticeship with a small employer, with up to 20 staff.

- in 2019, 52.4% of commencements were with small employers
- in 2020, 56.4% of commencements were with small employers
- as at 30 June 2021, 58.7% of commencements were with small employers.

The construction industry is characterised by a large number of small employers/sub-contractors and would significantly influence these figures given that 28.7% of all apprenticeship commencements in 2020/21 related to the construction industry.

With regard to traineeships, the majority of commencements occur with medium to large employers.

- in 2019, 83.9% of commencements were with medium or large employers
- in 2020, 80.1% of commencements were with medium or large employers
- up to 30 June 2021, 74.2% of commencements were with medium or large employers.

The *CCIQ Domestic and Family Violence as a Workplace Issue – Small Business Social Impact Series 2021* identified small and medium sized businesses have low awareness of domestic and family violence, were less likely to have formal policies in place and lack the money and time necessary to proactively address domestic and family violence. This finding related to the size of the employer may assist in explaining why traineeship completion rates are generally significantly higher than apprenticeship completion rates (with 58.7% of apprenticeship commencements in 2021 being with small employers).

Role of Government Agencies

DESBT

The Chief Executive of DESBT has responsibility for administration of the apprenticeship and traineeship system in Queensland through provisions of the *Further Education and Training Act 2014*. (FET Act). The majority of functions under the FET Act have been delegated to DESBT officers, and in some instances, officers in other organisations such as Queensland Racing and Australian Apprenticeship Support Networks (AASN).

In general, functions under the FET Act include:

- determination of qualifications and occupations to be declared as apprenticeships and traineeships, including probationary periods, durations, requirements for full-time, part-time, and school based arrangements, and other relevant requirements
- maintenance of the register of training contracts for apprentices and trainees
- approval of training contracts ensuring the specified requirements for supervision, range of work and facilities are met
- variations to training contracts
- support to be provided to apprentices, trainees, employers, and other stakeholders throughout the lifecycle of the apprenticeship and traineeship
- prohibiting employers from employing apprentices where required
- approval for the completion of training contracts for apprenticeships and traineeships.

This provides DESBT with a framework to support apprentices and trainees, including providing assistance with situations related to the breakdown of relationships in the workplace caused by issues such as harassment and bullying. A fact sheet outlining their role in this regard is at **Attachment 6**.

The majority of the DESBT functions are delivered through their regional offices, who also provide services for Skilling Queenslanders for Work, Back to Work, Registered Training Organisation funding compliance activity and Small Business programs.

DESBT has contracted their provider of Employee Assistance Services to deliver support and assistance to referred apprentices and trainees, if required. Over the last three years, there has been one referral to this service in both 2019 and 2020, with two referrals made in 2021.

DESBT also had a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Workplace Health and Safety Queensland (WHSQ) established as part of the phased out Train to Retain strategy (**Attachment 4**), to facilitate a collaborative approach to supporting apprentices and trainees experiencing bullying or harassment in the workplace.

DESBT engages with industry through Industry Skills Advisors (ISAs) for every industry sector to co-ordinate engagement across the industry and provide advice to DESBT on skilling issues, with a full list of contracted organisations included at **Attachment 7**.

DESBT also engages with the schooling sectors through funding the Gateway to Industry Schools programs to facilitate engagement between industry and schools. Details of funded programs are included at **Attachment 8**.

Office of Industrial Relations and WHSQ

WHSQ works with industry and assists businesses to create a safe and healthy culture in Queensland places of work. They do this by:

- making sure workplace health and safety laws are followed
- investigating work related fatalities and serious injuries
- taking legal action when work health and safety laws are broken
- educating employees and employers on their legal obligations.

Workplace bullying is defined as repeated and unreasonable behaviour directed towards a worker or group of workers that creates a risk to health and safety.

To assist employers to meet their obligations, WHSQ provides a *Guide for preventing and responding to workplace bullying*. They also provide a guide for workers – *Dealing with workplace bullying – a worker’s guide*.

Workers who believe they have been a victim of workplace bullying can make a complaint to WHSQ, who may investigate to ensure the employer has met their legal obligations to provide a safe and healthy workplace.

WHSQ will not:

- provide legal advice
- mediate between the parties involved
- provide counselling or victim support for work related bullying matters
- order the person conducting the business or undertaking to discipline the alleged bully or terminate their employment
- take sides
- deal with industrial matters
- issue an order to stop behaviours that constitute work-related bullying.

Workers in Queensland can seek a stop bullying order by application to the Fair Work Commission (if the worker is employed by a corporation) or the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission (QIRC) if the worker is employed by a sole trader or a Queensland industrial relations jurisdiction employer (eg a local or state government employer). It is also noted the Fair Work Commission has recently been given powers to issue orders to stop sexual harassment in certain circumstances.

QIRC has advised they do not report on the number of Stop Bullying Orders directly related to apprentices and trainees. However, they advised that in 2021 they have issued 11 Stop Bullying Orders to date, consistent with 14 in 2020 and 13 in 2019.

Queensland Human Rights Commission (QHRC)

The QHRC is an independent statutory body established under the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991*.

Services provided include:

- resolving discrimination and human rights complaints
- delivering training to business, government, and the community on discrimination and human rights
- providing information products and services, and responding to enquiries about their services and guiding legislation
- influencing government policy and legislation through legal submissions
- promoting public discussion of human rights through a variety of community engagement and communication strategies.

Whilst specific data is not recorded in relation to complaints received from apprentices and trainees, QHRC advised that it has received the following complaints for those under the age of 25 related to issues in the workplace:

Year Complaint Received	Discrimination	Sexual Harassment	Unnecessary Questions	Victimisation
2018/19	18	9	3	7
2019/20	22	11	7	6
2020/21	19	11	5	9

In addition to the work of the QHRC, matters can also be determined by a tribunal. Across Australia, tribunals have dealt with a number of reported matters related to apprentices and trainees, including:

- *Hopper v Mt Isa Mines Ltd & Ors* [1997] QADT 3 – Discrimination and sexual harassment against first female apprentice diesel fitter on a mine site, including a finding that nothing had been done to prepare the worksite for the first female apprentice
- *Roberts v King* (2009) QADT 3 – pregnant hairdressing apprentice discriminated against
- *Kordas v Ruba & Jo Pty Ltd t/a Aztec Hair & Beauty* [2017] NSWCATAD 156 – sexual harassment and victimisation of an apprentice hairdresser by his manager and trainer
- *Willis v State Rail Authority of New South Wales (No 3)* NSW Equal Opportunity Tribunal (24 July 1992) - Medical standards applied by the State Rail Authority in respect of the hearing of applicants for employment as apprentice motor mechanics were found to be discriminatory
- *Thomas v Alexiou (Anti-Discrimination)* [2008] VCAT 2264 – apprentice engine reconditioner sexually harassed during three and a half years of his employment
- *Carroll v Zielke & Ors* [2001] NSWADT 146 – apprentice pastry chef sexually harassed by two managers
- *Schlipalius v Petch* [1996] VADT 37 – apprentice chef dismissed after having HIV test
- *Thomas v Alexiou (Anti-Discrimination)* [2008] VCAT 2264 – male apprentice compensated for harassment
- *WorkSafe Victoria v Map Foundation t/a Café Vamp* (unreported, Melbourne Magistrates Court, 8 February 2010) - this now famous prosecution brought by WorkSafe Victoria, was one which resulted in the Victorian government enacting what is known as “*Brodie’s Law*”, which makes serious bullying a criminal offence

- *WorkCover v City Edge Panel Repairs* (unreported, Melbourne Magistrates' Court, 10 July 2000) – 15 year old first year panel beating apprentice was physically and verbally abused by work colleagues over a three month period
- *Blenner-Hassett v Murray Goulburn Co-operative Ltd & Ors* [1999] VCC 6 – employer of apprentice fitter and turner failed to regulate or monitor workplace bullying
- *WorkCover Authority v Peninsula Prestige Cars Pty Ltd* (unreported, Frankston Magistrates Court, 18 October 1999) – being “unaware” of bullying does not help employers escape liability
- *WorkCover Authority v Dennis John Vines* (unreported, Dandenong Magistrates' Court, 7 April 2000) – employees penalised for bullying behaviour against a 19 year old apprentice mechanic
- *Inspector Gregory Maddaford v MA Coleman Joinery (NSW) Pty Ltd* [2004] NSWIRComm 317 – initiation of 16 year old apprentice involved bullying behaviour
- *WorkSafe v Matthew Lever* (unreported, Ringwood Magistrates' Court, 1 July 2010) – apprentice set on fire as a prank – three employees prosecuted – employer not vicariously liable when it can show reasonable steps taken to minimise risks.

Queensland Small Business Commissioner (QSBC)

The role of the QSBC is to advocate, enable and empower small businesses to improve productivity and help drive economic growth in Queensland.

The functions of the QSBC include:

- providing information and advisory services to small businesses in Queensland about matters relevant to them
- assisting small businesses with informal resolution of COVID-19 small business leasing disputes. This includes providing initial information and advisory services, and pre-mediation services to connect tenants and landlords to try to identify solutions prior to progressing to mediation
- administering a small business lease dispute mediation process (where information or pre-mediation support has not resolved the dispute), before progressing to the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal or the courts for dispute resolution.

The QSBC has recently implemented the Small Business Friendly Councils initiative, with participating councils committing to raise the profile and capability of small businesses within their local government area.

Queensland Training Ombudsman (QTO)

The FET Act established the QTO as an independent statutory position, which commenced operation in September 2015. The FET Act sets out the key statutory functions and governance arrangements for the QTO. The QTO has established formal information sharing arrangements with a number of entities to assist in achieving outcomes for individuals.

The QTO provides complete wrap-around support for students, apprentices and trainees and other stakeholders, to assist them to address issues with the vocational education and training (VET) services they are being provided. The QTO has also been tasked to identify systemic issues with the provision and quality of VET in Queensland.

While the QTO is an independent statutory body, the FET Act provides that the Minister may refer a matter to the QTO for review or research and the provision of advice or recommendations.

Since establishment on 14 September 2015, the office has completed 2085 complaints as at 31 December 2021. Of these complaints, 233 (11%) relate to apprentices and trainees with a number of those complaints including allegations of bullying and/or harassment

The following strategic reviews directly linked to apprentices and trainees have been completed:

- quality of training to electrical apprentices
- quality of training and assessment in the security industry
- quality outcomes delivered by group training organisations
- high risk qualifications identified by DESBT
- training and assessment and the interface with licensing with the Queensland construction industry (a joint review with CSQ)
- quality of VET provision in regional, rural and remote Queensland
- training delivery linked to advertising of vacant positions
- school-based apprenticeship and traineeship administrative arrangements in Queensland.

Services provided by Other Organisations

Australian Apprenticeship Support Network (AASN)

The Australian Government contracts AASN providers across Australia to provide information and advice to support employers, apprentices, and trainees across Australia.

In Queensland, the four contracted AASNs are:

- Busy at Work
- MAS
- MEGT
- Sarina Russo Group.

DESBT also provides funding to AASNs to enable them to provide a “one stop shop” service to Queensland employers, apprentices, and trainees.

AASNs assist stakeholders to commence an apprenticeship by:

- providing advice and assistance with recruiting apprentices and trainees
- facilitating the ‘sign up’ and completion of necessary paperwork
- linking the employer and apprentice/trainee with a SRTO
- applying for applicable incentives
- approving the training contract under the FET Act (through delegations from the chief executive of DESBT).

During the apprenticeship or traineeship, the AASN:

- is a point of contact for the employer, apprentice, or trainee
- attempts to contact the apprentice/trainee twice per year
- assists with variations to the training contract and with completions
- applies for applicable incentives
- provides advice and support.

At various times, AASNs are also engaged by the Australian Government to assist with specific initiatives, such as gateway services places for women interested in a non-traditional trade, or programs funded through the Women’s Leadership and Development program. Many also deliver Queensland Government funded projects such as those funded under Skilling Queenslanders for Work.

Other Organisations

As outlined in **Attachment 9**, consultation occurred with a large number of organisations during this review. Services provided by these organisations include:

- promoting occupations and industries to schooling sectors, including initiatives targeted at attracting female apprentices in male dominated trades
- demystifying stereotypes regarding female participation in trades
- identifying preferred employers who have implemented strategies to increase female participation in male dominated trades
- providing resources to assist employers diversify their workforce
- supporting apprentices and trainees who are experiencing bullying and/or harassment in the workplace
- supporting apprentices and trainees to deal with personal issues
- supporting employers in effectively managing their workforce
- providing advice on how to improve communication with young people.

Feedback from Stakeholders

A summary of feedback received from stakeholders consulted (**Attachment 9**) is outlined below:

Bullying, Harassment and Culture

- The issue of bullying and harassment is not unique to apprentices and trainees and is a workplace culture issue that must be resolved in a number of industries
- Completion rates for apprentices and trainees may provide an indication of industry sectors that need to address culture issues related to bullying and harassment
- Industries like construction are generally resistant to changes in workplace culture and implementation of any changes as a result of this review will take time
- The structure of industries and the size of organisations impacts on how bullying and harassment issues are dealt with – some industries are characterised with a number of large employers whilst others are made up of several large organisations and many sub-contractors
- A one size fits all approach to dealing with harassment and bullying in the workplace, and female participation, will not deliver results.
- Apprentices, no matter what the trade, background or gender are happy when they have been trained properly, know what they are doing and working towards a career in the industry
- Culture must be inclusive – not just of women but for all workers and diverse groups
- Real effort and actions are needed to change the culture of some industries to ensure it reflects inclusiveness
- In the construction sector, there is a range of mechanisms used to address bullying and harassment on big sites, but the biggest risk exists on small sites where those mechanisms are not in place
- Encourage individuals to complete Diversity and Inclusive awareness training.

Preparing Workers and Workplaces

- There is a broad range of programs used by industries with a focus on preparing young people in schools for the workplace. These programs need to also be adapted to workplaces, with some programs being trialled
- Consideration should be given to approving employers that can employ apprentices, or as a minimum, requiring the nominated supervisor of all apprentices and trainees to undertake training to ensure the apprentice or trainee is provided with adequate support in the workplace.

- The Queensland Government is implementing all aspects of Respect@Work, including an education role to ensure stakeholders are aware of legal responsibilities
- Need proactive programs for small businesses focussing on what they need to do – not what they don't do.

Attracting Female Apprentices in Male Dominated Industries

- New technology should make some trades more appealing to a more diverse range of Queenslanders
- The outcomes of the “Exemplar Project” at Cannon Hill should provide some better evidence on how females can be better engaged in the construction industry
- It is not just about female participation – it is about ensuring female workers have access to the same highly paid opportunities as male workers eg on enterprise bargaining sites in the construction industry
- Some sectors don't want to change – with some trades reporting female acceptance in trades is stronger in private sector employers than the public sector employers
- Several industries stated employers want to employ more female apprentices and trainees, but they do not attract applicants for vacant positions
- Some industries, such as the resources sector, have set targets to grow female participation in their industry – 6% in 2005, 19% in 2021, and a target of 30% in 2026. Participation in trades is reported to be a lower level than those above. Targets need to be supported with strategies to encourage women into the industry, such as the Girls Mentoring Program offered through the Queensland Minerals and Energy Academy (QMEA), and with strategies to ensure fair treatment of all such as the Rio Tinto Everyday Respect program
- Every female apprentice should have a “buddy” in the workplace
- Consider a male allies program
- More needs to be done to map career pathways
- Need to improve visibility of some industries eg Defence does a lot of work to attract workers in general, and for specific cohorts such as females in trades and indigenous participation
- Some industries are not seen as female industries – strategies need to be implemented to change this
- More needs to be done to attract females to male dominated industries
- Female role models and mentors would assist in attracting females to industry. Co-ordinated programs such as Tradeswomen on the Move need to be considered again
- Help match small businesses with individuals seeking work
- Use infrastructure projects being delivered for the 2032 Olympics to promote women in trades.

