



EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING COMMITTEE

Members present:

Ms KE Richards MP—Chair
Mr MA Boothman MP
Mr N Dametto MP
Mr BL O'Rourke MP
Mr JA Sullivan MP

Staff present:

Mr R Hansen—Committee Secretary
Ms R Duncan—Assistant Committee Secretary

PUBLIC BRIEFING—VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN QUEENSLAND

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

MONDAY, 19 APRIL 2021

Brisbane

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The committee met at 10.01 am.

CHAIR: Good morning. I declare this public briefing open. I am Kim Richards, the member for Redlands and chair of the Education, Employment and Training Committee. I acknowledge that we are meeting on the land of one of the world's oldest living cultures. I pay my respects to the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet, the Jagera people and the Turrbal people, and to their elders past, present and emerging. We are very blessed in this country to have two of the world's oldest living cultures in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. With me from the committee are Mark Boothman, the member for Theodore; Nick Dametto, the member for Hinchinbrook; Barry O'Rourke, the member for Rockhampton; and Jimmy Sullivan, the member for Stafford. James Lister, the member for Southern Downs and our deputy chair, is on leave and is an apology for today.

The purpose of this briefing is to assist the committee to better understand the challenges ahead for the delivery of vocational education and training in Queensland. In particular, the committee has asked to be briefed on the future demands for technical trades and service workers in Queensland and their vocational education and training needs; the economic importance of vocational education and training services in Queensland, particularly in regional Queensland; the role of private and public providers; the effectiveness of incentives and fee support to encourage students and employers to invest in vocational education and training; and the training needs and sustainable employment outcomes for women, both in South-East Queensland and in the regions and in traditionally male dominated industries.

Having skilled and competent staff is the key to the success of Queensland industries and employers. For Queenslanders looking for their first job or to get a start in a new career, being able to access the right training to develop the skills they need is very important. To provide the briefing today I welcome officers from the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training and TAFE Queensland. It is our intention today for the meeting to be as informal as possible, but I am still obliged to point out that the committee's proceedings are proceedings of the Queensland parliament and are subject to the parliament's standing rules and orders. Officers are not required to give evidence under oath, but I remind everyone that intentionally misleading the committee is a serious offence. I ask everyone present to turn mobile phones off or to silent mode.

I remind committee members that officers are here to provide factual and technical information only. Any questions seeking an opinion about policy should be directed to the minister or left to debate on the floor of the House. For any questions taken on notice today we will write to the department once we have the transcript and seek written responses for the committee within seven days from that date.

BABOVIC, Mr Nik, General Manager, Operations, TAFE Queensland

CAMPBELL, Ms Mary, Chief Executive Officer, TAFE Queensland

CAMPBELL, Mr Tim, General Manager, North Region, TAFE Queensland

KINNANE, Mr Brent, General Manager, South West Region, TAFE Queensland

KOCH, Mr Steven, Deputy Director-General, Investment, Department of Employment, Small Business and Training

KURUKITOGA, Ms Katherine, Director, Executive Services, TAFE Queensland

LECKENBY, Mr Gavin, Executive Director, Department of Employment, Small Business and Training

LUCAS, Mr David, Executive Director, Department of Employment, Small Business and Training

O'BRIEN, Ms Denise, General Manager, International Education, TAFE Queensland

PYNE, Ms Joann, Chief Academic Officer, TAFE Queensland

RODGER, Ms Ana, General Manager, East Coast Region, TAFE Queensland

TUCKER, Mr John, General Manager, SkillsTech, TAFE Queensland

CHAIR: Would you like to make a brief opening statement?

Ms Campbell: I thank you, Chair, for the opportunity today for TAFE Queensland to meet and present to the committee this morning. I would like to start by just briefly introducing my executive team members and where they come from across our great state.

Tim Campbell is our general manager of the north region, a region covering 19 campuses from the Whitsundays in the south to Thursday Island in the north and out west to Mount Isa. The north region has the largest cohort of TAFE Queensland's Indigenous students and is also home to the Great Barrier Reef International Marine College.

Brent Kinnane is our general manager of the south-west region, a region overseeing a total of 15 campuses from Inala in Brisbane's south through Springfield, Ipswich, Toowoomba, Warwick and further out to Roma, Kingaroy and Charleville. The south-west region is home to the Rural Centre of Excellence in Toowoomba and the Nurunderi campus, a campus located in the Aboriginal community of Cherbourg situated on the traditional lands of the Wakka Wakka Aboriginal people.

John Tucker is our general manager of SkillsTech, our trade training specialists. SkillsTech trains across four campuses in Greater Brisbane and includes the flagship trade training centre at Acacia Ridge which spans more than 22 hectares.

Ana Rodger is our general manager of the east coast region, a region supporting eight campuses from Mooloolaba in the south to Bundaberg in the north. The east coast region includes the Sunshine Coast Health Institute, a dedicated education, training and research facility operated in partnership with the Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service, Griffith University and the University of the Sunshine Coast. The region is also our hub of TAFE Queensland's online delivery training programs.

Denise O'Brien is our general manager of international education. Our international team is tasked with leading and directing TAFE Queensland's fully commercial international onshore, offshore and development aid portfolio. Denise provides strategic oversight of all TAFE Queensland international contracts including the Pacific Training Coalition. She manages an annual revenue budget in excess of \$60 million.

Nick Babovic is our general manager of operations and is responsible for leading TAFE Queensland's planning and reporting functions and the establishment of the TAFE Queensland Foundation and our very important scholarships program. Nick strongly promotes the role of the public provider and advocates to federal and state funding bodies.

Last but not least is Jo Pyne, our chief academic officer. Jo oversees TAFE Queensland's academic governance, academic quality, training product, learner experience and engagement, educated capability and marketing and communications.

We also have in attendance from the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training, Steve Koch, the deputy director-general of investment; Gavin Leckenby, executive director; and David Lucas, executive director.

