Queensland Future Work Social Research Project

WHAT IS THIS PROJECT ABOUT?

This 2019 study is part of a broader Jobs Queensland project investigating the changing nature of work and its impact on jobs and skills in Queensland.

It seeks to provide a Queensland-specific understanding of the complex and evolving nature of work and skills.

The project involved a two-phase approach covering Employers and Workers.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

PHASE 1 — QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

5 focus groups with a mixture of: Small, Medium and Large Queensland Employers

5 focus groups + an online community with a mixture of: Standard and Alternative Workers

PHASE 2 — QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

502 Employers surveyed online with a mixture of: Small, Medium and Large Employers

1,515 Workers surveyed online with a mixture of: Standard, Alternative and Remote Workers

For the full Social Research Report please **click here**

This study offers insights into:

TECHNOLOGY ADOPTION
- Rates of adoption
- Reasons for adoption
- Impact
- Challenges

ALTERNATIVE WORKERS
- Extent
- Diverse nature
- Important skills and attributes
- Benefits
- Challenges
- Expected tenure

REMOTE WORKERS
- Extent
- Motivations
- Important skills and attributes
- Challenges

SKILLS AND TRAINING
- Rates of training
- Types of training
- Key barriers
- Future skills
- Expectations of future training

FUTURE FOCUS
- Differences of views between Employers and Workers
- The potential role of the Queensland government

Research conducted on behalf of **Jobs Queensland**

by **ENHANCE research**

Technology Adoption

Technology is a major driver of change. Queensland Employers and Sole Traders were surveyed to identify rates of technology adoption, the reasons and challenges of adoption, as well as the impact of adoption.
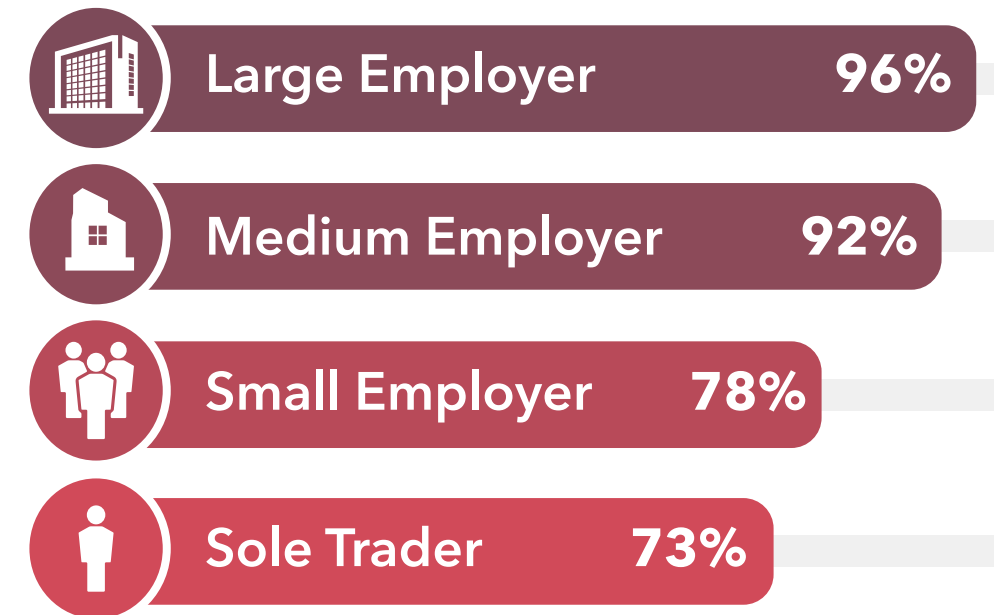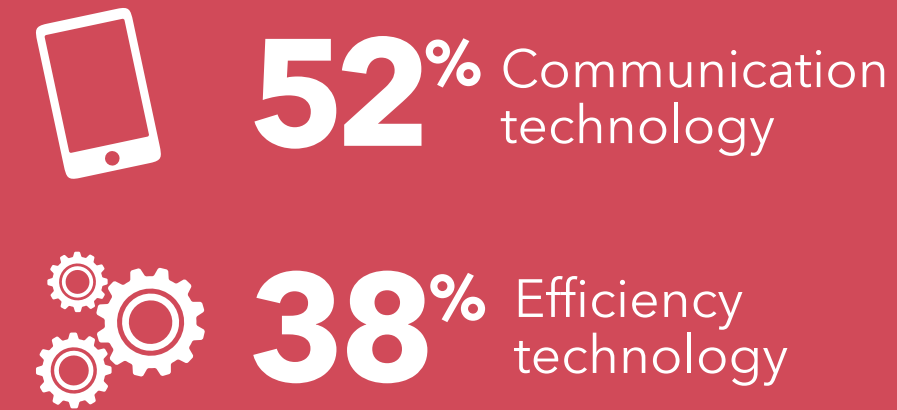
Over the past 3 years...
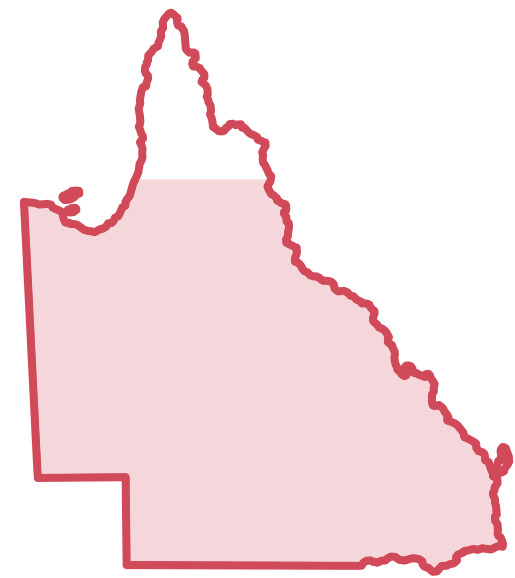
84% of Queensland Employers surveyed have **adopted new major technology**

