

Strengthening Queensland's NDIS Workforce

The implementation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) represents the most significant social policy reform in a generation. At the time of developing this report (September 2019) more than 55,000 Queenslanders were receiving NDIS-funded services and exercising choice and control over the services they receive.

A total of more than
55,000
participants were supported
by the NDIS in Queensland
compared with the projected **91,000**



With NDIS-related occupations projected to be some of the fastest growing occupations in Queensland in coming years, a strategic approach to NDIS market and workforce development will help reap significant social and economic gains.

Jobs Queensland's *Strengthening Queensland's NDIS Workforce* report describes the outcomes of research undertaken by Jobs Queensland and WorkAbility Queensland (a consortium of peak industry bodies) to investigate the workforce challenges and opportunities associated with the operation of the NDIS in Queensland.

Key findings

- Jobs Queensland research consistently points to the value and importance of place-based approaches to skills and workforce development.



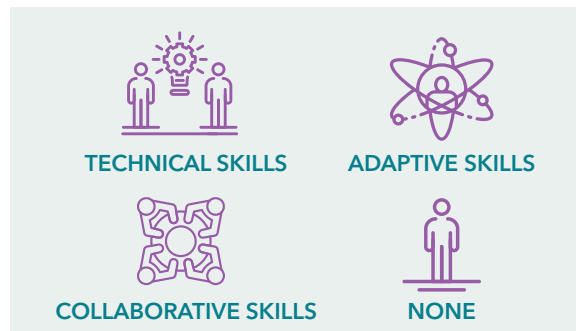
REGIONAL/REMOTE DELIVERY

Distance has been one standout issue for providers in regional areas, particularly for those servicing remote communities

- A challenge in strategic workforce planning for the NDIS is the lack of suitable data sets to comprehensively measure and monitor the disability workforce. The ANZSIC standard classification for industries does not specify the disability sector and the standard classification for occupations (ANZSCO) combines aged care and disability support workers into the single category of Aged and Disabled Carers.
- There is a shortage of allied health professionals, particularly Physiotherapists and Occupational Therapists in regional and remote locations.

These shortages may be impacting the growth in NDIS participants in some regions due to delays in service provision and long waiting lists.

- A common barrier is that jobs and careers in the NDIS continue to have a low profile and appear to be undervalued. Workers find aspects of their work challenging, with the challenges mitigated by the meaningfulness of their work.
- Key skills gaps in the NDIS workforce exist.



- There are policy and historical barriers to traineeships in the disability sector, in particular due to the large proportion of casual workers in entry level roles and the supervision arrangements in the industry.



Capitalising on growth opportunities

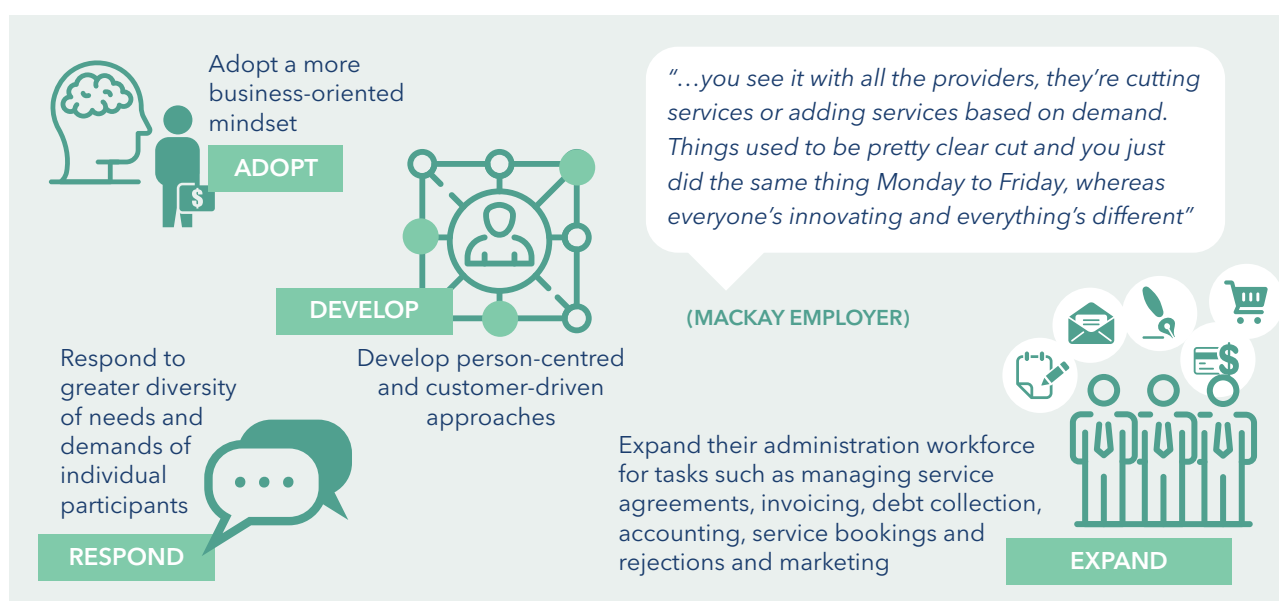
It is likely that the number of people employed in NDIS-related occupations will grow significantly over the coming years.

Many NDIS service provider employers report difficulty recruiting staff, particularly for support worker and allied health professional roles. Employer surveys also reveal strong demand for administration staff and support co-ordinators.

As the NDIS demand-led service market matures there is an opportunity to turn the challenges facing

service providers into opportunities. Importantly, there is evidence that NDIS service providers are investigating ways to transition their business from the past to the future.

Leveraging the growth of the NDIS can support economic recovery and increase employment opportunities for Queenslanders, particularly in regional Queensland. This will improve the supply of workers for this important sector and create new jobs.



Recommendations

- That further funding for industry-led and place-based approaches would support regional workforce planning and development, as well as localised attraction and job matching.
- That the Queensland Government work with other jurisdictions to deliver a coordinated career promotion campaign, linked to training pathways and job matching, to support attraction and retention of workers in the NDIS.
- That the Queensland Government work with WorkAbility Queensland to establish a new customised traineeship pathway for entry level roles in disability support that prioritise on-the-job learning and support qualification attainment in the industry.
- That the Queensland Government invest in an action research project that supports the establishment of allied health assistant roles in priority areas such as rural and remote locations.
- That the Queensland Government work with other jurisdictions to identify and capitalise on existing and potential administrative data sets that will help guide future NDIS workforce policy planning and implementation.
- That the Queensland Government work with WorkAbility Queensland to improve both accredited and non-accredited training for the NDIS workforce. This includes through existing avenues such as the NDIS Training and Skills Support Strategy and other avenues as necessary.