I would like to thank the committee for the opportunity to discuss the delivery of vocational education and training in Queensland. To begin I would like to provide a brief opening statement. Vocational education and training is an integral piece of the Australian education system. There is no doubt vocational education and training has played a critical role in building Australia's workforce and will continue to do so for many decades to come. To help our state continue to move on from the pandemic, organisations will need skilled and job-ready workforces. Workers with the right training and skills will play an important role in everyone's recovery and prosperity over the coming years.

For more than 138 years, TAFE Queensland has been delivering practical and industry relevant training to provide students with the skills and experience they need to build lifelong careers. TAFE Queensland is the largest provider of vocational education and training in Queensland and is one of approximately 440 Skills Assure suppliers preapproved for the delivery of training and assessment

services that are subsidised by the Queensland government. We deliver training to over 110,000 students annually across some 460 programs. We deliver training to students and apprentices on site, online, in the workplace or on campus to give people the skills they need to enrich their communities, support their industries and strengthen their local economies.

Enhanced by our online and international training delivery, TAFE Queensland's scale and location options are extensive. TAFE Queensland offers students access to over 60 campus locations throughout Queensland, from Thursday Island in the north to Coolangatta in the south-east and, of course, as far west as Mount Isa. Our facilities include purpose-built workshops complete with world-class equipment, fully functioning health clinics, simulation labs, digital studios, restaurants, beauty salons and gyms. Notably, most of our facilities are also open to the public and provide a unique opportunity for our students to put their training into practice. For example, our cookery and hospitality students serve the public at our training restaurants and cafes across the state and we often partner with local councils to deliver free health and wellness activities in our gyms in local communities.

In addition to our facilities, we have a highly experienced workforce dedicated to delivering best practice in innovative training that provides real employment outcomes for our students and our employers. With nearly 4,000 full-time-equivalent employees, TAFE Queensland is a major employer in this state, particularly across our regional locations. From entry level certificates and apprenticeships to bachelor degrees, we align our training with the needs of Queensland industries, designing new programs in areas of emerging need and supporting industry transformation. Together we are providing the training that Queenslanders need to change their lives and equipping our students, our communities and our industry partners with the skills required for the jobs of the future. Our students graduate confident, capable and ready to help drive the success of their industries and communities across the state.

We also understand the need for perpetual innovation and flexibility in both our training programs and our delivery practices. As the needs of employers and industry change, so too does our training delivery. For example, TAFE Queensland recently partnered with Australia's largest supplier of military vehicles, Rheinmetall Defence, to create a training program that would keep defence supply chain jobs in Queensland. One of the major challenges facing the production of military vehicles in Australia is having a local workforce of suitably qualified welders that meet international certification standards. Consequently, TAFE Queensland developed a fusion welding program pathway to raise the skills of experienced welders in Queensland to the highest international practice standard, ISO 9606. Together TAFE Queensland and Rheinmetall Defence are bridging the international welding certification qualification gap in Australia and firmly positioning Queensland as Australia's home of land defence and industrial capability.

As the state's largest and most experienced VET provider, TAFE Queensland has a broader remit than the delivery of training alone. Not only are we committed to providing the training and skills needed to support our state's employers and industries; most importantly, we are committed to supporting the communities in which we live and work throughout Queensland. As such, our training is accessible to students from all walks of life. We enrol students from diverse education and socio-economic backgrounds to enhance the economic and social wellbeing of the communities that we serve.

In closing, TAFE Queensland is committed to providing Queenslanders with the high-quality, hands-on training that they need to succeed in their chosen career while fulfilling the skills demands of the communities. We know the power of training and skills and we are in the very privileged position of being able to not only help our students to change their lives and achieve their career aspirations but also enhance the social wellbeing and financial sustainability of the communities in which we work and live throughout Queensland. With more than 138 years of high-quality training experience and close to a 94 per cent employer satisfaction rate across the state, you can trust that TAFE Queensland will continue to support local Queensland industries, employers and communities long into the future. Thank you.

CHAIR: Thank you. I propose to conduct today's briefing in the order of the points we asked to be covered. We might commence with the future demands for technical trades and service workers in Queensland and their vocational education and training needs. Mary, did you want to respond to that directly? There is a fair bit of agility required. Rheinmetall is a good example. What are the predictors that you use to mobilise a workforce and understand those shortages? I think the committee would be keen to understand what tools you have at your disposal to be ready to move so quickly.

Ms Campbell: I thank the committee for the question. As you say, to meet the training needs of Queenslanders, TAFE Queensland is guided by our industry partners, employers and student demand as well as by a range of research. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Jobs Queensland's research in its *Anticipating future skills* report predicted that employment in Queensland was heading towards 9.4 per cent growth, or over 234,000 new workers, in the five years to 2024. Their report highlighted that by 2024 a third of Queensland workers would be employed across the healthcare and social services, retail trade and construction industries.

Although the overall proportion of Queenslanders with post-school qualifications is increasing, there are still workers in these industries who have not attained a formal qualification, especially in food services and retail. Sixty per cent of new jobs would be for work in one of these four industry sectors: health care and social assistance; professional, scientific and technical services; education and training; and accommodation and food services. The report also said that there would be above average growth in occupations such as sport and personal service workers, road and rail drivers, arts and media professionals, storepersons, carers and aides.

In March 2021 the National Skills Commission released the first of their updated employment outlook forecasts, and that report took into consideration some of the impacts of the pandemic. Their industry employment outlook projects that there will be 7.8 per cent employment growth, or over 991,000 new workers, across Australia by 2025. Their updated economic modelling shows occupations with strong pre-COVID growth are expected to rebound, with the most significant employment growth expected across the service industries. Industry insights from this report along with their *Australian jobs 2020* report published in late 2020 indicated that health care and social assistance require continued investment and that occupations in cleaning, food services and general administration are also needed to support the sector. Although, as we all know, employment in accommodation and food services has been severely impacted by COVID-19, that sector is projected to partially rebound through the uptake of domestic tourism throughout 2021.

Demand for professional, scientific and technical workers will grow as well as business, human resource and marketing professionals. TAFE diploma programs provide entry into this industry as well as pathways to bachelor level studies. In education and training, the tertiary education sector has experienced job losses due to the reduction in international students across the country. This has been partially offset by the growing demand for skilled workers to support the school-age and adult learning sectors.