The level of adoption increases as the size of the Employer increases

- Large Employer — **96%**
- Medium Employer — **92%**
- Small Employer — **78%**
- Sole Trader — **73%**

Regardless of size and industry, Employers most commonly adopt:

- **52%** Communication technology
- **38%** Efficiency technology

Other technologies are adopted at different rates depending on industry.

For example, Manufacturing, Mining and Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing industries are most likely to have adopted Safety technology.

Technology adoption centres around increasing efficiencies, however, the financial cost of purchasing and implementing new technology is a considerable barrier

Reasons for adoption

- **58%** Increases efficiency / streamlining
- **51%** Reduce / save costs
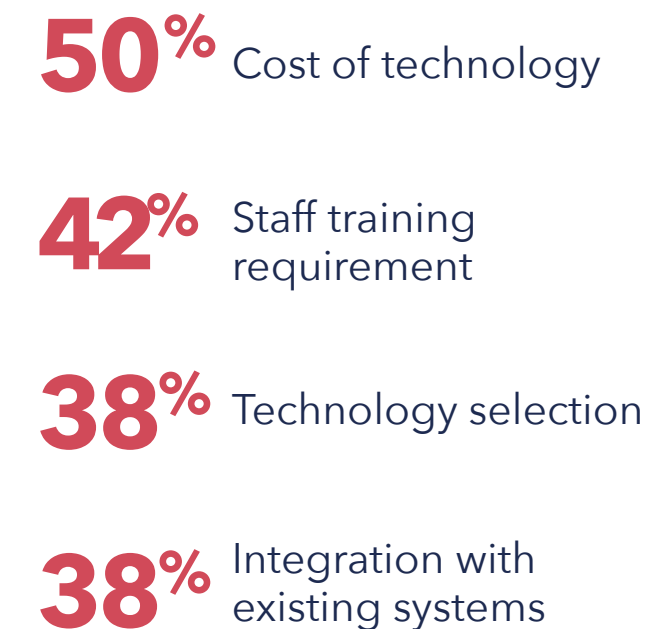- **48%** Improve communications
- **45%** Stay up-to-date