Administration of the Apprenticeship and Traineeship System

- There is a need to ensure all apprentices are accessing the appropriate range of work and off the job training. In some trades, like Refrigeration Mechanics and other licensed trades, there may be a need to implement revised Employer Resource Assessment processes prior to the engagement of apprentices – leveraging off changes recently made to those requirements for electricians
- Given the large number of organisations and agencies involved in the apprenticeship system, it is difficult for an apprentice or trainee to know who to contact when they begin experiencing bullying or harassment, with apprentices and trainees often unaware of options available to them
- Government agencies and contracted organisations need to recognise the difficulty apprentices and trainees may be experiencing and not just pass them off to another agency. The initial reaction needs to change to reflect that the individual needs to be supported

- DESBT is too reactive in dealing with apprentice and trainee issues, and generally only gets involved when it is too late. Other feedback regarding DESBT included comments such as DESBT no longer administers or cares about apprentices and trainees – they are too busy focussing on other things
- Employers of apprentices who have a history of complaints regarding bullying and harassment of apprentices and trainees should be prohibited from employing them
- Stopping apprentices from being poached might make employers change behaviour – South Australia has implemented a program where large employers who poach a third-year or fourth-year apprentice from a small employer have to pay a fee to the small employer for doing so
- Formalise the establishment of an alumni of completed apprentices in identified trades that can provide support and assistance to current apprentices
- Ensure Registered Training Organisation (RTO) training co-ordinators understand the trade
- Ensure training record books (including e-profiling where used) are completed with integrity and truly represent the work that has been completed by the apprentice.

Support and Communication

- Given the large number of organisations and agencies involved in the apprenticeship system, it is difficult for an apprentice or trainee to know who to contact when they begin experiencing bullying or harassment, with apprentices and trainees often unaware of options available to them
- Large RTOs such as TAFE Queensland provide comprehensive Student Support Services who can assist apprentices and trainees. However, funding provided to facilitate this support is limited
- There is a need to identify new ways of engaging and communicating with apprentices and trainees
- Organisations like Mates in Construction are achieving results (such as 11.6% reduction in suicide rates), the rollout of Lifeskills Training Courses, and the use of identified ‘Connectors’ on site to assist workers
- There are a large number of courses, mentoring and other services available
- Support is paramount – but needs to be easily found and accessed
- Some female apprentices have taken the lead and implemented new ways of engaging other apprentices – eg the “Sparkettes”
- The benefits of pastoral care offered through Group Training Organisations (GTO) is a good model. However, the Mates in Construction report identified a high incidence of bullying and harassment if an apprentice was employed by a GTO, which is being addressed through the Apprentice Employment Network
- There is a need for a single point of contact, given the large number of organisations now involved in the administration of the system, or providing services to employers, apprentices, and trainees. The provision of a “apprentice card” may assist in this regard.

Key Themes

During this review, it became evident there was a need to examine issues through the themes of:

- Preparation
- Support
- Intervention

Preparation

The need for preparation applies as much to prospective apprentices and trainees as it does to employers.

Individuals

As outlined in this report, many services are offered to prepare individuals to enter an apprenticeship or traineeship, including:

- access to VET in Schools and school-based apprenticeships and traineeships. Despite this, it is noted many stakeholders consider more needs to be done by schools to promote trade careers, and VET in general
- promotion of industries through the Gateway to Industry Schools program
- promotion of careers by employers, unions, employer associations and industry bodies
- promotion of trade careers, with a number of organisations providing support and assistance to female school leavers to consider male dominated trades, focussing on identified barriers such as:
 - informal recruitment strategies
 - job advertisements and position descriptions not encouraging diversity
 - perception of manual trades as masculine
 - non-inclusive work culture
 - bullying and harassment
 - lack of family friendly work arrangements
- Role of AASNs in assisting the sign up and approval of training contracts
- Participation in programs such as Skilling Queenslanders for Work.

Issues that may need to be considered include:

- whole of industry strategies to promote workplace diversity and a safe and healthy culture free of bullying and harassment
- the benefits of better co-ordination through schools of promotional activities to encourage female participation in male dominated trades
- a focus on all cohorts for female participation as identified in *Towards 2025 – An Australian Government Strategy to Boost Workforce Participation* (as outlined earlier in this report).

Employers

A comprehensive checklist on how to hire employees is available on the [Business Australia](#) website and should be used by employers considering employing an apprentice or trainee for the first time. This checklist covers the following:

- decide on the type of employee
- assess employment impacts and costs
- recruit an employee
- prepare for your new employee
- pay your employee the right amount
- pay superannuation and tax
- keep required records
- report payments, tax and super
- know the rules around ending employment

The checklist refers employers to the Fair Work Commission for wages for apprentices and trainees and the AASN providers to assist with the sign-up of an apprentice or trainee and to make claims for incentives where applicable.

If choosing to employ an apprentice or trainee, the Queensland Government provides information on the [Business Queensland](#) website which outlines the following steps:

- understand the commitment
- recruit, including apprentice and trainee responsibilities

- commence
- manage, including advice on how to resolve issues
- complete

Given completion rates are lower for apprenticeships than trainees and the majority of apprentices are employed by small business that do not have access to HR department in their business, there is an opportunity for:

- more information to be provided to small employers to encourage them to diversify their workforce, including how to review recruitment strategies and prepare their workplace
- provide advice to prospective employers of apprentices and trainees on resources available through organisations such as Supporting and Linking Tradeswomen (SALT), National Association for Women in Construction (NAWIC), QMEA, Top 100 Women
- consideration of advice being made available through Small Business Friendly Councils to assist small employers engage apprentices and trainees.

Importantly, the themes identified in the list of tribunal cases provided by the QHRC outlined earlier in this report, provide a good starting point for employers to consider when ensuring they are providing a safe and healthy workplace free of bullying and harassment.

Support

Issues related to workplace bullying and harassment are complex, and in some cases relate directly to industry workforce culture. Apprentices and trainees are generally vulnerable workers within industry and as such require specific support. Similarly, small employers may need specific support to assist them to deal with these issues.

Individuals

Apprentices and trainees need access to timely, relevant, and accessible support should they experience bullying or harassment in the workplace. Given the large number of organisations involved in the apprenticeships system (eg DESBT, AASNs, SRTOs), and agencies like QHRC and WHSQ offering avenues for complaints in certain circumstances, apprentices and trainees are often confused as to who to contact. Quite often when they do choose one of the above entities, they are left without clear advice as the matter often involves many organisations.

At the time of commencement, apprentices and trainees in Queensland are advised their AASN should be their first point of contact. However, weeks, months, or years after commencement the apprentice or trainee is unsure who to contact.

To avoid this issue, the provision of one number for all apprenticeship and traineeship enquiries needs to be considered. The organisation contacted needs to provide a wrap-around service and not just refer the caller to another agency. Furthermore, new ways need to be explored to ensure apprentices and trainees have access to this information when it is required.

Addressing apprenticeship and traineeship administration issues is a way in which apprentices and trainees can avoid workplace conflict. For example, apprentices often report the workplace relationship begins to break down if they seek advice from their supervisor or employer with regards to accessing the appropriate range of work and off the job training required for the trade. This often occurs after they return from off the job training with their SRTO where they may have learnt theory they have not yet completed on the job, or they become aware of the type of work being performed by other apprentices. It is noted following the review of training provided to electrical apprentices conducted by QTO, DESBT implemented more comprehensive Employer Resource Assessment requirements to ensure apprentices received the appropriate range of work and off the job training required. Consideration should be given to implementing similar arrangements in other identified trades, particularly those with licensed outcomes.

Additional support should be provided to female apprentices in male dominated industries. For example, in universities where females undertake study in male dominated occupations (eg Engineering), female students are offered access to support groups to assist with their studies. No such support is provided on a formal basis to female apprentices in male dominated industries.

Employers

Some stakeholders believe employers should be given specific approval to employ an apprentice or trainee, in addition to the current requirements of an employer under the provisions of the FET Act.

Other stakeholders believe more support can be provided to business and apprentices and trainees by requiring supervisors of apprentices and trainees to undertake additional training on workplace bullying and harassment issues, and how to deal with them.

Industry

Given the unique nature of industries, as evidenced by the analysis of commencement and completion rates for apprentices and trainees, a one size fits all approach will not provide the support necessary to drive change. As identified in the CSQ 2018 Women in Construction report, it is important for strategies to be led by industry and not as an intervention by government.

The gap between completion rates of female apprentices and male apprentices is an indicator of workplace culture that is not addressing the barriers to female participation. Specific strategies are needed for the following industries:

- Automotive
- Construction
- Engineering
- Furnishing

There is also a need for specific strategies in the following industries to lift the number of commencements of female apprentices:

- Construction
- Engineering
- Furnishing
- Utilities

There is also a need for strategies in the following industries to increase the commencement of female trainees:

- Automotive
- Communications
- Construction
- Furnishing
- Government
- Utilities

Strategies developed should include:

- narrowing the gap between completion rates for male and female apprentices
- identifying and addressing barriers to female participation and the provision of additional support to female apprentices

- recognising existing programs used in each industry to change workplace culture. For example, on 23 November 2021, CSQ in partnership with the Construction, Forestry, Maritime, Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU) and Men and Co Services, launched Harness, a program aimed at engaging with construction workers about the concept of personal, relationship and family wellbeing and how to seek support. This initiative is proactive using conversations in the form of toolbox talks, meets workers on site and provides access to counsellors where required
- Consideration of successful programs being offered in other jurisdictions.

Consideration also needs to be given to promoting industries achieving great results, including:

- the utilities industry achieved a 94% completion rate for male apprentices and a 93% completion rate for female apprentices in 2019/20
- female apprenticeships in Community Services, Hospitality and Primary Industry sectors all achieved better completion rates for female apprentices compared to male apprentices in 2020/21
- female completion rates in traineeships are higher than male completion rates.

There is also a need to understand why completion rates for apprentices in the following industries are below 50%, irrespective of gender:

- Community Services (Childcare)
- Food Processing
- Hospitality
- Retail (Hairdressing)

The work undertaken relating to the above industries needs to identify:

- what parts of the apprenticeship system are seen as barriers
- whether complementary models for skills development in these industries are working better than the apprenticeship system (noting individuals can complete the childcare qualification institutionally, the industrial relations arrangements allow for individuals to complete the hairdressing qualification on an institutional basis, and the Registered Trade Skills Pathway has been previously used in the hospitality industry)
- whether new complementary models need to be considered by each industry.

Intervention

As mentioned previously, issues to do with bullying and harassment are complex and involve many organisations and agencies. Where intervention is required, it is critical it occurs as early as possible.

As outlined in this report, many agencies and organisations have a role in dealing with bullying and harassment of apprentices and trainees, including:

- AASNs facilitate the sign up of apprentices and trainees, payment of Australian Government incentives, and are required to facilitate ongoing contact with apprentices and trainees
- DESBT through administration of the FET Act requirements for administering and regulating the apprenticeship and traineeship system in Queensland – QATO through development of policies and procedures and inspectors under the FET Act located in each DESBT regional office
- SRTOs deliver training to apprentices and trainees and often may present the first opportunity for an apprentice or trainee to be away from their workplace and raise concerns
- WHSQ makes sure workplaces are safe and healthy including free of bullying and harassment, investigate activities of employers, but do not resolve individual issues
- QHRC receives complaints regarding discrimination and harassment
- QIRC can issue 'stop bullying' orders for employers covered by the Queensland Industrial Relations system.
- Fair Work Commission can deal with matters related to employers covered by the national industrial relations system.

This can be particularly daunting for apprentices, trainees and small employers and the provision of support through a single point of contact for apprentices, trainees and employers should assist in addressing this issue.

The role of DESBT was raised consistently in stakeholder feedback, particularly the lack of regulation perceived to be occurring through regional offices. It is acknowledged DESBT regional offices perform a large range of functions. However, DESBT needs to ensure services related to the regulation and administration of the apprenticeship system under the FET Act are provided in a timely, efficient, and effective manner. Early intervention is particularly important in relation to bullying and harassment issues. Policies and frameworks (such as Employer Resource Assessment requirements for specific occupations) should also be reviewed to remove any real or perceived enablers of conflict in the workplace.

Importantly, more needs to be done to deal with bullying and harassment issues, such as:

- DESBT needs to review why apprentices are not seeking assistance through their contracted provider and explore alternative options, if required
- DESBT and WHSQ should review their MOU to enhance assistance that can be provided to address matters raised by apprentices and trainees
- Where WHSQ identifies an employer has failed to provide a safe and healthy workplace, DESBT should immediately review the appropriateness of the employer to continue to employ apprentices or trainees
- Where the issue related to an employer is repeated, DESBT should consider utilising existing FET Act provisions by prohibiting the employer from employing apprentices and trainees.

Recommendations

1. DESBT should urgently implement a Train to Retain Strategy 2.0, which as a minimum includes:
 - a. a reinvigorated role for DESBT regions to ensure they are effectively regulating the apprenticeship and traineeship system at the local level, and are being proactive with early interventions to address bullying and harassment issues
 - b. provision of additional capability in the DESBT Call Centre (such as the previous Senior Training Support Consultants) to provide support and advice to employers, apprentices, trainees, regional staff, and other stakeholders on dealing with bullying and harassment issues
 - c. clear communication that bullying and harassment of apprentices and trainees will not be tolerated and employers who are the subject of multiple complaints will be subject to additional scrutiny and intervention, and may be prohibited from employing apprentices in accordance with provisions for prohibiting employers under the FET Act
 - d. provision of free online training to all supervisors of apprentices and trainees on minimising the risk of workplace bullying and harassment, and how to effectively deal with issues if they do arise
 - e. a fresh approach to co-operation between DESBT and WHSQ to deal with bullying and harassment issues
 - f. a strategy to assist small business (who employ the majority of apprentices) to deal with workplace issues such as bullying and harassment, including additional support which may be provided through Small Business Friendly Councils.
2. DESBT should enhance communication with apprentices and trainees through the provision of a Digital Card (similar to that used for Containers for Change) which displays:
 - a. the apprentice or trainee's registration number

- b. the Apprentice Info Line Number (1800 210 210) as the contact number for all enquiries regarding apprenticeships and traineeships.
3. DESBT should provide a seamless triage service to all callers to the Apprentice Info Line to ensure the required level of support is provided and not just refer callers to other agencies without appropriate assessment of who is best placed to provide support.
4. DESBT should provide advice to small employers on the benefits of them diversifying their workforce through:
 - a. reviewing recruitment strategies
 - b. reviewing job advertisements and position descriptions to ensure they are not barriers to accessing a wider pool of applicants
 - c. providing linkages to resources available by a range of other organisations.
5. CSQ should be engaged to develop a Queensland Women in Construction Strategy to include:
 - a. focussing on the three themes used in the Victorian Women in Construction Strategy
 - b. focussing on the six cohorts identified in the *Towards 2025 – An Australian Government Strategy to Boost Workforce Participation*
 - c. individual strategies aimed at increasing the commencement of female apprentices and trainees and narrowing the gap in completion rates between male and female apprentices.
6. DESBT should engage the recently announced Manufacturing Skills Queensland (once operational) to develop a Queensland Women in Engineering Strategy, similar to the construction strategy to be developed by CSQ.
7. DESBT should engage Motor Trades Association Queensland to develop strategies to:
 - a. narrow the gap between completion rates for male and female apprentices in the automotive industry
 - b. increase the uptake and completion rates for trainees in the Automotive industry (noting this industry is currently not an industry covered by the Gateway to Industry Schools program).
8. DESBT should engage with the Furnishing industry to develop strategies to increase the commencement of female apprentices and trainees and to narrow the gap in completion rates between male and female apprentices.
9. DESBT should engage with Energy Skills Queensland to develop strategies to increase commencements of female apprentices and trainees in the Utilities industry (noting this industry is currently not an industry covered by the Gateway to Industry Schools program).
10. DESBT should work with the Queensland Public Service Commission and the Local Government Association of Queensland to promote the uptake of female traineeships in the Government sector.
11. Consideration should be given to creating an Apprenticeship Advisory Committee to identify the reasons for low completion rates for apprentices in the Community Services, Food Processing, Hospitality and Retail sectors (noting that over 85% of commencements in Community Services and Retail are females), and to develop strategies to increase completion rates or the use of complementary models to deliver the skills required by those industries.
12. DESBT should review administrative arrangements (including Employer Resource Assessment requirements where appropriate) to ensure they are not an enabler of real or perceived conflict in the workplace.

Attachments

- Attachment 1** Review Terms of Reference
- Attachment 2** *Apprenticeships, women, and workplace culture – A Literature Review*
- Attachment 3** Previous Reports and Publications Identified by Stakeholders
- Attachment 4** *Train to Retain – a fair go for apprentices in the workplace – An action Plan*
- Attachment 5** DESBT Industry Training Group Data Analysis
- Attachment 6** DESBT Fact Sheet – Assistance and Support
- Attachment 7** Industry Skills Advisors
- Attachment 8** Gateway to Industry Schools Programs
- Attachment 9** Stakeholder Consultation

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Review of support provided to apprentices and trainees with a focus on female apprentices in male dominated occupations

Objective

The Queensland Training Ombudsman will review the support provided by organisations, including the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training (DESBT), to ensure adequate mechanisms are available for apprentices and trainees, irrespective of whether they are employed by private or public sector employers, and that barriers are identified and removed, to assist apprentices and trainees to complete their training.