There has been a projected long-term decline in the overall manufacturing sector. However, there are really positive signs of growth in some industry areas through the redevelopment of advanced manufacturing within Australia. Enhanced technology and analytical skills are increasingly needed within the workplace for e-commerce, advanced manufacturing, collaboration tools for remote working and digital skills for specialist software and computer applications.

TAFE Queensland also looks to industry sector bodies such as Construction Skills Queensland for Queensland industry trends and research to inform our training delivery. It is widely accepted that most of the new jobs in the labour market, mainly as a result of technological advances, require different and higher level skill sets. Workforce needs are also influenced by a range of factors such as demographic changes and local needs.

TAFE Queensland works alongside local industry and communities when planning for training and jobs and skills development. This includes being a member of regional job committees across the state where TAFE Queensland works with stakeholders to improve our training pathways. TAFE Queensland is at the forefront of new skills development and higher level training. We are a partner in the Higher Level Apprenticeship Pilot, which is delivering Queensland's first ever Diploma of Applied Technology. We are also supporting the Queensland craft brewing industry by delivering—

CHAIR: It is popular with everybody, might I say.

Ms Campbell:—a formal beer-making qualification for new or transitioning employees in Queensland's craft beer industry. I would like to add that we recently came second in the award for the best craft beer in the state and they had been brewing for less than 12 months.

CHAIR: Whereabouts are they located? You have to share that with us.

Ms Campbell: If you would like to come to our South Bank campus at any time, it is on tap in our restaurant.

Additionally, renewable energy is booming in Queensland, and TAFE Queensland has developed its own renewable energy strategy aimed at staying at the forefront of renewable energy skills development, specifically relevant to the Queensland workforce. TAFE Queensland has also developed a hydrogen industry road map to assist the organisation to gain an in-depth understanding of the industry to enable an expansion of our product offerings as we move forward.

Through government investment, TAFE Queensland delivers training in world-class facilities. While the financial details of the infrastructure investment are held by the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training, I would like to just give you some examples of key projects that have been undertaken or will be undertaken over coming months. They include: the upgrade and expansion of nursing and health related facilities at Toowoomba, Pimlico, Loganlea, Caboolture, Southport, Alexandra Hills, Redcliffe and Bowen; the upgrade and expansion of our trade training facilities at Ashmore, Alexandra Hills, Bohle in Townsville, Bundamba, Nambour, Acacia Ridge, Cairns, Burdekin and Mount Isa; the creation of a fashion centre of excellence as well as an upgraded film, TV and media training facility at our Mount Gravatt campus; and recent investment in horticulture training facilities at Toowoomba, Mount Gravatt, Bohle and Bundaberg.

TAFE Queensland complements these impressive facilities with a full range of student services: counselling, library services and dedicated student facilities with access provided to the broader community throughout Queensland. Our Chief Academic Officer, Jo Pyne, will now provide the committee with further information of how at the ground level TAFE Queensland engages with industry to inform training delivery.

Ms Pyne: TAFE Queensland implements a range of strategies for industry engagement, and we use those outcomes to make sure our training and assessment strategies are relevant to industry, that our staff have current skills and that we can identify industry skills that are going to have an impact on the training. The strategies include, but are not limited to, things like facilitating industry sector panels—and I will talk a bit more about those; partnering with local employers, regional and national businesses, relevant bodies and enterprise RTOs; involving employers in industry advisory committees and/or reference groups; embedding staff in enterprises to meet the specific training needs of that enterprise; and networking with industry representatives, peak bodies and/or employers on a regular basis. We also develop networks of relevant employers and industry representatives to participate in regular activity around validating our assessment processes.

Many of the industry sector panel events that we had planned for 2020 were interrupted due to COVID. However, many exceptional events have been facilitated over the last six months. I would like to talk about three events and the outcomes that they achieved.

We held an aviation industry sector panel in October 2020. We invited along key players from the industry. They included the aviation industry manager from Australian Industry Standards, CASA, the acting chief pilot and head of flying operations at QantasLink, Sunshine Coast corporation representing small regional airports, Brisbane Airport representing a large airport and the chief remote pilot from Remote Aviation Australia. As a result of that panel, we better understand the aviation industry's important issues and gained some new insights into technologies and capabilities. In particular, this panel had a focus around drones.

One of the most important opportunities from this discussion was forming a joint initiative between CASA, TAFE Queensland and Aviation Australia to upgrade and align the training packages and to embed critical regulatory requirements. CASA expressed an interest in streamlining regulatory requirements between them and us and ASQA, and TAFE Queensland is looking into a model where TAFE Queensland facilitates the training requirements for the licensing and CASA can then focus on the safety requirements, which would be a really great outcome for students and a lot simpler to understand.

A community services industry sector panel was held in September 2020. Again, we had great support from industry. The outcomes we achieved were a commitment from TAFE Queensland to work on a suite of fact sheets focusing on the range of roles in domestic and family violence, sexual assault, and women's health and wellbeing services. Those fact sheets would be used across the industry in an industry-wide initiative. They would also be available to TAFE Queensland teachers for their use with students and colleagues to show the range of roles in the sector.

TAFE Queensland is also partnering with the NDIS industry sector and WorkAbility on the NDIS Vocational Placement initiative. This initiative has recently commenced and will focus on bringing the NDIS industry sector and VET closer together to inform and develop greater opportunities for our students. A suite of fact sheets focusing on the benefits to employers, RTOs and students will also

be prepared as part of that initiative. TAFE Queensland is partnering with the NDIS industry sector to roll out programs for VET teachers. These include the NDIS principles and VET practitioners leadership programs funded by DESBT.

A business and finance industry sector panel was also held. This was done remotely. We facilitated eight one-hour consultation sessions and we have monthly sessions planned for 2021. The outcomes of this panel will enable us to identify the future skills needs important to employers including a continual focus on foundation skills such as problem solving, communication, customer service, mental health and wellbeing training, planning, organising, management skills and financial skills in all programs. Industry support for specific electives will also be included in programs.