The perceived impact of this technology adoption aligns strongly with the key motivations, with additional benefits including:

- Performing tasks to a higher standard
- Better use of data to inform strategy
- New market opportunities

Less than **one in five** employers have reduced worker's hours due to automation

Challenges of adoption

- **50%** Cost of technology
- **42%** Staff training requirement
- **38%** Technology selection
- **38%** Integration with existing systems

Employer size influences the nature of challenges in adopting technology

Small Employers
- #1 Cost of technology
- #2 Staff training
- #3 Selecting the right technology

Large Employers
- #1 Integration with existing systems
- #2 Staff training
- #3 Resistance from staff to change
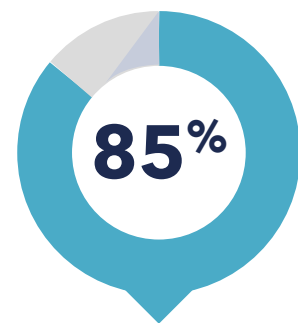
Alternative Workers

As demographic, social and technological changes occur, so do the ways Queenslanders work. In this study Alternative Workers are defined as those who do not work for the same Employer year-round.
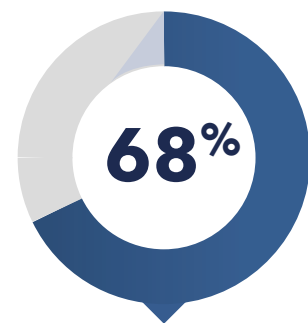
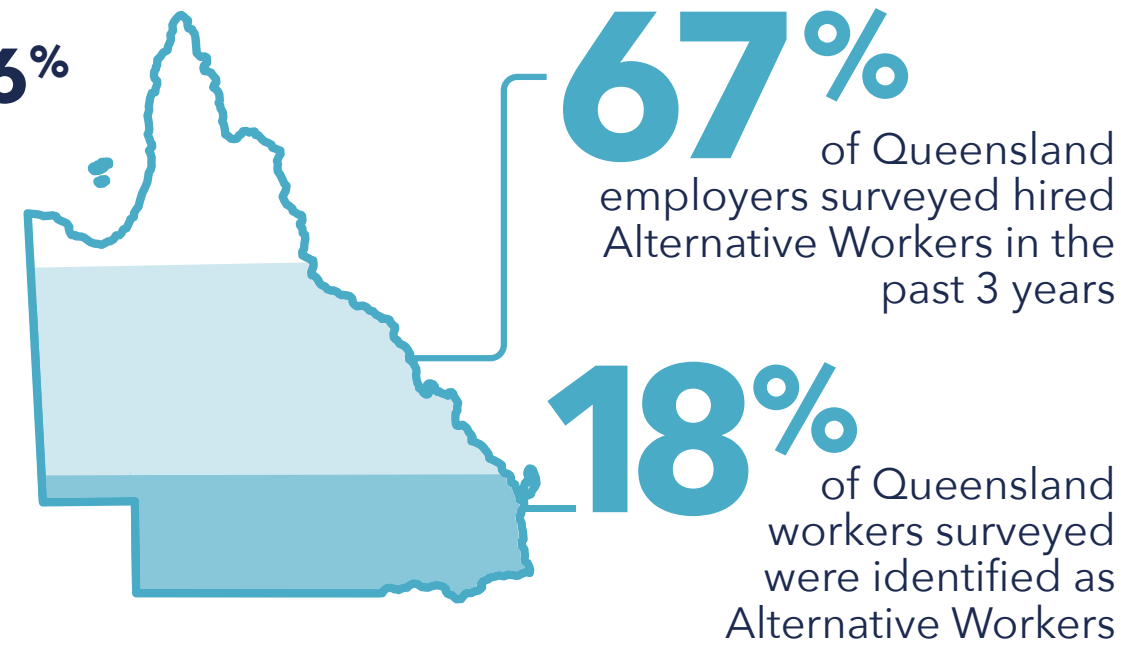## Alternative Worker snapshot