Furthermore, the Queensland Training Ombudsman will review strategies aimed at supporting the participation of female apprentices particularly in male dominated occupations.

The review will make recommendations to the Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development on areas for improvement.

Background

The Minister and the Queensland Training Ombudsman have recently been made aware of several instances where apprentices and trainees have alleged that they have been unfairly treated in the workplace, resulting in them being injured or cancelling their apprenticeship or traineeship. A number of these instances have related to female apprentices in male dominated occupations.

Additionally, Mates in Construction recently released a report that outlined 27% of apprentices surveyed in the construction industry had experienced bullying, and over 30% had suicidal thoughts in the previous 12 months.

Whilst it is acknowledged there are a number of support mechanisms available, it is timely to review them to ensure the best possible assistance is being provided to apprentices and trainees to enable them to safely undertake their training and become the skilled workers Queensland needs for the future.

Scope

The review will:

- analyse previous reports including but not limited to:
 - Improving workplace practices to help reduce harassment of apprentices and trainees in Queensland - Queensland Training Ombudsman 2006
 - The Impact of Workplace Bullying on Mental Health and Suicidality in Queensland Construction Industry Apprentices – completed by Griffith University for Mates in Construction
 - Women in Construction Report 2018 and 2021 – Construction Skills Queensland
- review processes currently in place with DESBT and other agencies to assist apprentices who have experienced bullying or harassment
- analyse complaints received and identify the impacts on apprentices and trainees
- review data related to the participation of female apprentices in trades
- identify existing and previous initiatives to increase the participation of female apprentices in trades and ensure they are supported to complete
- identify enhancements to the co-ordination of support provided across agencies to deal with bullying, harassment and participation of female apprentices in trades.

Consultation

Consultation will occur with organisations, including:

- DESBT, particularly the Queensland Apprenticeship and Traineeship Office
- Workplace Health and Safety Queensland
- Public Service Commissioner
- Queensland Human Rights Commission
- Other government agencies
- Queensland VET Quality Forum, with membership including Australian Skills Quality Authority, Office of Fair Trading and Office of Industrial Relations
- Employer Associations and Industry Representative Bodies
- Unions
- Registered Training Organisations
- Employers
- Apprentices and Trainees
- Other stakeholders including
 - Women in Engineering
 - Women in Mining and Resources Queensland
 - Mates in Construction
 - National Association of Women in Construction
 - Queensland Mental Health Commissioner
 - Queensland Small Business Commissioner
 - Office for Women and Violence Prevention

Outcomes

A report will be prepared for the Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development that identifies the contemporary trends, current support mechanisms in place, and recommendations to enhance the level of support provided to apprentices and trainees with regard to dealing with bullying and harassment, and promoting female participation in male dominated occupations.

Support

DESBT will:

- provide data and information required
- provide access to staff from within the Queensland Apprenticeship and Traineeship Office as required.

Jobs Queensland has agreed to assist by conducting a literature review.

Resources

This review will be conducted utilising existing resources.

Timeframe

It is anticipated the review will be completed by 31 December 2021.



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Apprenticeships, women and workplace culture

A literature review

October 2021



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Introduction

The Queensland Training Ombudsman is undertaking a review of the support provided by organisations, including the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training (DESBT), to ensure adequate mechanisms are available for apprentices and trainees to complete their training in an environment free of bullying and harassment. The review will also include strategies aimed at supporting the participation of female apprentices particularly in male dominated occupations.ⁱ

The Queensland Training Ombudsman has requested Jobs Queensland undertake a review of current Australian and international literature in relation to bullying and harassment into traditional apprenticeships¹, with a focus on its impact on women in traditional trades. The review specifically focused on relevant literature that covered the following topics:

- Women in trade apprenticeships²
- Workplace culture (bullying and harassment) including support mechanisms
- Future apprenticeship models.

In 2017, Jobs Queensland published *Positive Futures: Apprenticeships and Traineeships in Queensland (Positive Futures)*ⁱⁱ. This literature review takes that work as its starting point and examines recent literature and identifies gaps in the research.

Findings from the literature review

Apprenticeships and traineeships continue to be extensively researched both in Australia and internationally. In the literature, apprenticeships and traineeships are often indistinguishable from each other. In Australia, they are considered as 'Australian Apprenticeships' with the longer four-year apprenticeship model often referred to as a 'traditional' or 'trade' apprenticeship.ⁱⁱⁱ

Around the world, apprenticeships are recognised as a desirable pathway into work by industry and supported by governments through legislation and funding arrangements.^{iv} Apprenticeship schemes differ by country and researchers may classify them using a range of metrics.^v There are, however, common challenges across the jurisdictions:

- The under-representation of women in engineering and technology apprenticeships^{vi}
- High non-completion rates for both men and women^{vii}
- The need to change workforce practices and workplace cultures to support diversification of the workforce^{viii}
- Lack of defined career pathways on completion of an apprenticeship^{ix}
- The changing nature of work and the ability of the system to respond to this.^x

In undertaking this review, Jobs Queensland found that the contemporary literature is primarily focussed on system issues, i.e. focus is largely on issues such as completions, cancellations and products such as training standards and Training Packages. There is also a body of research that focuses on institutional issues, funding models and infrastructure that support apprenticeship delivery.

This review found that there is limited literature that focuses on people, and specifically on women in trades, or the impacts of bullying and harassment more broadly on non-trade apprentices. Whilst the literature is incomplete, the review revealed a number of key stakeholders who are connecting directly with female apprentices and providing vital support to them (Appendix A).

“Ultimately, a safe and harassment-free workplace is also a productive workplace.”

Kate Jenkins, 2020. Australian Human Rights Commission.

¹ Unless expressly stated, the term 'apprenticeship' encompasses both apprenticeships and traineeships in Australia.

² 'Trade apprenticeships' are apprenticeships in industries such as construction, manufacturing, information technology, electrical trades and automotive. Apprenticeships in these industries are male-dominated.

Recent literature on the state of apprenticeships in Australia

Positive Futures found that there was strong stakeholder support for the apprenticeship and traineeship system in Queensland. However, to remain relevant, stakeholders reported there needed to be a greater focus on the skills for future jobs.

These findings were supported by work undertaken for the *Advancing Manufacturing Workforce Strategy*.^{xi} Manufacturing stakeholders identified apprenticeships as the preferred entry pathway to the industry. Increased flexibility within the apprenticeship system and the need for higher-level skills within manufacturing as the transition to Industry 4.0 progressed were identified as key issues for employers of apprentices.^{xii}

Two major trends are identified in the literature prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. These were the ongoing decline in apprenticeship commencements, with the Australian Institute for Health and Welfare (AIHW) identifying a 35 per cent decrease between 2011-12 and the twelve months ending June 30 2020; and an increase of 21 per cent of apprentices being aged 20 to 24 (see figure below).^{xiii} This is in line with similar trends internationally.^{xiv}

A number of factors have driven the decline in apprenticeship numbers:

- Negative growth in full-time employment
- Ongoing structural change in the composition of the labour market
- Relevance of the current apprenticeship model in some occupations
- Supply factors such as a potential decline in the quality of applicants as a result of the growth in higher education opportunities.

Overall, where there is growth (or decline) in apprenticeship commencements, it is reflective of changes within the Australian economy.^{xv}

Adult apprentices (those aged over 20) have become an increasingly important component of the apprenticeship system. Some employers have expressed a preference for engaging older apprentices, citing a stronger work ethic, greater reliability, well developed employability skills and high levels of motivation as characteristics of an adult apprentice.^{xvi}

Even though supply-side issues have emerged and changes in approaches to apprenticeship recruitment are emerging,^{xvii} the literature identified that attracting and retaining women in trade apprenticeships remain challenging globally.^{xviii} Engagement rates for female apprentices range from one per cent to ten per cent across the world.^{xix} Increasing the proportion of women in traditional trade occupations is a policy objective in many countries.³

There may be a correlation to industries introducing targeted strategies to employ more female apprentices. There is a shortage of research into the effectiveness of these strategies. However, the literature also shows that factors such as family employment and word of mouth play a major role in increasing female apprentice numbers.

The impact of technology on apprenticeships

Research by Jobs Queensland has found that technology is a significant driver of change in workplaces and in working conditions. As a result of technology, many of the tasks associated with manual labour are being automated or augmented by technologies that make work less hazardous and physically taxing.^{xx} This is changing the way jobs are being performed and may negate the perception of employers that a trade is too physically demanding for a woman.^{xxi}

There is little research available on the impact that changing technologies are having on apprenticeships and whether the introduction of collaborative technologies are changing workplace culture and increasing opportunities for workforce diversification. A proposed research project by the Australian Robotics Centre at the Queensland University of Technology has the potential to provide some information.

³ These countries include Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Canada and the United States of America.

The impact of COVID-19 on apprenticeships

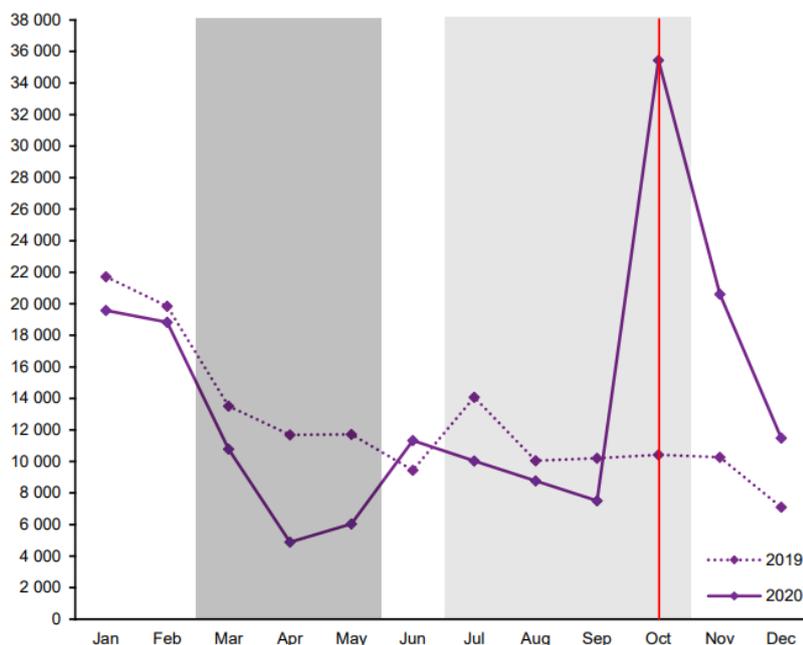
The pandemic has had a significant impact on apprenticeships and traineeships. In March and April 2020, the implementation of national restrictions saw a dramatic increase in contract suspensions, with an increase of more than 650 per cent and almost 300 per cent in May compared with the same period in 2019.

The majority of suspensions occurred in industries with a largely female or casualised workforce – Accommodation and Food Services; Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing; Arts and Recreation Services; Retail Trade; and Transport, Postal and Warehousing. Industries that experienced only modest increases in suspensions include Construction and Manufacturing – the two industries employing the highest percentage of trade apprentices.

Nationally, commencements also fell during that period. However, the introduction of the Australian Government's Boosting Apprenticeship Commencement wage subsidy program in October 2020 together with State and Territory incentive programs has seen a strong rebound in numbers.

Given that the industries most impacted by the pandemic include Accommodation and Food Services, Arts and Recreation Services, and Retail Trade, it is no surprise that there was a significant increase in suspensions of training for women over the period. In 2020 suspensions increased by nearly 600 per cent over both the March and June quarters. Non-trade occupations experienced a greater percentage of suspensions in the March and June quarters of 2020. Relative to 2019, around 700 per cent of contracts for non-trade occupations were suspended.

The introduction of the Boosting Apprenticeship Commencements support package also resulted in a substantial increase in apprentices over the age of 45, with an increase of more than 300 per cent in the December 2020 quarter compared with the December 2019 quarter.^{xxii}



Note: The dark-grey shaded area indicates months when national restrictions were in place; the light-grey shaded area indicates months when restrictions were in place in Victoria; the red line indicates the introduction of the Boosting Apprenticeship Commencements support package in October 2020.

Source: National Apprentice and Trainee Collection nos 103 and 107 (March 2020 and March 2021 counts).

Source: Hall, M. 2021. *Apprentices and trainees 2020: impacts of COVID-19 on training activity*. Adelaide: NCVET⁴

Research on the impact of the pandemic on apprenticeships has largely focused on training participation rates. There is evidence that workplace stress can increase bullying and harassment.^{xxiii} While there has been a significant body of research on the impact of the pandemic on youth mental health^{xxiv} including the impact of disruption to learning,^{xxv} there has been little published on the impact that the pandemic has had and is having on apprentices' mental health and experience of workplace bullying and harassment.

⁴ This data includes both trade apprenticeships and traineeships.

Bullying and harassment in the trades

The detrimental impact of bullying on workers is not a recent phenomenon. The 2012 *Workplace Bullying* inquiry found that workplace bullying can result in significant damage to an individual's health and wellbeing and can lead to suicide.^{xxvi} Women are more likely to experience higher rates of bullying and for longer periods than men, including more unwanted sexual advances, humiliation and unfair treatment due to gender. Men reported higher levels of workplace violence.^{xxvii}

There is a significant cost associated with the impact of bullying and harassment in the workplace. The Productivity Commission (2010) estimated that workplace bullying costs the Australian economy between \$6 billion and \$36 billion every year.^{xxviii} The cost to employers in lost productivity, absenteeism, staff turnover and recruitment costs, low worker morale and reputational damage is estimated to average between \$17,000 and \$24,000 per case.^{xxix} Workers compensation data indicates that mental health related claims in 2018-19 cost \$35,900 per claim, an increase of 209 per cent since the year 2000.^{xxx}

There are a number of reasons that a culture of bullying and harassment develops in an organisation or workplace, including that:

- There are benefits for the bully, including feelings of dominance, revenge and power
- The behaviour is rewarded (condoned) by management (e.g. accepted as standard industry practice)
- There are no costs/consequences for the bully (e.g. no action by the victim or management)
- The behaviour is not illegal, further reinforcing the lack of consequences
- Bystanders lack the power to intervene
- Targets (victims) are reluctant to complain or report for fear of escalating the abuse
- Management may be reluctant to take action against the perpetrator for fear of losing a 'good worker'.^{xxxi}

Research undertaken in 2014^{xxxii} identified several work and organisational-related antecedents of workplace bullying:

- Workplace policies – workplaces that do not have strict and clear policies around workplace bullying or standards of behaviour have a greater risk of bullying
- Physical work environment – aspects of the physical work environment such as heat, crowding, noise, etc. can increase the risk of bullying
- Organisational change – this can promote bullying via stress, frustration, ambiguity and uncertainty about job security
- Psychosocial work environment – bullying is more common in organisations where competitive behaviour is rewarded, abuse is normalised, and large power imbalances exist
- Work stressors – workplace bullying is strongly related to psychosocial aspects of an individual's job, including higher job demands; low autonomy; role ambiguity; low job security; and low levels of social support at work
- Leadership – this is an important predictor of the nature and extent of workplace bullying.

Research into bullying and harassment of apprentices is limited. The major focus has been on women and, to a large extent, apprentices have been ignored. The *MATES in Construction* report (2020) is a seminal piece of work that defines and quantifies the extent of the problem for trade apprentices in Queensland.^{xxxiii}

In Queensland, 27.3 per cent of construction apprentices had experienced workplace bullying with 20 per cent experiencing severe bullying. Thoughts about suicide were high with 30 per cent having some thoughts about suicide in the previous twelve months to the study. Eight recommendations were put forward. These can be found in Appendix B.^{xxxiv}

Common factors found to be associated with an apprentice being bullied or harassed include:

- Aged between 18 and 25
- Working for a large employer
- Working for a group training organisation
- Not currently having an employer
- Not currently in an apprenticeship
- Having an apprenticeship status as *other*
- Identifying as LGBTI+.^{xxxv}

The construction industry is not the only industry with issues relating to bullying and harassment. Over a third of apprentices in the hospitality industry reported experiencing bullying or harassment and almost 50 per cent of contracts are cancelled or withdrawn in the first year. For many employers, the complex nature of the apprenticeship system coupled with a lack of knowledge of workplace laws and human resource management practices contributes to this culture. Non-compliant practices were influenced by employers' reliance on inaccurate information such as industry norms and accurate information availability as well as procrastination and ambiguity.^{xxxvi}

For individuals experiencing workplace bullying and harassment, impacts include:

- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Sleep disturbances
- Lowered self-esteem
- Anger
- Suicidal thoughts
- Headaches
- Burnout
- Suicide.