Ms Campbell: I would now like to ask the deputy director-general if he has anything further to add in terms of future VET needs for workers in Queensland.

Mr Koch: The department is also very glad to be here as part of this briefing this morning. Similar to what the CEO of TAFE Queensland has outlined, the department also has a number of mechanisms to ensure that the training needs of industry, employers and the broader economy are supported now and into the future. We also keep well abreast of the research from Jobs Queensland and the National Skills Commission that the CEO has previously outlined and some of the key trends there.

Importantly, I want to highlight that we also work really closely with industry in terms of developing new training packages and also understanding and receiving industry advice. A key way we do this is through the industry's skills adviser network. The industry skills adviser network is a key source of information for the department in terms of the future demand for technical trades and service workers in Queensland.

The industry skills advisers are contracted by the department to provide coverage for a range of industry sectors. They engage with employers, small business and industry stakeholders to provide high-quality, evidence based advice and intelligence around current skill needs, jobs growth and identifying emerging industry demand. That is important for the department to understand not just the skill needs but also the broader workforce planning and employment conditions that are needed within those industries.

There are currently 12 industry skills advisers that we as a department contract with the 13 priority industry sectors across Queensland. Each of those industry skill advisers has an industry reference group that is made up of representatives who are well placed to advise on the current and future skill needs for those industry sectors. As the CEO of TAFE Queensland outlined, we also receive local regional advice through regional jobs committees, and there are currently six regional jobs committees located across the state.

CHAIR: Can I say how fantastic they are. I have one of those out my way. They play an important role in working with TAFE in understanding the gaps and the opportunities.

Mr Koch: We find it really critical in terms of the local place based type of advice to make sure we are addressing skill needs right across the economy, particularly within those local areas. That is really critical. As well as the comprehensive industry engagement and local engagement, we also have a wealth of data that registered training organisations submit to the department. We undertake trend analysis and analytics on the data. That enables us to understand where there is increased demand for certain qualifications and training and then be able to adjust investment settings towards those qualifications in industry areas.

The other key point that we are really focusing on as a department and through the recent skills strategy from August 2019 is not only the vocational technical skills but also some broader non-VET or non-accredited skills, which are in areas such as micro-credentials. There is a \$5 million pilot of micro-credentials that the department is rolling out which has been fully committed. We have had a lot of interest in those micro-credential pilots. We are trying to supplement not just the technical and vocational education and training requirements and qualifications but also some more bespoke and future based skills programs.

The other key initiative that was announced at last year's state budget was the \$200 million Future Skills Fund, which includes a range of initiatives to ensure that we not only work on bespoke and contemporary training infrastructure but also support disadvantaged cohorts in their training and support them into future skills areas that are in demand for jobs of the future.

Mr SULLIVAN: I thank all three of you for outlining the significant interaction you have with industry at both the high level and the regional grassroots level. It is really interesting. My question is in relation to TAFE's interaction and the department's interaction with education in senior schooling

and how the effective work that you do in terms of identifying future skills and future needs gets fed back into training for years 11 and 12 students in particular. My question is twofold. Firstly, how is that great work and the feedback you get fed into the interaction with Education Queensland? Secondly, in that space, we have gone through significant change over the past few years with the introduction of ATAR, where training is not just an add-on; it is well and truly part of that process. How has TAFE gone in playing a role in that space?

Ms Campbell: When I was here a couple of weeks ago, I talked to the critical role that TAFE Queensland plays in the high schools across the length and breadth of Queensland. I think that is a really good question because, essentially, skilled workers are the way of the future. We can explain to students while they are still in high school the many pathways that are available to them and we are working with the education department. We also have our own senior school located at the Alexandra Hills campus, where we do years 11 and 12. We work really closely across the state and we have a suite of TAFE at School officers who work locally. They are led by our general manager from the south-west region, Brent Kinnane. I will hand over to Brent to answer the question in terms of what we have done, particularly with ATAR, and how we are out and about in all of the schools across Queensland talking to young people about the future of training and the future of jobs.

Mr Kinnane: Our VET in Schools program is quite significant. In 2019-20 we had over 13½ thousand students undertake a VET program. We have not yet finished the 2020-21 enrolments, but we are up about 35 per cent on last year. It is a significant increase and a really important part of the business of TAFE Queensland.

The VET in Schools programs are funded to offer certificate I and II level qualifications right across the state. Those programs are available to students free as a result of that particular funding. Students may also study on campus or through a partnership with a school. We actually liaise with the schools and sometimes utilise their teachers to help deliver training and education to the students so that they have a very flexible offering that is made available. The industry information that we receive, which Mary referred to previously, is fed straight back into this particular program. We also liaise with the schools to identify what the school students actually want to do, because it is part of their Queensland Certificate of Education and part of their ATAR program. A lot of discussion happens locally with the schools as well as with industry to find the right courses to offer in that particular space. The most number of qualifications are in our trade based programs and health based programs, so they are reflective of future industry requirements.

In relation to the question around ATAR, with the introduction of ATAR last year certificate qualifications now are a part of the student's ATAR score from certificate III and above. TAFE Queensland has introduced a number of certificate III programs that follow on from the certificate II programs that are funded to provide students with the opportunity to complete a certificate III whilst at school which contributes to their ATAR score. We also have an opportunity for the delivery of certificate IV products, which actually give a student a bit more of an academic approach. Those students who are on a traditional ATAR pathway can choose those programs, if they are a bit more academically inclined, to get a VET qualification whilst they are at school as well.

Mr SULLIVAN: Whilst also qualifying for the ATAR?

Mr Kinnane: Yes, the certificate IV also qualifies for the ATAR. It effectively takes the place of one particular subject. Those offerings are considered an expansion to the certificate II program. Students will undertake the certificate II in either year 10 or 11 and then pick up the certificate III pathway through year 11 and into year 12. They can do that either as a direct course or as a school based apprenticeship or traineeship.

Mr O'ROURKE: I refer to those people who are very much disadvantaged in our community. Maybe they are long-term unemployed or have been out of employment for an extended period. How do you tap into that group to get them involved in training? Is there work with the Commonwealth government in that space?