45% Male — Female 55%

34% Under 45 — Over 45 66%

85%
Describe themselves as self-employed

68%
Have one job and it is an alternative job

67% of Queensland employers surveyed hired Alternative Workers in the past 3 years

18% of Queensland workers surveyed were identified as Alternative Workers

Numerous sub-categories* of Alternative Workers were identified within the research

3%
Digital Nomad Worker
Work is primarily digitally enabled, works from various locations

12%
Stationary Non-Digital Worker
Works from single location, work is primarily **not** performed on a computer

15%
Gig Economy Worker
Sources work from traditional Gig Economy apps

19%
Stationary Digital Worker
Work is primarily digitally enabled, works from fixed locations

21%
Roamers
Work is not primarily performed on a computer and requires a vehicle / specific location

30%
Non-Categorised
These Workers lack consistent characteristics large enough to be unique identifiers

Important skills and attributes for Alternative Workers are:

#1 Good communication skills

#2 Self motivation

#3 Self-discipline

#4 Resilience

With greater flexibility comes greater unpredictability for Alternative Workers

The flexibility of alternative working arrangements is its greatest **benefit**, including:

46% More flexible hours

40% Great work life balance

24% More autonomy

However, the unpredictability of alternative work creates a number of **challenges**, including:

44% Unpredictable income

37% Irregular hours

36% Limited access to leave benefits

36% Lack of job security

The ripple effects

The unpredictable nature of this work can create **further challenges**, including:

- Accessing loans and insurance
- Access and acceptance by government services (e.g. Australian Tax Office and Centrelink)
- Traditional businesses acknowledging their work experience and skill

These challenges and the evolving nature of these various types of alternative working arrangements may in part explain why…

4 in 5
do not consider their alternative working arrangement a long term career

Remote Workers

For the purpose of this study, Remote Workers are defined as Workers who have the same Employer year round, are paid a salary and that work at different locations to work operation sites but are part of the one business.

Is remote working occuring in the workforce?

6 in 10 Employers offer remote working arrangements

Remote Workers are most likely to be employed by:

- Large Employers
- Government departments
- Employers in SEQ

3 in 10 Workers utilise remote working arrangements in some form

45% Male — Female **55%**

34% Under 45 — Over 45 **66%**

63% Sometimes work remotely

37% Regularly work remotely

The benefits of both sides are well acknowledged...

Key Employer motives

47% To accommodate family / caring duties

42% To ensure better employee retention and satisfaction
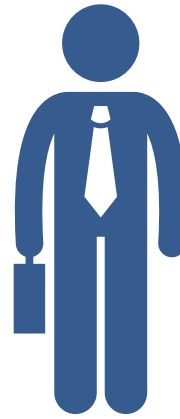
22% Workers not available in the local area

Key Remote Worker motives

41% Better work-life balance

36% Flexible working environment / workspace

33% Flexible working hours

Important skills and attributes for Remote Workers are:

#1 Self-discipline

#2 Good communication skills

#3 Self motivation

#4 Organisational skills

Remote working can create challenges

Both Employers and Workers can struggle to adjust to this working arrangement

Challenges of employing remote workers

36% Tracking productivity

36% Creating a unified team culture

36% Communication challenges

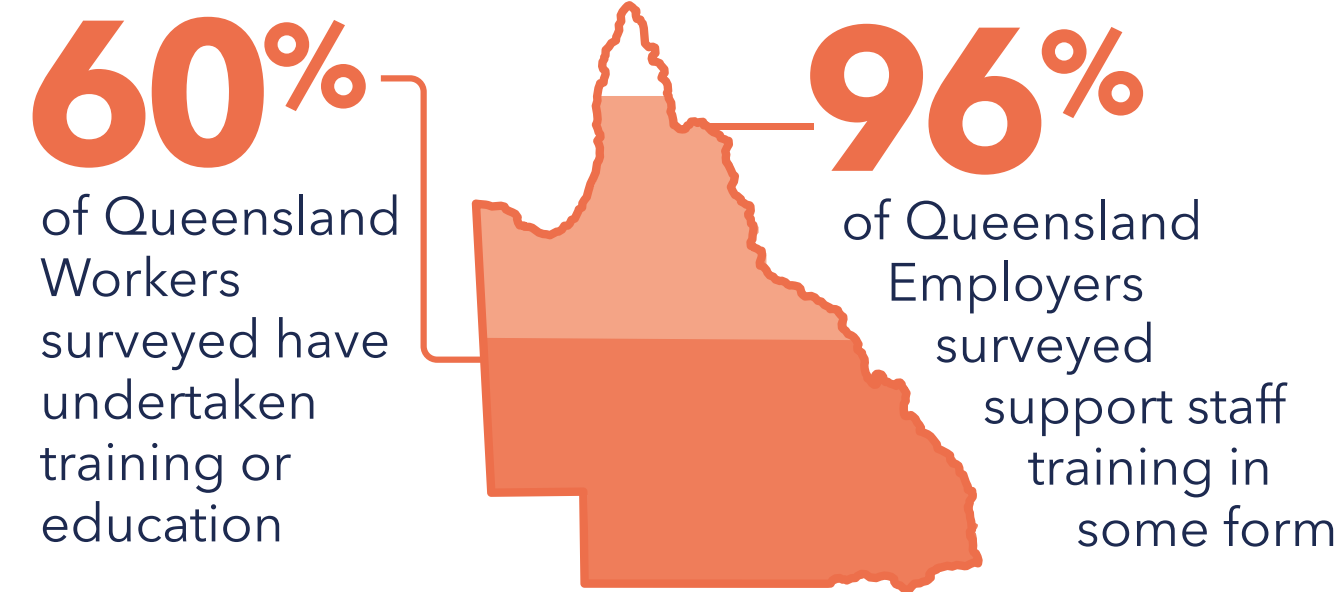**33%** Performance management

Challenges of working remotely