Other employees who witness the bullying and harassment, i.e. bystanders in the workplace also report increased levels of stress and anxiety.^{xxxvii} Another effect experienced by the bystander is less satisfaction with their work. Despite this, bystanders often will not speak up and there are many reasons for this, including:

- Power and inequality
- Beliefs, justice and moral identity
- Stigmatisation by association.^{xxxviii}

Solutions suggested within the research

Bullying and harassment of apprentices is a complex problem to which there is no one solution. It requires all stakeholders (government, industry, employers, unions, apprenticeship services and employees) to work together to:

- Address structural issues such as power imbalances
- Address the culture by breaking the cycle of 'that's the way things are done'
- Understand the perspectives of both perpetrators and victims
- Provide more support for apprentices to build resilience^{xxxix}
- Provide specific training for leaders, managers and supervisors in appropriate workplace behaviours
- Encourage employers to invest in developing healthy workplace cultures^{xl}
- Provide clear and unambiguous information and training for all workers.^{xli}

Employers need support to understand their obligations under workplace, health and safety (WHS) legislation to create a psychologically safe culture that acknowledges harassment and bullying as unsafe behaviours.^{xlii}

Women in trade apprenticeships

Challenges:

- Overcoming societal and cultural norms
- Lack of female role models
- Lack of engagement through familial and social networks
- School curriculums that do not encourage female participation in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) and trade-based classes or work experience
- Employers that are resistant to employing female tradespeople
- Workplace cultures that support and condone workplace bullying
- Lack of or ineffective human resource policies and practices to respond to workplace bullying
- Lack of appropriate female facilities on worksites
- Difficulty accessing gender-specific work clothing and footwear.

Trade occupations such as builder, electrician and automotive mechanic are perceived to offer high pay, quality work and job security. For women, the pay differential in these occupations by age 32 has been calculated as being \$NZ106,722.^{xliii} Given that similar research has not been undertaken in Australia, it is difficult to know if comparative results would be found for Australian women in trade occupations.

Trade occupations are traditionally the domain of males. The percentage of women in these occupations has remained relatively unchanged over the past 30 years (see below). Women experience difficulty gaining entry into an apprenticeship for these occupations.^{xliiv} Often, successful entry is only through having a family connection into the industry.^{xliv}

	1988	1998	2008	2018
Occupation	Percentage of women in occupation			
Electro technology & telecommunications trades	1.1	1.8	2.8	1.9
Construction trades (bricklaying, carpentry, painting/decorating, metal fabrication and plumbing)	1.3	1.1	0.8	1.4
Automotive and engineering trades	1.1	0.9	1.4	1.1

Australian Bureau of Statistics (2018). Labour Force, Australia, Detailed, Quarterly, Feb 2018, Table EQ8 Employed persons

Source: CSU, 2019⁵

The barriers to employment for women in trade occupations are complex.^{xlvi} Societal and cultural expectations about gender roles and perceptions and the workplace culture of the trade industries underpin these barriers.^{xlvii}

Within the trade occupations, women face barriers at all levels – from recruitment through to employment post-apprenticeship. Discrimination, bias and barriers such as perceptions around the need for physical strength to work in trade occupations are consistently used to limit opportunities for young women to enter male-dominated employment.^{xlviii} Coupled with parental concerns relating to safety (both physical and emotional) and a lack of female role models, young women are less likely to see a trade apprenticeship as a viable post-school option.^{xlix}

⁵ No explanation was given in the research for the significant increase in the number of women in Electro technology and Automotive and engineering in 2008.

For young women wanting a trade apprenticeship, having a connection with a trade (either a tradesperson within the family or an employer of tradespeople within the social network) is often the only way to gain a contract. Recruitment into trade apprenticeships occur largely through informal means and networks that are often not inclusive of women.ⁱ

With significant growth occurring in the construction industry in Queensland due to the large number of infrastructure projects in the pipeline, the outlook for apprenticeship opportunities in that industry is good.ⁱⁱ It is unknown if this will translate into increased opportunities for women to gain trade apprenticeships.

For women who are successful in gaining a contract, workplace barriers such as a lack of female site facilities and difficulty obtaining suitable, affordable female workwear increases workplace, health and safety risksⁱⁱⁱ. Gender discrimination within the workplace is common, with 38 per cent of female trade apprentices reporting they experienced discrimination during their apprenticeship. In a New South Wales survey of 1000 women aged 15 to 24, 26 per cent cited gender discrimination as their main reason for failing to complete their apprenticeship.ⁱⁱⁱⁱ

Female apprentices are more likely to be sexually harassed and victimised than their male counterparts.^{liv} This stems from an entrenched 'macho' culture within some industries and workplaces.^{lv} The cost of sexual harassment in the workplace is significant. In 2018, it was estimated to have cost the economy \$2.6 billion in lost productivity and almost another \$1 billion in other costs. Employers bore 70 per cent of the cost. Staff turnover accounts for the largest portion of the loss of productivity (32 per cent of the costs).^{lvi} Addressing these issues will deliver social and economic outcomes for organisations.

Inflexible work arrangements and lack of appropriate childcare options can also impact on retention of women in trade occupations.^{lvii} Many mature female tradespeople believe that their gender has had a negative impact on their career, consistently reporting a lack of and/or difficulty accessing promotions^{lviii} and leadership opportunities.

International research also highlighted wages as a barrier to entry for women due to many being the primary caregiver.^{lix} Recent research out of New Zealand has found that the pandemic has increased the appeal of an apprenticeship, especially for women whose employment has been impacted.^{lx} In Australian research on barriers for women, wages have not been raised. Research undertaken in 2010 found that for trade apprentices in general, the expected wage gain on completion of the apprenticeship outweighed the low wages of an apprenticeship.^{lxi}

Whilst the literature provides evidence of poor culture, bullying and harassment towards women in male dominated trades and apprenticeships, there are also encouraging signs that some employers are seeking to diversify their workforce and highlight the benefits of employing women.^{lxii}

Employers that take on women in trade roles report a number of benefits:

- Women in trade roles display a greater attention to detail
- They 'soften' workplace behaviours
- Women are generally better at communicating
- There is improved productivity as men do not want to be seen as doing less than women
- Women help the business better reflect its customer base
- Women tend to be more passionate about their trade.^{lxiii}

Solutions suggested in the literature

Solutions to attracting, training and retaining more women in trade occupations will need to be multifaceted.^{lxiv}

They can be classified broadly into three areas:

- Cultural change
 - Perceptions of trade occupations
 - Perceptions of female work
 - Workplace culture ("Respect@Work"^{lxv})

- Promotion of female participation in trade occupations
 - Schools and career guidance
 - Benefits for employers
 - Economic and social benefits to parents, employers and young women
- Role models, networks and female mentors
 - “You can't be what you can't see”
 - Creating networks of female tradespeople and supportive employers
 - More female STEM and trades teachers in schools and vocational education.^{lxvi}

Future-focused apprenticeship models

As the skills needs of the Australian economy shift in response to new technologies, changing demographics and social norms, there has been discussion in relation to the relevance of the apprenticeship model.^{lxvii}

Research undertaken by Jobs Queensland has found that while employers are supportive of the traditional apprenticeship model, they have also expressed the need for apprenticeships to be more ‘forward-focused’ on the skills needed for the future as well.^{lxviii} Many employers question the need for the traditional time-based model in an era of rapid change and skills obsolescence. For employers in technology-driven industries such as manufacturing and information and communication technology (ICT), where technologies are advancing rapidly, the question is around the ability of the education and training sector to meet their current and emerging skills needs.^{lxix} This is driving the interest in and development of alternate apprenticeship models such as higher-level apprenticeships and advanced apprenticeships.

Western Australia has recently launched a new pilot program, the Construction Accelerated Apprenticeship Program (CAAP) for the construction industry which offers free skills assessment for experienced construction industry workers without a formal qualification. The program has been developed with key industry bodies and employers within Western Australia.^{lxx} In Queensland, the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training (DESBT) funds the Trade Skills Assessment and Gap Training (TSAGT) Program. This program gives eligible Queenslanders with substantial industry experience the opportunity to complete a priority trade qualification. It “complements” apprenticeship pathways rather than being an apprenticeship.^{lxxi}

Another model being trialled in Australia is the ‘higher apprenticeship’. Higher apprenticeships have been defined as “... a program of structured on-the-job training [combined] with formal study, with the study component leading to the award of a VET qualification at the Australian Qualifications Framework level 5 (diploma) or level 6 (advanced diploma).”^{lxxii} Initially there were two small projects funded, one with a focus on Industry 4.0 leading to the Diploma and Associate Degree in Applied Technologies qualifications. The other pilot project enabled participants to complete VET diplomas in business, information technology (IT) and professional services. Both these trails were funded by the Australian Government.^{lxxiii} In Queensland there is currently a Higher Level Apprenticeship Pilot project for the Applied Technologies qualifications in progress in Townsville and Brisbane. This project is funded by DESBT and commenced in late 2020.^{lxxiv}

Higher apprenticeships:

- Are seen as a logical progression to meet the need for a skilled future workforce
- Extend apprenticeships to higher level qualifications such as diplomas and associate degrees
- Support evolving labour market demands
- Develop contemporary, relevant and higher-level trade and para-professional skills
- Involve collaboration between employers, registered training organisations (RTOs) and universities.^{lxxv}

Another Australian government-funded project is the Advanced Apprenticeship Pilot. The pilot offers employers the opportunity to upskill existing employees into the Associate Degree in Engineering. This pilot is commencing in September 2021.^{lxxvi}

While these pilots are referred to as 'apprenticeships', there are significant differences to the current apprenticeship model. Firstly, these apprenticeships may or may not be undertaken under a formal 'contract of training'. Secondly, the apprenticeship may be undertaken either through the VET system or the higher education (university) system. As such, these apprenticeships are subject to different educational, funding and regulatory arrangements.^{lxxvii}

Australia is not alone in trialling alternate models of apprenticeship.^{lxxviii} In the United Kingdom, there are two forms of higher apprenticeships – higher apprenticeships and degree apprenticeships. Higher apprenticeships is the older model, having been introduced in 2009. They are vocational qualifications.^{lxxix} Higher apprenticeships were introduced to support career progression and are equivalent to a foundation degree or a relevant industry professional qualification. Degree apprenticeships are available at level 6 and 7 (full Bachelor and Master's qualifications).^{lxxx} These were introduced in 2015 with the intention to bring together the worlds of work and higher education to increase productivity and social mobility. Both models would appear to be successful. There have been significant increases in commencements with the number of commencements in Degree Apprenticeships doubling in the two years to 2018-19 and commencements in Higher Apprenticeships rising from 13 per cent of all apprenticeship commencements in 2017-18 to 19 per cent in 2018-19.^{lxxxi}

There are also calls for higher level apprenticeships in the United States (US). Modern Apprenticeships are described as:

- Customised, supervised and paid on-the-job training at reduced or no cost
- Wages graduated in step with skills gained during training
- Related classroom instruction (on or off site) to reinforce technical skills learnt in the workplace
- Formalised mentoring and coaching
- Nationally recognised industry credentials or specialised technical certification earned for demonstrating the achievement of workplace competencies
- Optional college credit leading to an associate or bachelor's degree at little or no additional cost.^{lxxxii}

The key differences to an Australian apprenticeship are the lack of the formal tripartite Contract of Training and the optional college credit.

While these future-focused apprenticeships models could increase opportunities for women to enter trade and technical occupations, pilots are not yet sufficiently progressed to be able to assess such outcomes. Any review of these pilots needs to ensure that opportunities to improve the diversity of trade industries (e.g. increased representation by women and other under-represented groups) are assessed for effectiveness.

There may also be the potential to address the lack of clear career progression opportunities upon completion of an entry-level apprenticeship. These apprenticeship models may provide an entry pathway into further study at a para-professional or professional level. Proposed changes to training products under the Australian Government's Skills Reform agenda may also have a significant impact on future apprenticeships and address some of the concerns of employers regarding the ability of the training system to respond to rapidly changing skills needs.^{lxxxiii}

Summary

Key findings from the literature review

- Globally, apprenticeships are recognised as a desirable pathway into work by industry and supported by governments through legislation and funding arrangements.
- There are common challenges globally:
 - Under-representation of women in engineering and technology trade apprenticeships
 - High non-completion rates of apprenticeships for both men and women
 - The need to change workplace practices and cultures to support diversification of the workforce
 - Lack of defined career pathways on completion of an apprenticeship.
- Due to the changing nature of work, employers are concerned about the ability of the apprenticeship system to respond appropriately.
- The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on apprenticeships, including for women in trade apprenticeships and on workplace cultures needs to be investigated.

Bullying and harassment impact

- Bullying and harassment was estimated to cost the Australian economy between \$6 billion and \$36 billion per annum in 2010.
- For employers, the cost in lost productivity, staff turnover and other costs was between \$17,000 and \$24,000 per case.
- There is a limited amount of bullying and harassment research that is focused on particular industries or occupations.
- Women reported higher rates of bullying and for longer periods than men, including unwanted sexual advances, humiliation and unfair treatment due to gender.
- Young men in the construction industry are twice as likely to take their lives compared with other young males in Australia.
- In the Queensland construction industry, more than one in four apprentices have experienced workplace bullying.
- Workplace bullying and harassment is seen as an organisational issue rather than a system issue.
- Ambiguity and misinformation contribute to the issue.
- Bullying and harassment is a complex problem to which there is no one solution.

The need for industry, organisational and workplace culture to:

- Address structural issues such as power imbalances.
- Address the culture by breaking the cycle of 'that's the way things are done'.
- Understand the perspectives of both perpetrators and victims.
- Provide more support for apprentices to build resilience.
- Provide specific training for leaders, managers and supervisors in appropriate workplace behaviours.
- Encourage employers to invest in developing psychologically safe workplace cultures.
- Provide clear and unambiguous information and training for all workers.

Strategies for increasing female participation can be classified broadly into three areas:

- Cultural change
 - Perceptions of trade occupations
 - Perceptions of female work
 - Workplace culture ("Respect@Work")

- Promotion of female participation in trade occupations
 - Schools and career guidance
 - Benefits for employers
 - Economic and social benefits to parents, employers and young women
- Role models, networks and female mentors
 - “You can't be what you can't see”.
 - Creating networks of female tradespeople and supportive employers.
 - More female STEM and trades teachers in schools and vocational education.

Areas that the literature does not address / opportunities to further explore in Apprenticeship review

- The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on apprentices' mental health.
- Strategies that encourage parents, schools and career advisers to promote trade careers to young women.
- Strategies that can successfully change employers' perceptions of what women can or cannot do in a trade occupation.

Gaps

- There has been very little research undertaken on the impact on apprentices and their families from workplace bullying and harassment, including understanding the financial and emotional costs to both the individual and their family.
- There is a need for further research to understand the concept of 'power' within the apprenticeship relationship and its role in the experience of bullying and harassment within a workplace.
- Most of the literature focuses on the culture within a workplace or organisation. There is little research that examines the culture within an industry or supporting associations and the role that this can play in establishing/reinforcing cultural norms within workplaces.
- Research into bullying and harassment of women largely focuses on sexual harassment of women in the workplace. There is a need to understand and quantify the impact of other forms of bullying and harassment (e.g. psychological and emotional) for women in the workplace.
- There is little research available on the impact changing technologies are having on apprenticeships and whether the introduction of collaborative technologies are changing workplace culture and increasing opportunities for workforce diversification.
- Research into the effectiveness of past and current strategies to increase female participation in trade apprenticeships is lacking in the literature.
- Previous Jobs Queensland research and stakeholder consultation has identified that the age profile for apprentices is changing. The practice of employing older and often male apprentices has the potential to limit opportunities for younger jobseekers and could have an impact on diversity. Further research into this would be of benefit in the development of strategies that seek to increase the diversity of apprentices and future tradespersons.
- A focus of research on school leavers who don't go on to further education and training and find entry level career jobs should also be undertaken.
- Trade training in Scandinavian countries has 'institutional based' training systems. Conducting further research into the impact of this form of apprenticeship delivery on diversity may provide some detail that could be applied to the Queensland context and lead to greater diversity and improved workforce culture.
- There is strong support for the apprenticeship system but given there are persistent skill shortages in some trades, coupled with the enhanced education and skill requirements resulting from technology, and the desire to improve gender balance, it is timely that a further key research piece is developed for the apprenticeships system in Queensland that focusses on these specific issues.