Mr Koch: It is a great question. Certainly the VET sector is really focused on supporting those who are disadvantaged and providing that step up the ladder, so to speak. It has always been the equity sector in terms of education by supporting that sector. One of the initiatives and programs that the department offers is the Skilling Queenslanders for Work suite of programs that has supported over 50,000 Queenslanders since 2015, including over 30,000 to actually go into employment and further study.

From the department's point of view, in terms of engaging disadvantaged cohorts through that program, we find the key is through the community based organisations that we partner with and that then partner with an RTO such as TAFE Queensland to deliver wraparound support to disadvantaged

cohorts. We find that community based organisations have the approach and the ability to actually reach and engage with disadvantaged groups as part of their core business—certainly better than a department has previously in terms of trying to engage those groups. We work with those not-for-profit, community based organisations that are really focused on disadvantaged areas and then they partner with the training provider. The community based organisation provides the mentoring and the support to address any social barriers that a disadvantaged person may have and then the training provider provides the skills. Coming together, that provides a really great partnership that supports that individual into employment, which is the ultimate aim.

Mr SULLIVAN: As you say, partnering with community programs and Skilling Queenslanders for Work is grassroots stuff. Do you find that there is a bit of a pathway through to TAFE from there? Do you think that people who may not be ready for a TAFE course yet, through that program, find a pathway?

Mr Koch: Absolutely. A lot of our programs under Skilling Queenslanders for Work focus on lower level qualifications—certificate I, certificate II. They really support the individual to get on the pathway to training and then higher qualification levels. Through our VET investment arrangements, the lower level qualifications for disadvantaged students, who meet concessional, can be heavily subsidised if not fee free. All students under Skilling Queenslanders for Work are fee free. There is no requirement to pay for the training. It is fully subsidised. That then provides the pathway to a certificate III level qualification, which research has shown is entry level for employment, and then once in training they can go onto higher level qualifications such as certificate IV and above as well.

Mr BOOTHMAN: Thank you for coming here today. It has been quite informative. Being part of the Gold Coast region, obviously tourism is a very important part of and a very large pillar for my electorate, as is the education industry. What type of strategies have been put in place to try to attract back international students? Obviously it is a bit difficult with the COVID pandemic. What future strategies have been put in place to bring this back as it is a very important part of the Gold Coast economy?

Ms Campbell: It is a vexed problem for all of us in this industry at this point. TAFE Queensland has been very fortunate that, before the pandemic, most of our students were already in the country last year. We start our training quite early, so most started in January. We have held our numbers very well up until this point. We are only about seven per cent down on where we were pre pandemic. We maintain that presence to increase our onshore training, but we have also been delivering remotely with our offshore partners.

I would like to ask Denise O'Brien, our international director, to come forward for a moment to talk to the specific strategies. We have almost 3,000 onshore international students in any given year across the length and breadth of the state. The Gold Coast is a very attractive destination, particularly our Coomera campus, where we have a lot of creative industries and we do a lot of work in film and TV with Movie World. There is a very keen interest not only for the type of life they will have living on the Gold Coast but also for the offerings that we have for our international students there. We are very proud of the work that we do for our onshore international students, as we are for our offshore students from countries around the world that we service. Denise, I will ask you to speak to the specific strategies that we have going forward as our borders remain closed.

Ms O'Brien: It is delightful to be able to work in the international space for TAFE Queensland. We have a significant global reach, right across the world, and great ambassadors for Queensland as a result of that. We have nearly 3,000 international students studying in Queensland at the moment. The Gold Coast is a very popular destination. You may be surprised to know that our source countries are Brazil, Colombia, South Korea, the Philippines, the United Kingdom and Sweden. This is a very popular destination for the Swedes; I wonder why!

On the strategies that we have at the moment, obviously we are very aware that while the border restrictions are in place we are not able to attract inbound students to this glorious state. However, we are able to convert students who are already onshore in Australia. We are converting those who might have traditionally been on a backpacker's visa, for example. They may like to stay in Australia, so they are turning their attention to studying here. I have a story that you may be pleased to hear.

Not long ago at the Gold Coast I met a couple of international students. One was from Japan and one was from the UK. I asked what drew them to the Gold Coast and why they are here. The fellow from Japan said that he was very interested in motor mechanics. He had researched Australia and had made his way here as a student. The young man from the UK was a backpacker. He decided to do automotive training at the Gold Coast as well. I said, 'What were you doing in the UK?' He said,

'Before my holiday I was an accountant.' I said, 'Why are you doing automotive here at the Gold Coast?' He said, 'I was travelling around Australia and the car that I was driving kept breaking down. I found that I had quite an aptitude for fixing cars so I found my way here.' Our reach and breadth and depth for international students, while they are here and while our borders are shut, is still very encouraging.

We also have campaigns to encourage those who may be living in states where the weather may be just a bit colder to fly north for the winter. We are really encouraging those students who are already here to come and study with us.

CHAIR: Following on from that, are you seeing a positive impact on enrolments through domestic migration to Queensland?

Ms O'Brien: Yes at the moment, but obviously the pool will diminish. We are working with the government to look at student arrival plans. It is a slow conversation at the moment, but we are certainly working with the International Education and Industry Advisory Group to look at the safest ways to encourage students to come back when the borders are open.

Mr BOOTHMAN: How do countries such as Colombia, Brazil and Sweden know about TAFE Queensland? What types of strategies were put in place to inform them of these education facilities Down Under?

Ms O'Brien: For many years we have had a very mature and professional network of agents who promote study at TAFE Queensland on our behalf.

Mr BOOTHMAN: How does that work? Is that in the schools over there or is that advertised?

Ms O'Brien: There are a number of different strategies. There are promotion and marketing roadshows. We work with Austrade to promote Queensland as a study destination. There is a very strong alumni now—many thousands of graduates who are living in these countries and are terrific at word of mouth. We have intergenerational students now who have been coming to TAFE Queensland. There is a range of different strategies to promote TAFE Queensland and Queensland as the study destination. They come here to study a range of different programs, from certificate levels to our degree courses.