33% Missing internal conversations and reduced visibility

30% Less visibility in the workplace

29% Working longer hours

29% Lack of access to office facilities
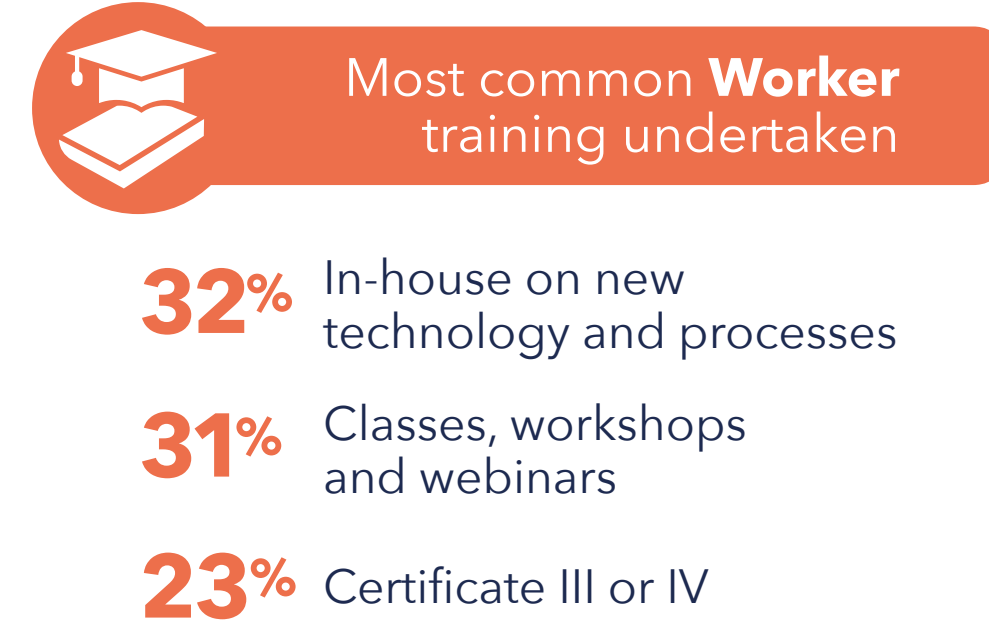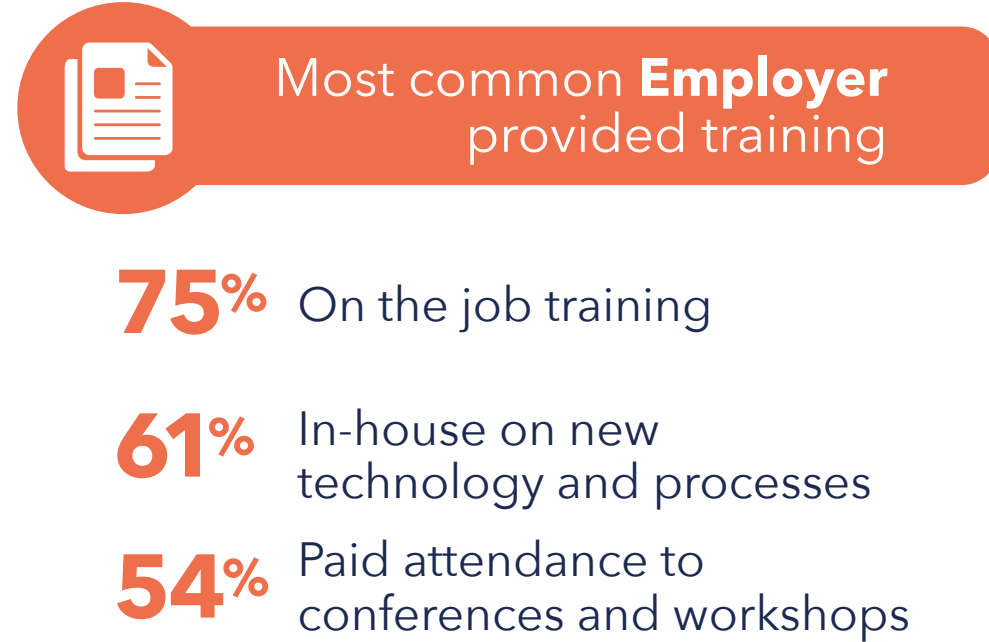
Skills and Training

A skilled workforce is essential for Queensland's future. This study investigated the attitudes and behaviours of Employers and Workers to skills and training.
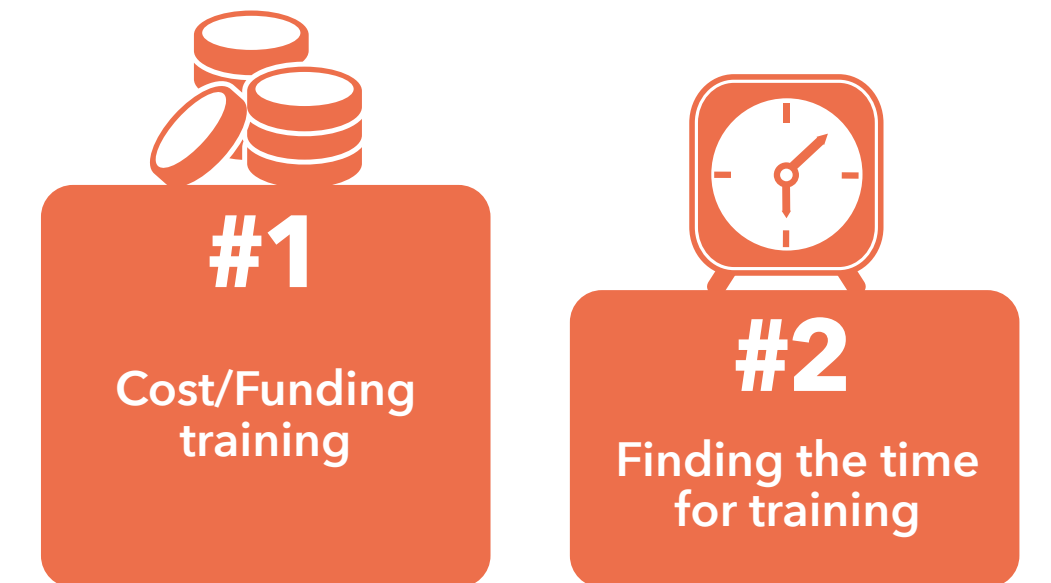
Over the past 3 years...