Other observations identified through this project

- Much of the current literature involving apprenticeships focuses on the apprenticeship system as a homogenous whole. When it comes to specific responses, it ignores the fact that the labour market for each trade is unique, including the size and nature of employers and employment arrangements, fluctuations in activity and career path opportunities.
- Data identified in the contemporary literature regarding the decline in apprentice numbers during the COVID-19 pandemic has limitations. Analysis of existing data sets that clearly separate out apprentices and trainees to examine the impact of declining Government incentives over the past 10 years would be beneficial to understand policy impacts. Contemporary long-term Queensland specific data would be useful in informing ongoing research into topics related to apprenticeships and traineeships.
- Technology, automation and artificial intelligence will have impacts on the apprenticeships system and the content that will be delivered as a part of the apprenticeship. There will be a need for the apprenticeship system to improve the theoretical knowledge of the discipline, its context, principles, science and practice. Future projects into apprenticeships in Queensland could focus on adapting the apprenticeship education and training structure for particular trades to address these requirements.

Appendix A

Key stakeholders in supporting women in trades

National Association of Women in Construction (NAWIC) - <https://www.nawic.com.au/>

National Committee for Women in Engineering (NCWIE) - <https://www.engineersaustralia.org.au/Communities-And-Groups/Special-Interest-Groups/Women-In-Engineering>

SALT – Supporting and Linking Tradeswomen - <https://saltaustralia.org.au/>

STEM Women - <https://www.stemwomen.org.au/>

Tradeswomen Australia - <https://tradeswomenustralia.com.au/>

Women in Adult and Vocational Education (WAVE) - <https://wave.org.au/>

Women in Mining and Resources Queensland (wimarq) - <https://womeninminingqueensland.com/>

Appendix B

Recommendations from MATES in Construction (2020) ^{lxxxiv}

Recommendation 1

Development and evaluation of an industry-wide onsite intervention program focussing on supervision, trade workers and apprentices to raise awareness of bullying as an issue and highlight the negative consequences of bullying in the industry.

Recommendation 2

Maintain and expand access to support for apprentices experiencing poor mental health and suicide risk to third party providers such as MATES in Construction.

Recommendation 3

Inclusion of resilience training for apprentices with specific focus on financial management, alcohol and other drugs awareness, suicide and mental health literacy, and workplace rights.

Recommendation 4

Further investigation into the vulnerable position of apprentices experiencing bullying, and in particular, understanding the experiences of apprentices who have been bullied and are unemployed. This investigation should include departmental supervision of apprentices, employment security and conflict management between employers and apprentices.

Recommendation 5

Examination into how various industry, safety and employment regulators impact on bullying, psychological distress and suicidality of apprentices. Specifically, how the relevant agencies may support an apprentice experiencing bullying and a poor psycho-social work environment. These should include but not be limited to:

- Division of Workplace Health and Safety
- Department of Employment, Small Business and Training
- The Queensland Training Ombudsman
- Queensland Building and Construction Commission
- Fairwork Australia.

Recommendation 6

Undertake an investigation into the potential benefits of structured industry-based apprentice mentor and support programs such as those offered by several trade unions and employer associations in the industry.

Recommendation 7

Conduct further research exploring the nature of the bullying experienced by apprentices and on how resilience can be developed.

Recommendation 8

Conduct further research exploring workplace culture and attitudes to bullying amongst trade workers, supervisors and employers of apprentices.

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Previous Reports and Publications Identified by Stakeholders

Domestic and Family Violence as a Workplace Issue – Small Business Social Impact Series 2021

Whilst this report from Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland (CCIQ) relates to domestic and family violence, it highlights the different manner in which different sized organisations, or different industries, deal with these types of issues. Several key findings of this report were:

- larger businesses were better able to deal with domestic and family violence through awareness and implementation of policies and guidelines
- the report identified small and medium sized business have low awareness of the issue, were less likely to have formal policies in place and lack the money and time necessary to proactively address domestic and family violence
- a large number of employees reporting domestic and family violence were from the female dominated industries of retail and accommodation and hospitality
- Construction and Manufacturing, both male dominated industries, reported having a very poor understanding of employer obligations and employee rights regarding domestic and family violence

The Impact of Workplace Bullying on Mental Health and Suicidality in Queensland Construction Industry Apprentices

Whilst this report is mentioned in the Jobs Queensland literature review, it is important to highlight two important statistics from the above review conducted by Griffith University for Mates in Construction that highlight the importance of ensuring there are adequate support mechanisms in place to deal with bullying and harassment in the workplace.

- Over 27% of apprentices encountered bullying or harassment in the previous 12 months
- Over 30% of apprentices experienced suicidal thoughts in the previous 12 months.

Whilst not reported specifically, the Chief Executive Officer Mates in Construction has recently reviewed the data used for the report and has indicated the above figures appear to be higher for female apprentices in the construction industry.

Victoria's Women in Construction Strategy: Building Gender Equality

The focus of this strategy is on women in trades and semi-skilled roles who were identified as representing 1% of trades and technician positions in the construction industry in Victoria. The Victorian Government invested \$500,000 to create a strategy to diversify the male dominated construction industry. The strategy is focussed on three key themes:

- Attract – women need to be aware that construction is an attractive and viable career option
- Recruit – women must be proactively recruited and have access to strong career pathways
- Retain – workplaces must be inclusive and adaptive to ensure women want to stay.

It is noted that the Australian Capital Territory recently announced they would also be implementing a Women in Construction Strategy.

Women in Construction: Exploring the Barriers and Supportive Enablers of Wellbeing in the Workplace – RMIT

The report was completed by RMIT University for the Victorian Government as part of their implementation of Victoria's Women in Construction Strategy. This report identified three inter-related themes:

- Women are outsiders – highlighting the culture of masculinity drives inappropriate behaviour, career pathway challenges, being treated differently on site due to gender, and barriers faced regarding family responsibilities and caring for children
- Consequence free behaviour – identifying the masculine culture can be an enabler of inappropriate behaviour, the mistreatment of female apprentices and the lack of support for managing inappropriate behaviour
- Culture of Silence – highlighting the lack of transparent processes for reporting inappropriate behaviour, little to no consequences for co-workers who act inappropriately, and fear of punishment for reporting inappropriate behaviour.

Recommendations from this report include:

- zero tolerance for inappropriate behaviour towards women
- adopting procurement practices to promote gender equality
- measurement of equality
- meeting occupational health and safety requirements
- focus on primary prevention.

The Cost of Doing Nothing Report

This report was prepared by BIS Oxford Economics for the Construction Industry Culture Taskforce in May 2021. The report highlights economic costs of the current culture of the construction industry, including:

- the lost wellbeing from work related fatalities, injuries or illnesses were found to incur a significant cost, estimated to be at least \$6.1 billion in 2017/18
- the prevalence of ill-mental health and stress experienced by employees
- the potential cost to the industry of a culture which results in low female participation in the workforce
- the current culture is known for its rigid practices and long work hours

Women in Business Small Business Social Impact Series 2020

This report from CCIQ identifies that it is imperative that business and government continue to ease challenges that are unique to women in Queensland. In particular the report highlights the need to:

- close the gender participation gap
- close the gender pay gap
- make it easier for small employers of women in business

Towards 2025 – An Australian Government Strategy to Boost Workforce Participation

The Strategy identifies six groups of women with specific needs and experiences:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women
- Culturally and linguistically diverse women
- Mature age women
- Rural and regional women
- Women with disability
- Young women.

By focusing on these six groups, the Government, through this strategy, acknowledges that efforts to improve women's workforce participation must recognise women are a diverse group, and policy responses must be tailored to respond to the different needs, aspirations, and challenges of all Australian women.



Train to retain

A fair go for apprentices in the workplace

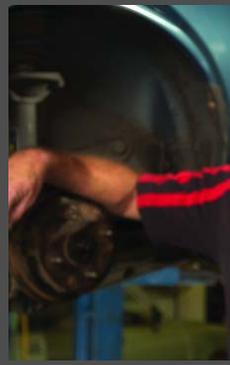
An action plan



Train to retain...

it's everybody's business

RECOMMENDATION	ACTION	COMPLETION DATE
1 Develop education strategies and resources for stakeholders who provide services to apprentices and trainees which identify the roles, responsibilities and processes established to improve workplace behaviour and help reduce the incidence of workplace harassment.	Develop a Workplace Education Program supported by appropriate resources, which clearly articulates the roles, responsibilities and processes used to support apprentices and trainees in the workplace.	30 December 2007
2 Ensure stakeholders through their induction processes help apprentices and trainees and where appropriate, their parents, understand what constitutes poor workplace behaviour including workplace harassment, and what support and referral systems are in place to address these issues.		
3 Develop a range of communication and engagement strategies as part of an overall awareness program aimed at key industry groups to address the issue of workplace harassment of apprentices and trainees.	Implement an Industry Communication and Engagement Strategy to inform and expand industry and community commitment to building safe, productive workplaces that support apprentices and trainees through appropriate behaviours and practices.	30 February 2008
4 Develop and implement an incident management policy and procedure within the Department of Education, Training and the Arts to manage complaints of poor workplace behaviour including workplace harassment of apprentices and trainees.	Develop Incident Management Policy and Procedures to respond and manage incidents in the workplace which involve apprentices and trainees.	30 October 2007
5 Ensure Department of Education, Training and the Arts staff have the necessary skills and support systems to enable them to better address incidences of poor workplace behaviour including workplace harassment.	Develop a Professional Development Program for Department of Education, Training and the Arts staff who are involved in supporting and promoting safe and appropriate workplace behaviour for apprentices and trainees.	30 December 2007
6 Develop a stakeholder skilling program that promotes best practice in workplace behaviour and ultimately leads to business benefit.	Develop a Skills Program with a focus on safe and productive workplace practices that reflect best practice workplace behaviour that benefits business.	30 February 2008



RECOMMENDATION	ACTION	COMPLETION DATE
<p>7</p> <p>Ensure that strategies to reduce poor workplace behaviour are integrated with arrangements put in place in private and public sector schools to address bullying.</p>	<p>Conduct a review with the schools sector of current mechanisms for managing workplace practices and behaviours across school-based apprenticeship and traineeship programs and incorporate relevant processes where appropriate.</p>	<p>30 August 2007</p>
<p>8</p> <p>Establish a set of performance measures which can be used to describe the prevalence of poor workplace behaviour and which can be used for future monitoring and reporting.</p>	<p>Develop a Performance Management Framework to monitor the prevalence of poor workplace behaviour and the effectiveness of current strategies to help improve workplace behaviours and practices. This framework will include a system for monitoring and reporting across relevant training partners including the Department of Education, Training and the Arts, group training organisations, Australian Apprenticeship Centres, supervising registered training organisations and the Training Ombudsman.</p>	<p>30 March 2008</p>
<p>9</p> <p>Establish a system of monitoring and reporting which also integrates information from relevant stakeholders.</p>		
<p>10</p> <p>Foster interaction between relevant agencies to develop a coordinated approach to addressing the harassment of apprentices and trainees in the workplace.</p>	<p>Establish a Reference Group to develop a coordinated approach to the support of apprentices and trainees through safe workplace behaviour and practices.</p> <p>Membership will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training Ombudsman (Chair) • Commerce Queensland • Australian Industry Group • Queensland Council of Unions • Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union • Busy Inc. • Group Training Australia • Australian Council for Private Education and Training • Young Workers' Advisory Service • SkillsTech Australia • Department of Employment and Industrial Relations • Department of Education, Training and the Arts 	<p>[Commence] September 2007</p>



RECOMMENDATION	ACTION	COMPLETION DATE
<p>11</p> <p>Review and redevelop the existing inter-departmental agreement between the Department of Education, Training and the Arts and the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations regarding workplace harassment to strengthen and clarify roles and responsibilities and establish joint reporting arrangements to give clear evidence of what is actually being done by each department.</p>	<p>Develop a Memorandum of Understanding between the Department of Education, Training and the Arts and the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations that articulates the roles and responsibilities of each organisation in managing workplace incidents involving apprentices and trainees.</p>	<p>30 September 2007</p>
<p>12</p> <p>Review current regulatory mechanisms to identify the regulation available and its adequacy to help prevent poor workplace behaviour including workplace harassment and to support incident management.</p>	<p>Review regulatory mechanisms in conjunction with the Training and Employment Recognition Council, to identify whether legislative modifications are needed to protect apprentices and trainees from harassment in the workplace.</p>	<p>30 December 2007</p>
<p>13</p> <p>Target research towards priority areas arising from the reporting processes which may lead to the greatest benefit.</p>	<p>Develop a research methodology which identifies priority action areas.</p> <p>This strategy will include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. identifying best practice in relation to promoting safe and appropriate behaviours and practices in the workplace to prevent and manage workplace incidents 	<p>2008–2009</p>
<p>14</p> <p>The Training Ombudsman to establish a team to identify candidate industry market segments and develop different treatments for each of those areas. The outcomes of these activities could be evaluated and used to develop future strategic responses to the issue.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. analysing existing information and data 3. identifying priority areas for improvement 4. developing strategies to address identified issues 	<p>2008–2009</p>
<p>15</p> <p>The Training Ombudsman assumes an ongoing role in reviewing the achievement against the strategies on a quarterly basis and submits reports to the Minister and the Training and Employment Recognition Council annually on progress in priority areas.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. reporting quarterly on progress and achievement against research, strategies and issues. 	<p>Ongoing</p>



Minister's Message

A major focus of the Queensland Government's \$1 billion Queensland Skills Plan is to encourage more people to undertake apprenticeships and traineeships.

At the same time we need to ensure that when apprentices and trainees do commence training, they have the support and encouragement they need to finish that training.

The Queensland Skills Plan included ways the Queensland Government could improve apprentice support arrangements to increase the number of apprentices who complete their full trade qualification.

New initiatives included increasing travel allowances and establishing an apprentice hotline to respond to apprentices and trainees seeking information and advice.

Both of these initiatives have been already implemented. Travel and accommodation allowances for apprentices have been doubled and, in February this year, we launched the *Apprenticeships Info* telephone hotline staffed by trained consultants to answer apprentices' questions on a wide range of topics.

We must now all turn our attention to the serious issue of workplace practices and the impact they can have on apprenticeship completions.

The Training Ombudsman has provided a report on improving workplace practices to avoid harassment or bullying. The report's 15 recommendations will serve as a foundation for increasing apprentice retention rates.

This action plan outlines those recommendations, together with my Department of Education, Training and the Arts' response.

To deliver these recommendations, we call upon our major stakeholders – industry groups, unions, employers, training providers and schools – to work with us to ensure that our workplaces successfully train and retain apprentices to build a more skilled and productive workforce.

Rod Welford MP

**Minister for Education and
Training and Minister for the Arts**

Background

One of the most critical issues facing Queensland's industries is a serious shortfall in skilled tradespeople.

Through the Queensland Skills Plan, a number of actions have been established to respond to the growing need for trade training and to address some of the factors that may discourage people from undertaking or completing apprenticeships and traineeships.

Part of these initiatives is an undertaking to ensure apprentices and trainees are able to maximise their learning experiences in safe, productive workplaces which promote appropriate behaviour.