Mr DAMETTO: Welcome team TAFE! It has been an absolute pleasure having you address the committee this morning and brief us on the important work that you are doing across the state. Thank you all very much for attending. We acknowledged a little earlier that different industries have been affected by the pandemic. An industry that has not stopped, from the start to finish of the lockdowns and the pandemic affecting the rest of Queensland, is the agricultural sector. What is TAFE doing in the agricultural space to not only identify skill shortages but also make sure that training is available for those wanting to take a pathway into agriculture? In particular, there are regulatory and legislative changes that are happening within the agriculture sector. We need to make sure that the people who want to take a pathway in have the right skill set to work in with that as well.

Ms Campbell: Again, it is an excellent question because in our vast and great state agriculture has been, and will be into the future in many different forms, one of the mainstays. We have been working very hard in the last couple of years—and working with the department—planning our strategies and our way forward. There has been that investment in our Toowoomba campus as our Rural Centre of Excellence servicing the whole of Queensland. Again, I will pass over to my colleague Brent Kinnane, as the general manager of south-west, who looks to that agricultural strategy for all of us. Although it is led by Brent, we can also speak with Tim in a little while as to what we are doing consistently across the state once we implement a strategy. This is what we have done in agriculture recently.

Mr Kinnane: At the start of 2020, right before the pandemic, we launched the Rural Centre of Excellence at the Toowoomba campus. That was a result of industry consultation with local representatives as well as other people from around the state to identify what opportunities exist in that agricultural space. As a result of that consultation, we particularly worked with a local organisation called Toowoomba and Surat Basin Enterprise, TSBE, and developed the opportunity of the Rural Centre of Excellence. We currently utilise that facility for our own agricultural training, but we also offer that facility and make it available to industry so that they can come in for their industry events. We have had representatives from large suppliers of vehicles into that space, where they come and talk to their customers about those opportunities that exist. Really, it is a sales opportunity that exists in that space. The benefit to us is that we get those big machines in our property for our students to have a look over and get access to and to get a feel for what is required in the particular industry.

At the Rural Centre of Excellence we have also put in what we call a grow pod, a hydroponics centre. It is high-tech and it enables the students to learn how to grow green, leafy vegetables in a hydroponic, vertical farming environment—potentially the way of the future. It is a great opportunity for students to achieve what is coming into the future and experience it whilst they are at TAFE Queensland.

A lot of industry consultation occurs. We have recently drafted a strategy document about how we would address the agricultural industry in Queensland. We are currently in the initial stages of rolling that out. An opportunity that exists in that space is what we are calling from the Queensland Farmers' Federation a virtual ag college type of environment where students will be able to be anywhere around the state but have opportunities for agricultural training to pop up in industries. We do not have the facilities right around the state; we have them in certain locations. Sending our teachers to those particular locations to undertake that training is the way that we see the future will be for agricultural training. To give an example of how we do that, with what we call drought strategy funding we have run many programs around the state out of our Toowoomba campus. Students who have been affected by drought conditions can undertake free training to get some skills that will help them when the drought breaks but also give them some skills that they can use for off-farm income.

Mr DAMETTO: My community is in one of the six reef catchment areas that are about to be affected by the implementation of upcoming reef regulations. That is something I am particularly interested in at the moment. Is there any conversation between TAFE Queensland and the Department of Environment and Science to make sure that people working on these farms who would be responsible under the ERA in place on these properties are being taught or have an opportunity to learn about nutrient management or nutrient application as well as managing that ERA for particular farming operations?

Mr Kinnane: I am not aware of any direct discussions with the department at this point in time on that matter, but it is certainly an area that we would take into consideration as part of the development of any programs.

Mr DAMETTO: The reason I ask the question is that someone who owns the farm will be the person responsible under the ERA for a blunder. If staff are not trained in that space to deal with that, there could be a problem into the future. Thank you very much for that opportunity to view that.

Mr Kinnane: Thank you. We will take that on notice as a training opportunity for the future.

Ms Campbell: I might just ask the general manager of north, Tim, to continue with that answer, because there has been a lot of work across that part of the state as well.

Mr Campbell: Good morning, everyone. Just to follow on from Brent on the development of pop-up delivery centres, we are in talks with Brent around our Bowen campus. We are trying to position Bowen as the agricultural centre of excellence for ag tech and for biofutures. There is big discussion going on around that. We have a strategy moving forward to our executive around positioning a project lead for that so that we can start those conversations.

In terms of one of the advances we have further north, on the Tablelands at Walkamin, we took over that site after the cessation of the Queensland Agricultural Training College. TAFE Queensland leases the property from the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries to deliver much needed community training in the areas of rural operations and agriculture. Additional delivery activities such as outdoor power tools and equipment and language and literacy courses are also planned for there. We aim to develop the site not just with a focus on agriculture but also to serve that community. The delivery will specialise in community focused training for Mareeba and the wider Tablelands region. The study areas on offer are in agriculture, rural operations and educational employment pathways.

Mr SULLIVAN: I know that TAFE Queensland has been very successful over the years in marketing itself and winning contracts in service provision with international partners. In the current environment, have we been able to continue those contracts? Have we been able to continue to provide that work which is a really good part of the business model of TAFE Queensland?

Ms O'Brien: Our offshore work is quieter. We have a number of contracts that have naturally expired; it has come to their expiry date. We have managed to maintain some new ones. For example, we are working at the moment on a program in Bhutan with TAFE Directors Australia to deliver international skills training in hospitality and tourism for the Bhutan government, in its technical centres. There are still opportunities for offshore delivery and service delivery. Recently, we have been short-listed to provide capacity-building services with the Asian Development Bank in Cambodia and now Nepal. There are big opportunities. Those opportunities are coming particularly through the aid and development space, through donor funded opportunities.

TAFE Queensland has been the contract manager for the Australia Pacific Training Coalition since its inception in 2007. That is the largest Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade technical investment in the Pacific. We have been able to provide amazing services to Pacific island countries and have to date graduated 17,000 Pacific island citizens with TAFE Queensland qualifications, delivered by 230 TAFE Queensland employees across nine Pacific island countries of which 85 per cent are Pacific island citizens. We are really contributing to the long-term sustainability of skills in the Pacific region, our closest neighbours.

