



## Future work for small business

### Skills, capabilities and potential

Jobs Queensland's *Future work, future jobs* research identified small business skills and capability development as an important element to increasing small business productivity into the next decade.

*Future work for small business: Skills, capabilities and potential* examines the high-level skills and capability needs of Queensland small businesses and identifies ways these needs can be supported, particularly in a post-COVID-19 world and against a backdrop of significant shifts in the way businesses and individuals work.

### The importance of skills and capability development for small business

A healthy small business sector is a prerequisite for a healthy economy. There are more than 400,000 small businesses in Queensland across all industry sectors making important contributions to Queensland's economic, employment, entrepreneurial and commercial footprint, particularly in its regions.

The diversity of small businesses across Queensland and their stage of maturity creates substantial variance in business capability and skills development needs.

The size and importance of Queensland's small business sector make effective skills and capability development pathways increasingly essential to support growth and sustainability.

### Skills and capability development areas

Small business owners and managers need the skills and capabilities to:

- sustain and improve business viability and resilience
- develop and foster growth opportunities
- enable innovation to support product and market development and diversification.

This research has identified five high-level skills and capability development areas needed by small businesses, and a sixth that captures elements that are specific to an individual enterprise.



FINANCE



HUMAN  
RESOURCES



MARKETING



BUSINESS  
ACUMEN,  
LEADERSHIP &  
MANAGEMENT



DIGITAL  
& DATA



ENTERPRISE  
SPECIFIC

Building capability in areas like leadership and management can be a key contributor to enabling both new and established small businesses to achieve their objectives and make them successful.

## Timely, affordable and fit-for-purpose

Small businesses often access training or capability development to address an immediate knowledge or capability gap. This research reaffirms that small businesses prefer just-in-time skills and capability development to gain the information or practical skills they need. They look for training or development opportunities relevant or contextual to their business needs.

Before committing to skills and capability development, small business owners often weigh up the potential return on investment against the price of participating, which can include considerations like cost, time away from the business and staffing.

## Building digital capacity and capability

For many small businesses, technology has been key to surviving COVID-19 as e-commerce, 'click and collect' and other adaptive digital approaches have changed business models. This process of change presents both challenges and opportunities if owners and managers have the skills and capabilities to innovate, strategise and plan.

Supporting small business to harness digital and tech opportunities

Developing skills and capabilities

Providing tailored advice

Investing in digital/tech adoption

## The way forward

The demand for skills, like the Queensland economy, is more dynamic than ever. One-size-fits-all approaches to skills and capability development for small business will not be effective. Approaches must be adaptable, multi-faceted and coordinated to meet the varying needs of small businesses spanning all industry sectors and regions.

Jobs Queensland has highlighted six ways the Queensland Government can play its part in supporting effective skills and capability development for small businesses.

- Establish a strong evidence base to inform future government action.
- Foster strategic partnerships with industry and regional organisations to build small business resilience and sustainability.
- Facilitate enhanced access to skills and capability development through vocational education and training.
- Enable more targeted skills and capability development opportunities for those small businesses with a desire and potential for growth.
- Support digital transformation through expanding existing programs and developing a network of trusted advisors.
- Improve skills and capability program and service coordination to assist small businesses to access offerings.

## To read the full report

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