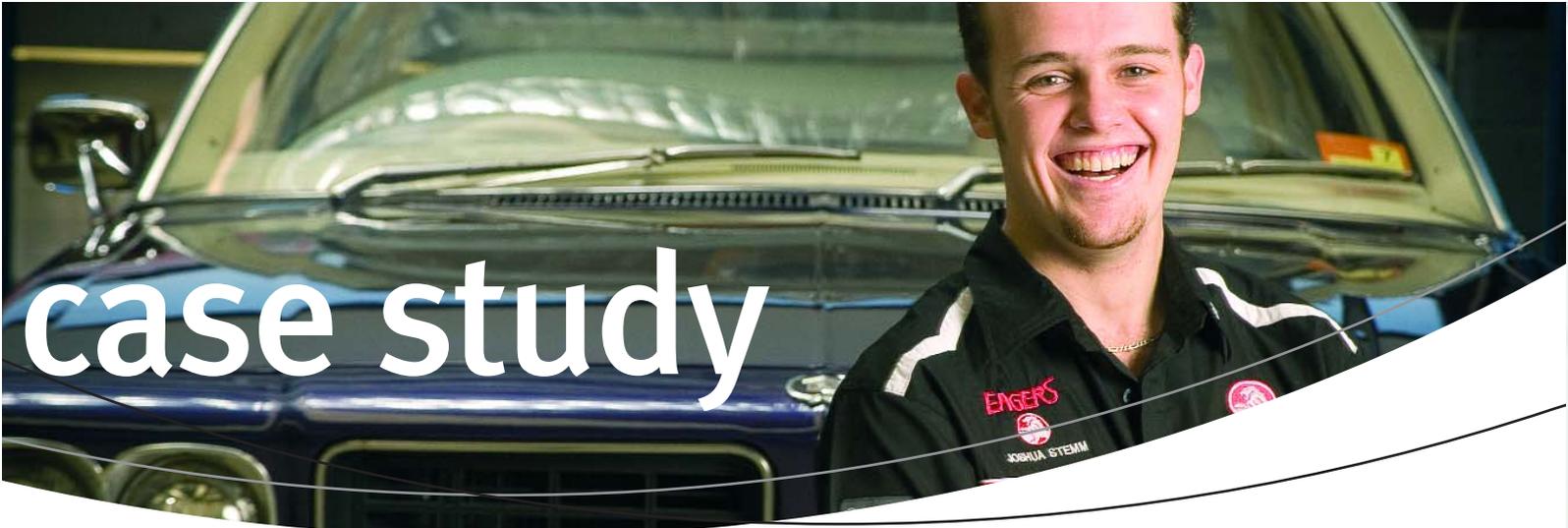
As employees, apprentices and trainees are in positions of limited power and this can make them vulnerable to workplace practices and behaviours that place them at risk.

It is the responsibility of all parties involved in apprenticeships and traineeships to value and protect apprentices and trainees, and to ensure the quality of their training.

The *Train to retain* action plan has been formulated as a response to the recommendations made in the Training Ombudsman's report *Improving workplace practices to help reduce harassment of apprentices and trainees in Queensland*. The actions in the plan aim to build safe, supportive and productive environments in which apprentices and trainees can learn and complete their training.

Ensuring a quality training experience is not only crucial for the skill development of each apprentice and trainee, but also essential for the ongoing development of Queensland's industries.





case study

Eagers Holden: Training to retain

In an era when skills shortages exist in the traditional trades and apprentices have more employment options than ever before, attracting and retaining good apprentices can be a challenge.

Queensland has already made significant inroads into attracting apprentices to the trades, but helping them to stay the distance is an area of concern.

Joshua Stemm, the 2006 Queensland Apprentice of the Year, knows a lot about the benefits of a supportive workplace. He sums up promoting a positive and supportive work and environment very simply.

“It’s all about communication,” Josh said.

“Although I pretty much knew what I was getting myself into because I’d already done work experience, there is so much to learn and get used to as a new apprentice.”

“It can also be difficult interacting with some of the older apprentices who finished school at Year 10 and can struggle to explain things.

“I didn’t run into too many problems though. My boss was really good at explaining why even the little things were important to the business.

“I think, as an apprentice, it’s really important to have recognition of milestones and good results that apprentices achieve.”

Josh raises the issue of feeling usefully employed in the early years of the apprenticeship as particularly important.

“When you first start with an employer you’re all keyed up to start working underneath a car and getting your hands dirty,” he said.

“But it’s not always like that. At first there was a lot of washing and cleaning and running around doing errands.

“It’s frustrating, and you really feel like you are getting held back. I think it would be a good idea for apprentices to have interesting work to do early on to keep them interested.”

The management at Eagers do their best to cater for their apprentices’ needs and expectations.

Eagers Service Manager John Waters said Eagers conduct annual one-on-one appraisals with their staff to ensure their apprenticeships are heading in the right direction.

“It’s a wonderful opportunity to reaffirm what our apprentices want to achieve,” John said.

“At these meetings, we establish both short and long-term goals that will help both the apprentice and management at Eagers.

“Often we discover that the apprentice is keen to work in a different area or spend more time doing a particular aspect of their training.

“We try to be as flexible as possible, because in the end, the apprentice is someone that our business has invested in.

“We don’t like to lose our apprentices once they complete their training, because they really are an asset to the business, but we very much want them to enjoy the experience.”

Eagers is just one example of a business that is investing time and resources into building its workforce.

Good communication that includes ongoing feedback, combined with induction programs and best practice human resource and safety procedures are just some of the ways that businesses can actively support apprentices and trainees in the workplace. Educating both employers and apprentices and trainees about the benefits of building safe, productive workplaces is a key strategy of the Train to retain action plan.

The Train to retain action plan is an integral part of the Queensland Skills Plan to ensure apprentices are treated fairly in the workplace during their training.

For further information about the Train to retain action plan contact the Department of Education, Training and the Arts on 07 3237 1796.

Department of Education, Training and the Arts <www.deta.qld.gov.au/skillsplan>

Queensland

(Data provided by DESBT – 11 August 2021)

Apprentice New Commencements

Year	Female Commencements	Male Commencements	Total Commencements
18/19	2222	12981	15203
19/20	2392	12097	14489
20/21	3389	16640	20029

Apprentice Completion Rates

Year	Female Completion Rate (%)	Male Completion Rate (%)	Combined completion rate (%)
17/18	61.32	80.6	79.09
18/19	62.7	78.87	77.66
19/20	54.2	79.79	77.69
20/21	49.41	71.14	69.09

Trainee New Commencements

Year	Female Commencements	Male Commencements	Total Commencements
18/19	11184	10891	22075
19/20	9035	8718	17753
20/21	13559	12192	25751

Trainee Completion Rates

Year	Female Completion Rate (%)	Male Completion Rate (%)	Combined completion rate (%)
17/18	79.38	77.6	78.74
18/19	80.14	77.83	79.21
19/20	82.39	78.34	80.77
20/21	80.94	75.35	78.75

Arts and Entertainment

Apprenticeships

Binding and Finishing
 Graphic Prepress
 Print Machining
 Screen Printing

Apprentice New Commencements

Year	Female Commencements	Male Commencements	Total Commencements
18/19	5	11	16
19/20	5	22	27
20/21	13	27	40

Apprentice Completion Rates

Year	Female Completion Rate (%)	Male Completion Rate (%)	Combined completion rate (%)
17/18	75.54	64.93	67.67
18/19	50.44	54.41	53.05
19/20	55.48	69.16	65.55
20/21	76.06	41.44	49.83

Arts and Entertainment

Traineeships

Arts Administration
 Broadcast Technician
 Design Worker
 Desktop Publishing Support
 Library and Information Services Assistant Level II
 Live Production and Services Worker Level III
 Media Level III

Trainee New Commencements

Year	Female Commencements	Male Commencements	Total Commencements
18/19	22	41	63
19/20	33	84	117
20/21	22	29	51

Trainee Completion Rates

Year	Female Completion Rate (%)	Male Completion Rate (%)	Combined completion rate (%)
17/18	95.13	94.71	94.89
18/19	92.95	94.63	94.26
19/20	99.77	99.73	99.75
20/21	97.62	97.86	97.77

Automotive

Apprenticeships

Automotive Vehicle Body Tradesperson (Panel Beating)
 Automotive Vehicle Body Tradesperson (Trimming)
 Automotive Vehicle Body Tradesperson (Vehicle Painting)
 Bicycle Mechanic
 Outdoor Power Equipment Mechanic
 Automotive Electrician
 Automotive Glazing Technician
 Automotive Mechanic (Agriculture Mechanical)
 Automotive Mechanic (Heavy Vehicle Mobile Plant)
 Automotive Mechanic (Light Vehicle)
 Automotive Mechanic (Motorcycle)
 Automotive Mechanical (Heavy Vehicle Road Transport)
 Automotive Mobile Plant Technician
 Automotive Salesperson (Parts Interpreting)
 Automotive Specialist (Diesel Engines)
 Automotive Specialist (Diesel Fuel)
 Automotive Specialist (Driveline)
 Automotive Specialist (Engine Reconditioning)
 Automotive Specialist (Forklift Mechanic)
 Automotive Specialist (Trailer Technician - Heavy Vehicle)
 Automotive Specialist (Underbody)
 Bus, Truck & Trailer Manufacture Level III
 Elevating Work Platform Technician
 Marine Mechanic
 Recreational Vehicle Manufacture Level III

Apprentice New Commencements

Year	Female Commencements	Male Commencements	Total Commencements
18/19	129	2431	2560
19/20	205	2247	2452
20/21	242	2929	3171

Apprentice Completion Rates

Year	Female Completion Rate (%)	Male Completion Rate (%)	Combined completion rate (%)
17/18	77.6	79.91	79.81
18/19	59.35	78.48	77.94
19/20	71.51	84.9	84.37
20/21	63.12	76.61	75.82

Automotive

Traineeships

Bicycle Serviceperson
 Outdoor Power Equipment Serviceperson
 Automotive Electrical Serviceperson
 Automotive Master Technician
 Automotive Mechanical Serviceperson (Air Conditioning)
 Automotive Mechanical Serviceperson (Cylinder Head Reconditioning)
 Automotive Salesperson
 Automotive Serviceperson (Tyre Fitting)
 Automotive Serviceperson (Underbody)
 Automotive Vehicle Serviceperson
 Recreational Vehicle Service and Repair Level III

Trainee New Commencements

Year	Female Commencements	Male Commencements	Total Commencements
18/19	15	206	221
19/20	5	149	154
20/21	16	282	298

Trainee Completion Rates

Year	Female Completion Rate (%)	Male Completion Rate (%)	Combined completion rate (%)
17/18	19.58	47.58	44.51
18/19	29.06	37.59	37.18
19/20	44.04	47.85	47.53
20/21	33.76	59.46	57.89

Business

Traineeships

Banking Services Manager	Cleaning Operations Level II
Branch Team Leader	Cleaning Operations Level III
Business Administration (Legal) Level III	Collections Clerk/Process Server
Business Level II	Collections Officer
Business Level III	Customer Contact Level III
Business Level IV	Customer Contact Level IV
Business Manager	Financial Planner
Credit Manager	Franchising Level IV
Credit Officer	General Insurance Broking Support
Financial Sector Team Leader	Governance Level IV
Financial Services (Loss Adjusting)	Library and Information Services Assistant Level III
Financial Services Level IV	Library and Information Services Assistant Level IV
Financial Services Worker Level III	Library Technician
Human Resources Level IV	Loss Adjuster
Insurance Broking Manager	Loss Adjusting Level V
Insurance Officer (General)	Management Level V
Legal Services Level IV	Mortgage Broking Manager
Legal Services Level V	Museum and Gallery Operations
Management Level IV	Occupational Health and Safety Level III
Marketing Coordinator	Occupational Health and Safety Level IV
Portable Fire Equipment Operator Level II	Occupational Health and Safety Level V
Project Management Level IV	Pest Management Level III
Project Management Level V	Procuring Level IV
Spatial Information Services Level II	Property Manager
Spatial Information Services Level III	Property Services (Agency)
Spatial Information Services Level IV	Property Services (Real Estate)
Superannuation Fund Administrator	Property Services (Real Estate) Level III
Surveying Level V	Property Services (Real Estate) Level IV
Work Skills (Business)	Purchasing Level IV
Accounts Clerk	Recordkeeping Level III
Accounts Manager	Recordkeeping Level IV
Assistant Accountant	Security Operations Level III
Assistant Financial Broker	Small Business Management
Bookkeeper	Spatial Information Service Level V
Business Administration (Education) Level III	Spatial Information Services Level V
Business Administration (International Education) Level III	Surveying Level IV
Business Administration (Medical) Level III	Swimming Pool and Spa Technician Level III
Business Administration Level III	Technical Security Level II
Business Administration Level IV	Waste Management Operations Level III
Business Sales Level IV	Waste Management Operations Level IV
Carpet Cleaning Operations Level III	Work Health and Safety Level III
Claims Officer	Work Health and Safety Level IV
Cleaning Management	Work Health and Safety Level V

Trainee New Commencements

Year	Female Commencements	Male Commencements	Total Commencements
18/19	3717	1681	5398
19/20	3157	1406	4563
20/21	5815	3075	8890

Trainee Completion Rates

Year	Female Completion Rate (%)	Male Completion Rate (%)	Combined completion rate (%)
17/18	79.35	75.66	78.39
18/19	80.85	73.95	78.72
19/20	83.38	77.22	81.54
20/21	84.74	79.88	83.29

Communications

Traineeships

Information, Digital Media and Technology Level II
 Information Technology Level 4
 Information Technology Level 4 (Digital Media)
 Information Technology Level 4 (Networking)
 Information Technology Level 4 (Support)
 Information Technology Level 4 (Systems Analysis and Design)
 Information Technology Level 4 (Websites)
 Information Technology Level III
 Information Technology Level IV
 Information, Digital Media and Technology Level III
 Telecommunications Technical Specialist
 Telecommunications Technician
 Telecommunications Technology Assistant
 Telecommunications Trades Worker
 Television Reception Technician

Trainee New Commencements

Year	Female Commencements	Male Commencements	Total Commencements
18/19	58	589	647
19/20	1	1	2
20/21	40	455	495

Trainee Completion Rates

Year	Female Completion Rate (%)	Male Completion Rate (%)	Combined completion rate (%)
17/18	74.12	78.16	77.95
18/19	88.25	86.06	86.23
19/20	94.12	85.08	86.12
20/21	77.84	87.29	86.64

Community Services

Apprenticeships

Children's Services (Para Professional) – Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care

Apprentice New Commencements

Year	Female Commencements	Male Commencements	Total Commencements
18/19	426	17	443
19/20	467	23	490
20/21	763	29	792

Apprentice Completion Rates

Year	Female Completion Rate (%)	Male Completion Rate (%)	Combined completion rate (%)
17/18	57.26	33.62	56.59
18/19	63.32	58.17	63.2
19/20	43.7	48.2	43.82
20/21	43.53	18.7	42.5

Community Services

Traineeships

Education Support Worker
 Aged Care Activity Worker
 Aged Care Worker
 Child Care Worker
 Community Care Worker
 Community Services Worker
 Disability Support Worker
 Disability Worker
 Job Placement Consultant
 Mental Health Worker
 Out of School Hours Care Coordinator
 Social Housing Worker
 Trainee Employment Consultant
 Youth Worker

Trainee New Commencements

Year	Female Commencements	Male Commencements	Total Commencements
18/19	1250	158	1588
19/20	1091	118	1209
20/21	1658	220	1878

Trainee Completion Rates

Year	Female Completion Rate (%)	Male Completion Rate (%)	Combined completion rate (%)
17/18	78.45	68.67	77.43
18/19	80.3	69.55	79.29
19/20	82.31	69.84	81.12
20/21	75.87	63.93	74.99

Construction

Apprenticeships

Bricklayer
 Carpenter
 Fire Systems Technician
 Gas Fitter
 Joiner
 Painter and Decorator
 Plastering (Wall and Ceiling Lining)
 Plumber
 Roof Plumber
 Roof Tiler
 Shopfitter
 Solid Plasterer
 Stonemason
 Tiler
 Waterproofer
 Plant Operator
 Plumber (Mechanical Services)
 Plumbing and Draining
 Signwriter

Apprentice New Commencements (Civil, General, Off Site)

Year	Female Commencements	Male Commencements	Total Commencements
18/19	132	1210	3762
19/20	155	3760	3915
20/21	234	5745	5979

Apprentice Completion rate

Year	Female Completion Rate (%)	Male Completion Rate (%)	Combined completion rate (%)
17/18	71.83	77.31	77.2
18/19	66.55	75.09	74.9
19/20	61.86	75.21	74.87
20/21	53.25	64.35	63.96

Construction

Traineeships

Civil Construction Worker - Labourer
 Demolition
 Fire Systems Designer
 Pre-Apprenticeship (Construction)
 Rigging
 Scaffolder
 Skilled Construction Worker - Foundation Works
 Steelfixer
 Work Skills (Construction)
 Civil Construction Operations Supervisor
 Civil Construction Supervisor
 Concreter
 Construction Material Testing
 Dogger
 Essential Services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders
 Skilled Construction Worker - Bituminous Surfacing
 Skilled Construction Worker - Bridge Construction and Maintenance
 Skilled Construction Worker - Civil Construction General
 Skilled Construction Worker - Pipe Layer
 Skilled Construction Worker - Road Construction and Maintenance
 Skilled Construction Worker - Road Marking
 Skilled Construction Worker - Timber Bridge Maintenance
 Skilled Construction Worker - Traffic Management
 Skilled Construction Worker (Trenchless Technology)
 Swimming Pool Technician
 Work Skills Traineeship (Construction)

Trainee New Commencements

Year	Female Commencements	Male Commencements	Total Commencements
18/19	215	1539	1754
19/20	242	1543	1785
20/21	234	1869	2103