Mr SULLIVAN: Similar to the inbound students already here at the start of 2020, those staff were already in place and in situ?

Ms O'Brien: They were already in place.

CHAIR: What do the trends look like in terms of students on campus versus online? I know that technology has disrupted our universities as well. What does that look like for TAFE going forward?

Ms Campbell: Are you asking specifically in international or more broadly?

CHAIR: More broadly, right across all of our campuses.

Ms Campbell: It is very interesting. If we had had a plan before COVID to say that we could convert 110,000 students to a more blended and online delivery, we would have said, 'Well, that will take us the next three years.' When the pandemic hit, we did that in three weeks. We had 4,000 staff working remotely at the end of that three weeks, as well as remote payroll and remote customer services available and up and running. We were very proud of the innovation that in many ways, as many other companies found, was foisted upon us. We have certainly maintained that and are growing that.

We do find that some of our practical, hands-on delivery—face to face—and some of our facilities are second to none. We certainly had electricians in workshops on Zoom and had about 17,000 professional development activities during those weeks to ensure that our staff continued to deliver. I will ask our chief academic officer, Jo Pyne, to speak to this. The more we do remotely, the more inclusive our training becomes. That is obviously very close to our mission and purpose. Jo might give you a couple of specific examples. We are trying to give our students, wherever they reside, the most opportunity in how they engage with us.

Ms Pyne: We have a unit called TAFE Online, which delivers training across a very wide range of programs that is 100 per cent online, but for most of our students, there will be some component of remote delivery as part of their study. One of the things we are very conscious of is not saying it is online or face to face but, rather, 'What is the best solution for this cohort of students?' We have a whole range of technology that we can use to meet the needs of students, particularly with Queensland having such a wide geographical spread. We might have students, for example, in remote-area teaching who come in to residential blocks and the rest of the time will communicate with their teacher via Zoom.

As the CEO mentioned, we were able to transition a lot more easily than we thought during COVID and very quickly into the online environment. It was not a matter of putting notes and papers on the internet; it was communicating with our students using online rooms, Zoom, Teams—a whole range of tools—that allowed us to communicate with students in a face-to-face environment and make it much easier for them.

For many of our students' work, they are not able to come into campus face to face, so for those cohorts we are also able to use a lot of different tools. Our online management system is an off-the-shelf system called Desire2Learn, which is the industry preferred model for learning management systems. It gives us a whole range of flexibility in terms of how we assess students. We can have students uploading videos or they can be in a workshop showing us how they are working. For us, it is absolutely looking at the pedagogy—what is the best way to deliver this training?—not, 'Let's just put this all online.' It is a very conscious program that we have and we specifically train our teachers to use those tools effectively. In the pedagogy around online learning, it was a really extensive component during COVID. Out of our 2,000 teachers, 1,500 interacted in some way with some online learning to help them. We ran a whole series of online courses for our teachers so they were able to pick up the skills they needed for their particular activity. It is a very big part of the way we operate.

CHAIR: COVID has possibly provided an opportunity for TAFE to broaden its student base, then, and provide even more flexible options.

Ms Pyne: Students experiencing different types of learning are saying, 'We would like more of that as we go forward.' Yes, it is one of the positive outcomes.

CHAIR: Excellent. We move now to the next topic, which is the economic importance of vocational education and training services in Queensland, particularly in regional areas. Mary or Steve, did you want to make some comment?

Ms Campbell: I am really pleased to have the opportunity to discuss the importance of vocational education and training delivered by TAFE Queensland to Queensland's prosperity. In 2018, KPMG undertook an analysis of TAFE Queensland's contribution to the state. The analysis found that TAFE Queensland makes a vital contribution to Queensland through productivity benefits, employment opportunities and the provision of a highly skilled labour force. TAFE Queensland works collaboratively, as we stated earlier, with industry and government to shape education and training and to equip the workforce with the skills in a range of sectors important to our economy now and into the future.

The report also found that TAFE Queensland continues to demonstrate that it has a broader remit than the delivery of training and education alone, with a role in providing substantial services to the public in supporting local communities. It also found that TAFE Queensland was very regionally engaged, supported local growth, and partnered with industry to help drive innovation and meet business needs. We are a globally focused organisation and a destination for international students, as we have already discussed, and champions of equity in education and training across Queensland.

I would like now to showcase some of the work we are currently doing in our regional and remote training. I begin by asking our general manager from south-west, Brent, to talk to some of the work that we are doing in Cherbourg and in Roma.

Mr Kinnane: TAFE Queensland plays an important role in regional areas by bridging access to further education and jobs pathways across our state, in particular those areas where there are special needs and at-risk youth groups. We know that many of our students in regional and remote Queensland are more likely to come from low-income households and benefit hugely from accessing TAFE Queensland's training both online and, more importantly, at our regional based campuses.

Engagement with those key community stakeholders is crucial in regions and in areas to identify where there are employment opportunities and what skills are needed. TAFE Queensland is an integral part of these communities. We achieve this level of engagement by having locally employed staff who live and work in those communities and can liaise with those local industry bodies. To give you an example, in Cherbourg there is a high degree of disadvantage in that particular community, as we all understand. The Nurunderi TAFE campus provides a critical pathway to employment for many of those students.

How do we find out that information? Recently our campus coordinator implemented what we call a TAFE yarn, a quarterly event which enables anyone from the area, whether they are individuals, agencies or other local businesses, to come and talk to us about all things TAFE in a very informal arrangement where it is a little bit more social and enables the people of that community to feel a lot more comfortable coming in. This initiative ensures we meet the community needs. As a direct result of that recent community feedback we have commenced running a Certificate II in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care, and a certificate III program will be up at the end of that program when those people graduate.