60%
of Queensland Workers surveyed have undertaken training or education

96%
of Queensland Employers surveyed support staff training in some form

The most common types of training provided by Employers and undertaken by Workers is focused on building skills within a current role

Most common **Employer** provided training

75% On the job training

61% In-house on new technology and processes

54% Paid attendance to conferences and workshops

Most common **Worker** training undertaken

32% In-house on new technology and processes

31% Classes, workshops and webinars

23% Certificate III or IV

The key barrier to training for both Employers and Workers is financial

#1
Cost/Funding training

#2
Finding the time for training

Both Workers and Employers agree on the most important skill for the future

The most important skills for Workers in the next 10 years are:

#1 Communication skills

Soft skills

#2 Adaptive skills

#3 Self management skills

#7 Management skills

Hard skills

#4 Digital skills

#5 Analytical skills

#6 Industry specific skills

While Employers and Workers agree about important future skills there is a gap between the levels of training expected in the next three years

55% of Employers expect to provide the same levels of training to their employees

44% of Workers plan to undertake significant levels of training

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Future Focus

The perceptions of and preparedness for the future of work vary among Queensland Employers and Workers. Differences are notable across industries and regions.

Workers and Employers differ in their views on how much skills will change in the next 10 years

63% Workers
Slight to moderate

66% Employers
Moderate to a lot

CHANGE EXPECTED

Workers are focused on their immediate skill needs and are not considering the future

Over two thirds
of Workers are confident their current skills are sufficient for the future

However,
current training behaviour is focused on maintaining skills within current roles rather than developing new skills

Workers' reasons for training

44% To remain current

42% Gain required skills for current role

37% To meet compliance requirements

Suggesting Workers are strongly grounded in their immediate skills needs rather than the future

Despite current challenges and levels of expected change, Employers consider themselves well prepared for the future

Employers are finding it difficult **now** to find the right skilled Workers, and expect this to continue into the future

&

also expect that skills will change **moderately to a lot** in the future

Despite this, Employers largely feel **well prepared** for where their industry is heading

Not knowing what will change in the future of work grounds Employers and Workers in the now

While Individuals and Employers are considered to share the main responsibility for ensuring future skills

Differences of views between these groups suggest they are present focused
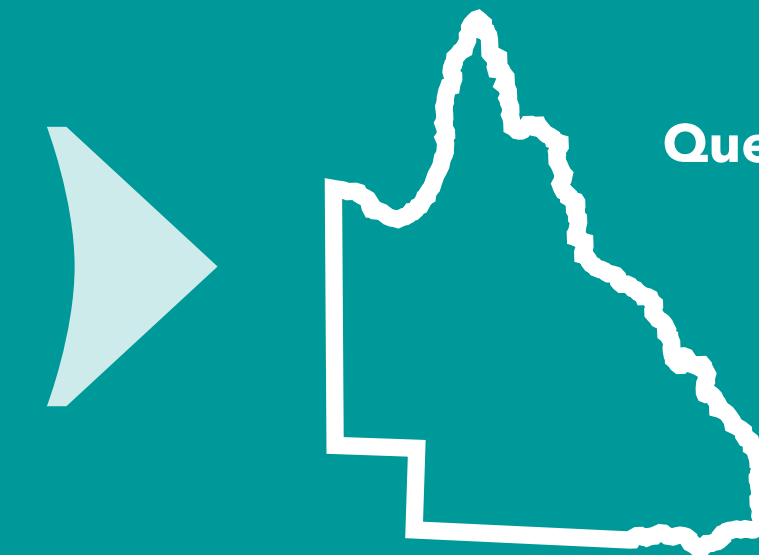
Indicating that the Queensland Government has a potential role to play in providing direction and guidance on future work

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