Trainee Completion Rates

Year	Female Completion Rate (%)	Male Completion Rate (%)	Combined completion rate (%)
17/18	88.93	86.07	86.29
18/19	88.49	85.89	86.14
19/20	89.9	84.13	84.87
20/21	89.13	78.42	79.59

Engineering

Apprenticeships

Aircraft Maintenance Engineer - Avionics
 Aircraft Maintenance Engineer - Mechanical
 Aircraft Maintenance Engineer - Structures
 Aircraft Surface Finisher
 Casting and Moulding
 Diesel Fitter/Mechanic (Fixed and Mobile Plant)
 Engineering Electrical/Electronic Trade
 Engineering Electrical/Electronic Trade (Electrical Fitter)
 Engineering Electrical/Electronic Trade (Electrical Mechanic)
 Engineering Electrical/Electronic Trade (Marine Electrical Mechanics)
 Engineering Electrical/Electronic Trade (Marine Electronics)
 Engineering Fabrication Trade
 Engineering Fabrication Trade (Boilermaking/Welding)
 Engineering Fabrication Trade (Casting and Moulding)
 Engineering Fabrication Trade (Light Fabrication - Sheetmetal)
 Engineering Fabrication Trade (Patternmaking)
 Engineering Fabrication Trade (Surface Finishing)
 Engineering Mechanical Trade
 Engineering Mechanical Trade (Machining)
 Engineering Mechanical Trade (Maintenance - Diesel Fitting)
 Engineering Mechanical Trade (Maintenance - Fitting and/or Turning)
 Engineering Mechanical Trade (Maintenance - Fitting/Machining)
 Engineering Mechanical Trade (Refrigeration and Air Conditioning)
 Engineering Mechanical Trade (Toolmaking)
 Higher Engineering Trade
 Higher Engineering Tradesperson
 Jewellery
 Locksmithing
 Marine Craft Construction
 Refrigeration and Air Conditioning
 Toolmaking
 Watchmaker
 Watchmaking

Apprentice New Commencements

Year	Female Commencements	Male Commencements	Total Commencements
18/19	107	2282	2389
19/20	132	1987	2119
20/21	141	2279	2420

Apprentice Completion Rates

Year	Female Completion Rate (%)	Male Completion Rate (%)	Combined completion rate (%)
17/18	83.64	91.06	90.92
18/19	92.94	90.18	90.27
19/20	87.59	89.68	89.62
20/21	74.4	87.87	87.33

Engineering

Traineeships

Engineering Technician
 Pre-apprenticeship (Engineering)
 Aeroskills Engineer (Avionics)
 Aeroskills Engineer (Mechanical)
 Aircraft Line Maintenance Worker
 Aircraft Maintenance Engineer - Level II
 Boating Services Level 2
 Boating Services Level 3
 Boating Services Level 4
 Boating Services Level III
 Drainage
 Engineering Production
 Engineering Production Systems
 Engineering Production Systems (Marine Craft Surface Finishing)
 Engineering Production Technology
 Engineering Technician - Advanced Trade
 Engineering Technician Level V
 Manufacturing Systems and Practices Level III
 Manufacturing Systems and Practices Level IV
 Manufacturing Systems and Practices Level V
 Manufacturing Technology Cadetship Level IV
 Pre-Apprenticeship (Hospitality)

Trainee New Commencements

Year	Female Commencements	Male Commencements	Total Commencements
18/19	13	128	141
19/20	94	158	252
20/21	92	245	337

Trainee Completion Rates

Year	Female Completion Rate (%)	Male Completion Rate (%)	Combined completion rate (%)
17/18	33.69	44.11	41.78
18/19	89.05	79.15	80.3
19/20	71.15	81.08	79.73
20/21	63.48	52.12	53.45

Food Processing

Apprenticeships

Baking
 Bread Baking
 Bread Baking/Pastry Cooking
 Meat Retailing
 Pastry Cooking

Apprentice New Commencements

Year	Female Commencements	Male Commencements	Total Commencements
18/19	106	348	454
19/20	108	303	411
20/21	123	405	528

Apprentice Completion Rates

Year	Female Completion Rate (%)	Male Completion Rate (%)	Combined completion rate (%)
17/18	55.14	57.28	56.87
18/19	46.98	53.45	51.68
19/20	45.41	54.38	52.6
20/21	46.25	38.85	40.64

Food Processing

Traineeships

Baking
 Bread Baking
 Bread Baking/Pastry Cooking
 Meat Retailing
 Pastry Cooking
 Baking
 Bread Baking
 Bread Baking/Pastry Cooking
 Meat Retailing
 Pastry Cooking
 Baking
 Bread Baking
 Bread Baking/Pastry Cooking
 Meat Retailing
 Pastry Cooking
 Baking
 Bread Baking
 Bread Baking/Pastry Cooking
 Meat Retailing
 Pastry Cooking

Trainee New Commencements

Year	Female Commencements	Male Commencements	Total Commencements
18/19	316	917	1233
19/20	203	789	982
20/21	227	622	849

Trainee Completion Rates

Year	Female Completion Rate (%)	Male Completion Rate (%)	Combined completion rate (%)
17/18	84.15	68.69	72.57
18/19	82.77	73.54	76.37
19/20	79.38	64.53	68.57
20/21	40.3	43.8	43.05

Furnishing

Apprenticeships

Cabinet Making
 Floor Technology
 Furniture Finishing
 Glass and Glazing
 Picture Framing
 Upholstery
 Wood Machining

Apprentice New Commencements

Year	Female Commencements	Male Commencements	Total Commencements
18/19	21	494	515
19/20	23	405	428
20/21	44	727	771

Apprentice Completion Rates

Year	Female Completion Rate (%)	Male Completion Rate (%)	Combined completion rate (%)
17/18	80.09	89.01	88.65
18/19	74.51	79.89	79.67
19/20	69.28	79.18	78.86
20/21	50.72	61.16	60.62

Furnishing

Traineeships

Furniture Making Level II
 Window Furnishing Technician
 Window Furnishings Technician

Trainee New Commencements

Year	Female Commencements	Male Commencements	Total Commencements
18/19	1	10	11
19/20	1	10	11
20/21	3	30	33

Trainee Completion Rates

Year	Female Completion Rate (%)	Male Completion Rate (%)	Combined completion rate (%)
17/18	0	100	100
18/19	0	0	0
19/20	0	0	0
20/21	0	19.05	19.05

General Education and Training

Traineeships

Vocational Trainer

Trainee New Commencements

Year	Female Commencements	Male Commencements	Total Commencements
18/19	0	0	0
19/20	0	0	0
20/21	40	15	55

Trainee Completion Rates

Year	Female Completion Rate (%)	Male Completion Rate (%)	Combined completion rate (%)
17/18	77.78	66.77	70.83
18/19	100	33.3	66.67
19/20	0	0	0
20/21	0	0	0

Government

Traineeships

Correctional Services Officer
 Local Government (Health & Environment) Level III
 Local Government (Operational Works) Level II
 Local Government (Operational Works) Level III
 Local Government (Planning) Level IV
 Local Government (Regulatory Services) Level III
 Local Government Administration Level IV
 Local Government Level 2
 Local Government Level 3
 Local Government Level II
 Local Government Level III
 Public Sector Level III Government
 Public Sector Level IV General
 Public Sector Level IV Investigation
 Public Sector Level IV Procurement and Contracting

Trainee New Commencements (Local and General)

Year	Female Commencements	Male Commencements	Total Commencements
18/19	1	0	1
19/20	11	48	59
20/21	11	73	84

Trainee Completion Rates

Year	Female Completion Rate (%)	Male Completion Rate (%)	Combined completion rate (%)
17/18	40	54.9	49.38
18/19	100	100	100
19/20	0	0	0
20/21	0	0.14	0.12

Health

Traineeships

Allied Health Assistant
 Dental Assistant
 Dietary Assistant
 Health Administration - Level III
 Health Supervisor - Level IV
 Health Supervisor Level IV
 Health Support Services Team Leader
 Indigenous Primary Health Care Worker
 Medical Practice Assistant
 Optical Dispenser
 Pathology Assistant
 Pathology Collector
 Patient Services Assistant - Health Services Operating Theatre
 Assistant
 Pharmacy Assistant
 Practice Manager

Trainee New Commencements

Year	Female Commencements	Male Commencements	Total Commencements
18/19	345	27	372
19/20	244	20	264
20/21	572	71	643

Trainee Completion Rates

Year	Female Completion Rate (%)	Male Completion Rate (%)	Combined completion rate (%)
17/18	91.52	92.62	91.57
18/19	90.68	85.48	90.35
19/20	89.89	83.93	89.45
20/21	86.4	87.9	86.55

Hospitality

Apprenticeships

Catering Operations
 Commercial Cookery
 Commercial Cookery - Demi Chef
 Hospitality Specialist - Front of House

Apprentice New Commencements

Year	Female Commencements	Male Commencements	Total Commencements
18/19	289	591	880
19/20	230	431	661
20/21	366	559	925

Apprentice Completion Rates

Year	Female Completion Rate (%)	Male Completion Rate (%)	Combined completion rate (%)
17/18	40.57	44.23	42.84
18/19	41.63	37.35	38.9
19/20	35.55	38.89	37.74
20/21	27.03	24.74	25.62

Ratio of Apprentices to Workforce

Year (as at)	Ratio of apprentices to total food trades workforce (%)	Ratio of female apprentices to total female food trades workforce (%)
May 2018	8.5	7.7
May 2019	8.4	8.8
May 2020	8.2	7.2
May 2021	6.7	5

Hospitality

Traineeships

Event Operations
 Hospitality Manager
 Hospitality Operations Level II
 Hospitality Operations Level III
 Hospitality Operations Level IV
 Kitchen Operations
 Work Skills (Hospitality)

Trainee New Commencements

Year	Female Commencements	Male Commencements	Total Commencements
18/19	2187	1214	3401
19/20	1587	868	2585
20/21	2157	1325	3482

Trainee Completion Rates

Year	Female Completion Rate (%)	Male Completion Rate (%)	Combined completion rate (%)
17/18	79.83	78.73	79.48
18/19	74.6	70.3	73.13
19/20	77.66	75.01	76.81
20/21	76.16	71.52	74.57

Laboratory Operations

Traineeships

Laboratory Assistant
 Laboratory Technician
 Laboratory Technician - Level VI
 Laboratory Technologist
 Laboratory Trainee

Trainee New Commencements

Year	Female Commencements	Male Commencements	Total Commencements
18/19	83	120	203
19/20	78	123	201
20/21	171	284	455

Trainee Completion Rates

Year	Female Completion Rate (%)	Male Completion Rate (%)	Combined completion rate (%)
17/18	91.88	88.85	90.8
18/19	78.66	87.67	81.3
19/20	94.95	90.65	92.3
20/21	80	84.77	82.91

Mining

Traineeships

Drilling Operations Level II
 Drilling Operations Level III
 Mine Operator
 Resource Planning Level II
 Resource Processing Level III
 Senior Driller
 Supervisor - Extractive Industry
 Surface Extraction Operations Level II
 Surface Extraction Operations Level III
 Underground Coal Mining Level II
 Underground Metalliferous Mining Level III
 Drilling Oil/Gas (On Shore Level II
 Drilling Oil/Gas (On Shore) Level III
 Drilling Oil/Gas (On Shore) Level III
 Drilling Oil/Gas Onshore and Well Servicing Level II
 Mine Emergency Response and Rescue
 Underground Coal Operations Level III
 Well Servicing Operations Level II
 Well Servicing Operations Level III

Trainee New Commencements

Year	Female Commencements	Male Commencements	Total Commencements
18/19	146	787	933
19/20	99	413	512
20/21	107	336	413

Trainee Completion Rates

Year	Female Completion Rate (%)	Male Completion Rate (%)	Combined completion rate (%)
17/18	67.61	80.43	79.47
18/19	90.93	92.9	92.45
19/20	90.42	82.57	83.33
20/21	72.78	70.66	71.04

Primary Industry

Apprenticeships

Arborist
 Farrier
 Farriery
 Floriculture Tradesperson
 Forest Products Worker (Saw Technology)
 Forest Products Worker (Sawdoctoring)
 Forest Products Worker (Wood Machining)
 Forest Products Worker (Woodmachining)
 Greenkeeping
 Landscape Tradesperson
 Nursery Tradesperson
 Nursery Tradesperson (Retail)
 Nursery Tradesperson (Wholesale)
 Parks and Gardens Tradesperson

Apprentice New Commencements

Year	Female Commencements	Male Commencements	Total Commencements
18/19	46	555	601
19/20	65	506	571
20/21	98	712	810

Apprentice Completion Rates

Year	Female Completion Rate (%)	Male Completion Rate (%)	Combined completion rate (%)
17/18	67.68	65.69	65.81
18/19	56.3	58.55	58.4
19/20	62.78	56.17	56.63
20/21	62.57	56.71	57.31

Primary Industry

Traineeships

Beef Production Level 2	Forest Products Worker Level II (Forest Growing and Management)
Conservation Worker	Forest Products Worker Level II (Harvesting and Haulage)
Conservation Worker Level 3	Forest Products Worker Level II (Timber Manufactured Products)
Conservation Worker Level 4	Forest Products Worker Level II (Timber Merchandising)
Conservation Worker Level 5	Forest Products Worker Level III (Forest Growing and Management)
Forest Products Worker Level III (Timber Manufactured Products)	Forest Products Worker Level III (Harvesting and Haulage)
Production Horticulture Farmhand	Forest Products Worker Level III (Sawmilling and Processing)
Production Horticulture Tradesperson	Forest Products Worker Level III (Timber Merchandising Products)
Timber Fabrication Detailer	Forest Products Worker Level III (Wood Panel Products)
Work Skills (Conservation and Land Management)	Forest Products Worker Level IV (Forest Operations)
Agribusiness	Forest Products Worker Level IV (Timber Processing)
Agriculture Level 2	Forest Products Workers Level II (Sawmilling and Processing)
Agriculture Level 3	Forestry Products Worker Level IV
Agriculture Poultry Production Level 3	Horticulture (Turf Management) Level 2
Animal Attendant	Horticulture Floriculture Level 2
Animal Attendant (Animal Care)	Horticulture Landscaping Level 2
Animal Attendant (Animal Technology)	Horticulture Level 2
Animal Attendant (Captive Animals)	Horticulture Level 3
Animal Attendant (Companion Animals)	Horticulture Parks and Gardens Level 2
Animal Attendant (Customer Service)	Horticulture Retail Nursery
Animal Attendant (Pet Grooming)	Horticulture Wholesale Nursery Level 2
Animal Management Officer	Irrigation Level 3
Aquaculture Operator Level 2	Irrigation Level 4
Aquaculture Operator Level 3	Nursery Hand (Production)
Assistant Animal Attendant	Park Ranger
Assistant Veterinary Nurse	Pork Production Stockperson
Beef Production Level 3	Rural Merchandising
Beef Production Level 4	Rural Operations Level 3
Beekeeper	Shearer Level 3
Beekeeping	Timber Fabrication Estimator or Jig Setter
Commercial Fishing Operations	Timber Fabrication Manager
Conservation Officer	Timber Fabrication Production Hand
Conservation Worker Level 2 (Indigenous Land Management)	Timber Fabrication Production Manager
Conservation Worker Level 2 (Land, Parks and Wildlife)	Timber Fabrication Production Specialist or Heading Hand
Conservation Worker Level 2 (Natural Area Restoration)	Timber Frame & Truss Designer
Conservation Worker Level 2 (Weed Management)	Timber Frame & Truss Manufacturer
Cotton Production Tradesperson	Veterinary Nurse
Dairy Farmhand	Wool Handler Level 3
Feedlot Operator	

Trainee New Commencements

Year	Female Commencements	Male Commencements	Total Commencements
18/19	399	829	1228
19/20	410	756	1166
20/21	512	895	1407

Trainee Completion Rates

Year	Female Completion Rate (%)	Male Completion Rate (%)	Combined completion rate (%)
17/18	91.72	90.16	90.75
18/19	91.47	91.24	91.32
19/20	94.06	93.63	93.76
20/21	94.52	93.3	93.73

Process Manufacturing

Apprenticeships

Blow Moulding Operator
 Blown Film Operator
 Extrusion Technician Level 3
 Injection Moulding Operator
 Plastics Fabricator
 Polymer Technician
 Polyurethane Product Manufacturer
 Rotational Moulding Operator
 Composites Technician
 Composites Technician Level 3
 Conveyor Belt Manufacturer
 Conveyor Belt Technician
 Conveyor Belt Technician Level 3

