

18 August 2023

The Honourable Di Farmer MP
Parliament House
2A George Street
Queensland 4000



Re: Queensland Vocational Education and Training Strategy Discussion Paper

Dear Queensland VET Strategy Committee,

The Restaurant & Catering Association (R&CA) is a national industry body representing the interest of over 57,000 restaurants, cafes, and catering businesses. The R&CA provides tangible outcomes for businesses across the sector, through advocating for evidence-based solutions to produce robust and prosperous businesses.

The R&CA welcomes the opportunity to provide consultation on the development of the Queensland VET strategy.

Focus Area 1: Delivering Priority and Future Skills

1. The R&CA supports the extension of incentives and subsidies for businesses who employ those undergoing a trainee or apprenticeship program.

Members have expressed to us that while apprentices and trainees receive a lower award, they are substantially more costly to employ due to the high cost of training and mentorship. Employers seek to invest in their staff and as a result both their business and employees would benefit from the additional training and development opportunities. The Queensland State Government should therefore be considered best placed to provide such investment.

2. The R&CA supports the state government's recognition of the role of micro-credentials, to support Cert II & Cert III Hospitality qualifications in addressing demand in future vocational skills.

Employers have expressed to the association that there are considerable gaps in the skills and standards of Australian hospitality workers, who often fail to meet current needs of businesses or are unprepared for real work scenarios. Micro-credentials offer industry specific qualifications that are both time efficient and cost effective, allowing students to focus on practical workplace experience.

Focus Area 2: Ensuring access for all Queenslanders

1. **The R&CA supports the state government's goal to ensure Queenslanders have access to quality vocational training opportunities.**

The R&CA believes the expansion of course options and methods of delivery through the use of micro-courses will support remote and regional students gain the necessary skills to obtain employment, without the cost burden of relocation or travel to a vocational training facility. The R&CA believes that to have both access and quality training options, there must be a competitive marketplace of Registered Training Providers who are aptly supported by the Queensland state government. Quality assurance, financial subsidies and outcome benchmarking led by the Queensland Department of Education, Skills & Employment, would ensure that these standards are adhered to.

2. **The R&CA supports the state government's focus on vocational training access for Queenslanders who are differently abled.**

The R&CA believes that the expanded delivery of micro-courses will offer those living with a disability, course options that are structured around their specific needs. Micro-courses by their design are flexible, segmented, and can offer an array of additional support such as closed captioning, voice over, and individual assistance from an RTO learning officer. For the Queensland State government to broaden access to occupational training opportunities, micro-courses must be financially accessible to Queenslanders living with special needs.

Focus Area 3: Working with employers and industry

1. **The R&CA supports the role of both employers and industry stakeholders to oversee the design and implementation of vocational training courses.**

For the vocational training sector to deliver stronger outcomes for students and employers, course programs must be informed and supported by industry.

The introduction of bi-annual roundtables with representatives from employer groups, industry associations and other relevant stakeholders would ensure that Queensland Vocational Education System is fit for purpose and informed by current and future industry needs.

Focus Area 4: Supporting VET pathways and jobs transitions

1. The R&CA supports the strengthening of vocational pathways for school leavers, particularly through the integration of micro-credentials and tertiary education.

The integration of vocational programs and work placements as a part of the Queensland higher education curriculum would establish a point of entry for school leavers to pursue a vocational career. The active promotion of vocational career pathways and opportunities for work-based learning would address the need for future skills and improve both the quality and execution of VET through an integrated curriculum.

Any Other Information

Industry owned and operated RTO's such as R&CA owned, are there to serve the industry and are not for profit organisations owned by the sector. Because of industry changes, they are best placed to provide contemporary industry requirements.

The R&CA ask that the Queensland government consider funding in part industry owned RTO's and courses.

Sincerely,



Suresh Manickam
Chief Executive Officer
Restaurant and Catering Australia
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Restaurant
& Catering