Apprentice New Commencements

Year	Female Commencements	Male Commencements	Total Commencements
18/19	3	74	77
19/20	1	60	61
20/21	4	87	91

Apprentice Completion Rates

Year	Female Completion Rate (%)	Male Completion Rate (%)	Combined completion rate (%)
17/18	94.4	88.12	88.69
18/19	0	50	50
19/20	0	90.35	89.15
20/21	88.89	77.58	78.07

Process Manufacturing

Traineeships

Plastics Operator
 Blast Coater Cleaner/Industry Spray Painter/Finisher
 Chemical Industry Technician Level IV
 Chemical Plant Operator
 Manufactured Mineral Products Operator/Pre-Mixed Concrete Operator
 (Level 2)
 Manufactured Mineral Products Operator/Pre-Mixed Concrete Operator
 (Level 3)
 Process Manufacturing Production Assistant
 Process Manufacturing Production Support Operator

Trainee New Commencements

Year	Female Commencements	Male Commencements	Total Commencements
18/19	32	110	142
19/20	28	70	98
20/21	30	114	144

Trainee Completion Rates

Year	Female Completion Rate (%)	Male Completion Rate (%)	Combined completion rate (%)
17/18	61.93	32.61	35
18/19	66.9	94.1	92.6
19/20	97.61	92.22	92.94
20/21	92.85	93.67	93.48

Retail

Apprenticeships

Hairdresser

Hairdressing - Barbering

Apprentice New Commencements

Year	Female Commencements	Male Commencements	Total Commencements
18/19	809	149	958
19/20	850	146	996
20/21	1143	242	1385

Apprentice completion rate

Year	Female Completion Rate (%)	Male Completion Rate (%)	Combined completion rate (%)
17/18	59.52	61.76	59.75
18/19	56.42	61.98	57.01
19/20	48.68	49.53	48.78
20/21	40.43	44.7	40.97

Retail

Traineeships

Retail Manager
 Beauty Services
 Beauty Services - Nail Technician
 Beauty Services Make-Up Artist
 Beauty Therapy
 Community Pharmacy Level II
 Community Pharmacy Level III
 Community Pharmacy Level IV
 Florist
 General Retail
 Retail Assistant
 Retail Cosmetic Assistant
 Retail Operations
 Retail Supervisor
 Salon Assistant
 Wholesale Sales Representative/Customer Service Officer
 Work Skills (Retail Services)

Trainee New Commencements

Year	Female Commencements	Male Commencements	Total Commencements
18/19	1104	583	1687
19/20	945	587	1532
20/21	1339	724	2063

Trainee Completion Rates

Year	Female Completion Rate (%)	Male Completion Rate (%)	Combined completion rate (%)
17/18	76.95	73.43	75.65
18/19	82.98	80.63	82.07
19/20	84.16	84.48	84.29
20/21	81.46	81.81	81.58

Sport and Recreation

Apprenticeships

Jockey

Apprentice New Commencements

Year	Female Commencements	Male Commencements	Total Commencements
18/19	4	1	5
19/20	7	6	13
20/21	14	3	17

Apprentice Completion Rates

Year	Female Completion Rate (%)	Male Completion Rate (%)	Combined completion rate (%)
17/18	70	60	66.67
18/19	75	94.74	81.82
19/20	72.13	98.72	87.05
20/21	36.36	34.78	35.56

Sport and Recreation

Traineeships

Advanced Stablehand
 Assistant Junior Coach
 Career Orientated Participant (Level II)
 Career Orientated Participant (Level III)
 Developing Sportsperson
 Exercise Instructor
 Exercise Trainer
 Outdoor Recreation Assistant
 Outdoor Recreation Guide (Controlled Environment)
 Outdoor Recreation Manager
 Pool Lifeguard
 Professional Athlete
 Sport and Recreation Assistant
 Sport and Recreation Co-ordinator
 Sport and Recreation Officer
 Sports Coach
 Stablehand
 Trackrider

Trainee New Commencements

Year	Female Commencements	Male Commencements	Total Commencements
18/19	161	239	400
19/20	90	78	168
20/21	138	136	274

Trainee Completion Rates

Year	Female Completion Rate (%)	Male Completion Rate (%)	Combined completion rate (%)
17/18	88.83	84.13	85.96
18/19	83.22	87.08	85.68
19/20	90.53	87.91	88.97
20/21	84.05	87.06	85.73

Textile Clothing and Footwear

Apprenticeships

Canvas Goods Making
 Sail Making
 Clothing and Textile Production
 Cotton Ginning Level III
 Footwear Maker/Repairer
 Leather Tradesperson
 TCF Mechanic

Apprentice New Commencements

Year	Female Commencements	Male Commencements	Total Commencements
18/19	4	13	17
19/20	1	8	9
20/21	2	13	15

Apprentice Completion Rates

Year	Female Completion Rate (%)	Male Completion Rate (%)	Combined completion rate (%)
17/18	87.1	69.23	78.95
18/19	4.26	33.33	26.5
19/20	0	17.39	13.33
20/21	0	8.13	4.9

Textile Clothing and Footwear

Traineeships

Applied Fashion Design
 Applied Fashion Technology (Clothing Technician)
 Applied Fashion Technology (Digital Embroidery)
 Applied Fashion Technology (Digital Printing)
 Cleaning Operations
 Clothing Production Assistant
 Clothing Production Operator
 Computerised Embroidery
 Cotton Ginning Level II
 Laundry Operations

Trainee New Commencements

Year	Female Commencements	Male Commencements	Total Commencements
18/19	0	0	0
19/20	0	1	1
20/21	4	1	5

Trainee Completion Rates

Year	Female Completion Rate (%)	Male Completion Rate (%)	Combined completion rate (%)
17/18	69.97	0	69.28
18/19	30.77	4.76	14.71
19/20	100	0	50
20/21	0	0	0

Tourism

Traineeships

Holiday/Park Operations Level III
 Tourism Operations Level II
 Tourism Operations Level III
 Tourism Operations Level IV
 Travel Agent

Trainee New Commencements

Year	Female Commencements	Male Commencements	Total Commencements
18/19	844	221	1065
19/20	500	131	631
20/21	48	8	56

Trainee Completion Rates

Year	Female Completion Rate (%)	Male Completion Rate (%)	Combined completion rate (%)
17/18	90.47	89.06	90.11
18/19	82.23	81.78	82.12
19/20	90.68	86.64	89.7
20/21	72.66	73.88	72.9

Transport and Distribution

Traineeships

Fleet Controller
 International Freight Forwarder (Senior Operator)
 International Freight Forwarding Operator
 Logistics Manager
 Marina Operator
 Rail Worker
 Supply Chain Operator
 Warehouse and Storage Worker Level II
 Warehouse and Storage Worker Level IV
 Coxswain (Grade 1 Near Coastal)
 Driver
 Flight Operator/Attendant Level II
 Flight Operator/Attendant Level III
 Furniture Removal
 Ground Services Operator - Leading Hand/Supervisor
 Ground Services Operator Level II
 Ground Services Operator Level III
 Locomotive Driver
 Locomotive Drivers' Assistant & Terminal Operator
 Logistics Operations
 Marina Operator Traineeship
 Marine Engine Driver (Grade 2 Near Coastal)
 Marine Engine Driver (Grade 3 Near Coastal)
 Marine Operator (Master Class up to 24 metres Near Coastal)
 Maritime Operator (Master Class up to 35 Metres Near Coastal)
 Mechanical Rail Signalling
 Tram/Light Rail Driver
 Warehouse and Storage Worker Level III

Trainee New Commencements

Year	Female Commencements	Male Commencements	Total Commencements
18/19	263	1369	1632
19/20	181	846	1027
20/21	310	1265	1575

Trainee Completion Rates

Year	Female Completion Rate (%)	Male Completion Rate (%)	Combined completion rate (%)
17/18	71.66	69.63	70.02
18/19	79.18	76.6	76.94
19/20	66.88	63.7	64.2
20/21	49.22	56.73	55.55

Utilities

Apprenticeships

Electrical Fitter
 Electrical Machine Repair
 Electrician
 Electrician (Special Class)
 Electronic Instrument Tradesperson
 Electronics and Communications Tradesperson
 Fire Protection Control Tradesperson
 Security Systems Tradesperson
 Appliance Servicing
 Data & Voice Communication
 Data and Voice Communications
 Electrician/Electronic Instrument Tradesperson
 Electricians/Electronic Instrument Tradesperson
 Gas Supply Industry Operations Level III
 Gas Supply Industry Operations Level IV
 Power Traction Linesperson
 Powerline Tradesperson (Electricity Supply Distribution)
 Powerline Tradesperson (Electricity Supply Transmission)
 Refrigeration & Air Conditioning Mechanic
 Refrigeration and Air-Conditioning Mechanic

Apprentice New Commencements

Year	Female Commencements	Male Commencements	Total Commencements
18/19	141	2385	2526
19/20	143	2193	2336
20/21	202	2883	3085

Apprentice Completion Rates

Year	Female Completion Rate (%)	Male Completion Rate (%)	Combined completion rate (%)
17/18	91.56	93.31	93.27
18/19	96.19	94.29	94.36
19/20	93.43	94.49	94.45
20/21	88.49	90.19	90.1

Utilities

Traineeships

Cable Jointing Tradesperson
 Electrical Distribution - Power Systems Supervisor
 Electrical Distribution – Power Systems Supervisor
 Senior Water Industry Operator
 Water Industry Operator Level II
 Water Industry Operator Level III
 Water Industry Operator Level III - Irrigation
 Water Industry Operator Level III - Treatment

Trainee New Commencements

Year	Female Commencements	Male Commencements	Total Commencements
18/19	12	143	155
19/20	13	125	138
20/21	13	118	131

Trainee Completion Rates

Year	Female Completion Rate (%)	Male Completion Rate (%)	Combined completion rate (%)
17/18	98.51	98.4	98.4
18/19	95.77	94.66	94.82
19/20	94.53	96.44	96.33
20/21	90.32	96.5	96.33

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Assistance and support

Information to get started

During the term of an apprenticeship or traineeship, an employer, apprentice or trainee may seek assistance or support from the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training, their Australian Apprenticeship Support Network (AASN) provider or, for more serious concerns, various other organisations.

Who can help?

Department of Employment, Small Business and Training

Some issues facing employers, apprentices and trainees that the department (or the AASN provider) can assist with are:

- communication problems
- workplace mediation
- negotiation and conflict resolution
- emotional and mental health issues
- personal issues
- absenteeism and behavioural issues.

The department, in providing such assistance, may need to decide matters relating to the training contract or refer the employer, apprentice or trainee to other community-based and government specialist services.

Community-based and government specialist services

Where specialist attention is required, the department will refer the apprentice or trainee to an appropriate community-based organisation, such as:

- [Lifeline](#) (24 hours) – 13 11 14
- [Relationships Australia](#) – 1300 364 277
- [Kids Help Line](#) – (free call) 1800 551 800
- [Working Women Queensland](#) – (free call) 1800 621 458

If the above organisations are unable to help, visit [My Community Directory](#) or the Queensland Government's [community support website](#) for more options.

Other advocacy services

The following services may be useful in relation to all types of employment issues:

- [Queensland Human Rights Commission](#) – 1300 130 670.
- **Unions and employer associations** – to access a union or employer association relevant to a particular industry, contact the [Fair Work Ombudsman](#) on 13 13 94.

Unfair treatment in the workplace

Apprentices and trainees should be treated fairly in a workplace, just as any other employee.

Examples of unfair treatment include:

- behaviour that is repeated, unwelcome and unsolicited
- behaviour that you consider to be offensive, intimidating, humiliating or threatening
- behaviour that a reasonable person would consider to be offensive, humiliating, intimidating or threatening
- ridicule (e.g. name calling, racist jokes)
- physical and emotional intimidation (e.g. physical threats or abuse, display of threatening or offensive slogans).

In addition, it can be illegal to be treated unfairly because of a person's:

- sex, relationship, parental status or family responsibilities
- race
- age
- impairment
- religious or political beliefs
- union activities
- gender identity, sexuality or lawful sexual activity
- pregnancy or breastfeeding.

Apprentices and trainees who feel they are being treated unfairly should take action as soon as possible:

- keep a diary of the times you feel bullied or harassed, recording as much as you can
- approach the person, or the person's supervisor, and request it stops
- talk to your workplace health and safety officer or your union member.

For further information

Contact Apprenticeships Info on 1800 210 210 or the AASN provider for the training contract.



Industry Skills Advisors

Organisation	Industry Sector and Indicative Coverage
Active Queenslanders Industry Alliance (AQIA)	Fitness Sport & Recreation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fitness • Sport • Outdoor recreation • Community recreation • Racing
The Australian Industry Group (Ai Group)	Manufacturing and Engineering <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advanced Manufacturing • Aeroskills • Aviation engineering and maintenance • Defence manufacturing • Engineering • Food processing and technology • Hydrogen processing • Furnishing • Laboratory operations • Meat processing • Textiles, clothing and footwear • Printing and graphic arts • Process plant operations • Sustainability
The Australian Industry Group (Ai Group)	Resources and Mining <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mining • Resource processing • Drilling oil/gas • Coal Seam Gas • Liquid Natural Gas
CheckUP Australia (CheckUP)	Health <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workforce • Rural & remote workforce • Allied health • Dental • First aid • Health administration • Nursing • Pathology including point of care testing • Sterilisation services
Community Services Industry Alliance Ltd (CSIA)	Community Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aged Care • Auslan including Interpreting • Child Protection • Community Services • Early Childhood Education and Care • Disability • School Age Education and Care • Youth Work • Mental Health in community setting

Organisation	Industry Sector and Indicative Coverage
Energy Skills Queensland (ESQ)	Electrotechnology & Utilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electrotechnology • Gas supply • General (Supply) • Telecommunications • Supply Networks • Renewable energy
Motor Trades Association of Queensland (MTAQ)	Automotive <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Automotive retail • Automotive service • Automotive repair
National Retail Association (NRA)	Retail and Personal Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retail • Community pharmacy • Floristry • Hairdressing and barbering • Beauty Services • Funeral Services
Australian Computer Society (ACS)	Business and Information Technology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Services • Information and Communications Technology Financial Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Services
Queensland Farmers Federation Ltd (QFF)	Agriculture and Horticulture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agriculture • Animal Care & Management • Aquaculture & Fishing • Conservation and Land Management • Forestry • Horticulture • Irrigation • Landscape construction • Primary Industries
Queensland Tourism Industry Council (QTIC)	Tourism, Hospitality and Events <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baking and patisserie • Cookery • Events management • Hospitality • Travel and tourism
Queensland Trucking Association Ltd (QTA)	Transport and Logistics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aviation • Marine • Rail • Transport • Road • Warehousing
Queensland Water Directorate (QWD)	Water <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potable water • Waste water • Water storage • Water recycling

Gateway to Industry Schools Programs

Industry	Company
Aerospace	Aviation Australia
Advanced Manufacturing	Queensland Manufacturing Institute (QMI)
Agribusiness	Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF)
Building and Construction	Construction Skills Queensland
Community Services	National Disability Services (NDS)
Food, Wine and Tourism	Queensland College of Wine Tourism (QCWT)
Mining and Energy	Queensland Minerals and Energy Academy (QMEA)
Health	CheckUP
ICT	Australian Computer Society
Screen and Media	Essential Screen Skills

Stakeholder Consultation

Apprentices who have recently experienced harassment and bullying in the workplace

Australian Industry Group

Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union

Australian Apprentice Support Network – Busy at Work, MAS National, MEGT Australia, Sarina Russo Group

Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland

Collabaloop

Construction, Forestry, Maritime, Mining and Energy Union

Construction Skills Queensland

Electrical Trades Union

Engineers Australia / Women in Engineering Queensland

Housing Industry Association

Jobs Queensland

Master Builders Queensland

Master Electricians Australia

Master Plumbers' Association of Queensland

Mates in Construction

Motor Trades Association of Queensland

National Association for Women in Construction (NAWIC), including Women on Tools subcommittee

Office for Women and Violence Prevention

Office of Industrial Relations / Workplace Health and Safety Queensland

Plumbing and Pipe Trades Employees Union Queensland

Queensland Council of Unions

Queensland Human Rights Commission

Queensland Mental Health Commission

Queensland Small Business Commission

Supporting and Linking Tradeswomen (SALT)

TAFE Queensland

Top 100 Women

Trainers with private Registered Training Organisations

Women in Mining and Resources Queensland (including Queensland Resources Council and Queensland Minerals and Energy Academy)