At the Cherbourg campus, we also deliver skills for education and employment programs on site. These programs are open to anyone in the community to attend. The program caters to various groups, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, youth, people with disabilities, mature-age people and jobseekers from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

TAFE Queensland has also looked at what programs can be delivered in a more flexible way in our remote communities. To give you another example at Cherbourg, we recently commenced the Certificate IV in Business Management. We worked with other TAFE Queensland regions and arranged for an educator to attend the campus one day per week to deliver the program. Members of the Cherbourg Men's Shed are enrolled in the program to not only develop their own business opportunities but also mentor other business owners in the community.

One of the challenges of Cherbourg campus is to grow the confidence of the community to seek education. A strategy being implemented is to recruit local teachers, mentors and tutors from within the Cherbourg community so students have a strong support network to help them with their confidence and encourage learning participation.

Students at Cherbourg are very reluctant to come forward and celebrate their successes and they are very reluctant to let people in the community know that they are studying. We have one student at the moment who takes a different route to campus every single day so that people do not see which way he comes or so that they do not know that he is coming to training, because he does not want to be seen to be bettering himself and his family members not. That is the extent that this person takes to come to train and better himself. Because it is a safe environment at the TAFE, he is willing and prepared to do that. It is disappointing that he feels that way, but part of TAFE at that campus is to create aspirations for that particular community, and we do a great job.

To give you another example of courses and industry consultation, recently at our Roma campus one of our local educators was having a conversation with an owner of one of the tools and trade shops there. They got to talking about welding. We received feedback saying, 'Hey, we could do some welding qualifications.' He said, 'What I will do is put an expression of interest out at my shop.' Within a few weeks, we had 40 expressions of interest to undertake night welding classes, which we commenced at the start of 2021. We have already finished one program. Our May and June programs are already full and there are other programs happening as we go through until the end of the year. Industry consultation does not have to be just formal.

CHAIR: That is fantastic.

Mr Kinnane: Yes, it is a really exciting outcome.

CHAIR: Does that happen more broadly across different areas where you are using your local employers to help drive that sort of engagement?

Mr Kinnane: Yes. I can give you another example. We have a small campus in Charleville where we offer Certificate III in Aged Care Training. That came as a direct result of consultation with the local community, in particular the mayor at the time, who identified these particular opportunities for us. We employed a local teacher on a casual basis in that community and basically said to her, 'Make the program your own.' She started off two years ago with four students who graduated, and last year I attended the graduation where 12 students graduated on the night and there were another three or four students who were unable to make it because they were working.

CHAIR: Good news!

Mr Kinnane: Great outcomes. I am sure every other GM from a regional community would be able to talk about those opportunities as well.

Other things we have recently done around teachers at Roma in particular, with regard to trying to employ local people—they need a Certificate IV in TAE. That opportunity only existed by attendance at a TAFE campus. The nearest campus was Toowoomba. We have implemented a program where we offer that TAE program through Zoom so that people get that face-to-face classroom experience. It is really important that they can communicate with other students as well as their teachers. For that program, they do not have to come in to a particular TAFE campus. That was initially rolled out at the end of last year. This year we have expanded that program even further under TAE and we now offer that program right around the state in that same manner. We have had over 300 people apply for that course and we commenced that course in January this year.

CHAIR: Wow, that is fantastic!

Mr Kinnane: They are really great outcomes. I now pass over to the general manager of the east coast region, Ana Rodger, who will provide the committee with further information regarding TAFE Queensland's participation on the regional jobs committees.

Ms Rodger: TAFE Queensland is an active participant on several regional jobs committees and finds the participation invaluable. Queensland's regions are unique. They are each characterised by distinct demographics, economic and social structures, industry profiles and levels of economic development. Regional jobs committees established by the Queensland government provide practical and local place based solutions through strong engagement with regional networks to drive stronger local employment and training pathways.

Jobs Fraser Coast was the first of the regional jobs committees to be established. TAFE Queensland is a member of the board, which includes industry and business associations, Regional Development Australia, state and local government, community organisations, and school and higher education. Previously named Fraser Coast Workforce Advisory Group, Jobs Fraser Coast was formed to respond to detailed research undertaken in 2017 by Jobs Queensland, in partnership with TAFE Queensland and the CSIRO, to grow opportunities in the Fraser Coast by informing regional workforce development. Research focused on employment data, changes in the demand and supply of skills in the region, and exploration of the potential for a thriving service oriented economy.

Drawing on further work supported by TAFE Queensland, in 2018 Jobs Queensland released the Fraser Coast Workforce Blueprint, which sets out workforce priorities and recommendations under the themes of education pathways; digital literacy; service and people skills; numeracy, literacy and problem solving; and entrepreneurship.

As a core member of Jobs Fraser Coast, TAFE Queensland contributes to Jobs Fraser Coast goals and the economic growth of the region through tailoring its course and program offerings to local industry, providing specialist advice in relation to local and regional training needs and using TAFE Queensland's networks, connections and knowledge to create strong linkages between industry, community and individual customers. To illustrate, in mid-2020 in Hervey Bay, TAFE Queensland and Jobs Fraser Coast jointly hosted a hospitality and tourism expo for industry, jobseekers, small businesses and schools. The shared topics of interest covered employment, traction strategies, skills and qualifications that were critical to the industry, training delivery models that provided flexibility, traineeship and apprenticeship incentives, enhancing job-ready skills in all TAFE programs, and keeping young people in the region through partnering with the high schools. Thank you. I pass to Tim Campbell now from North.

Mr Campbell: TAFE Queensland North region provides training to more than 15,800 people, and more than 3,000 of those students identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, representing 19 per cent of the north region's enrolments. By furthering their education with TAFE Queensland, these students are not only improving their own social and economic wellbeing but also contributing to the enhancement of the communities in which they live and work. When they graduate, these students become role models who support and empower others in their community to also further their education.

TAFE Queensland north region has a dedicated faculty delivering culturally appropriate courses to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. In 2020, our most popular courses among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students were linked to health care, followed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education, Indigenous housing repairs and maintenance, and cultural arts. In 2020, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students had a successful competency completion rate of 88 per cent.

I would also like to stress that in regional and remote areas of Queensland the education and training sector is a crucial employer responsible for significant financial, social, community and equity benefits. Across North Queensland, TAFE Queensland employs more than 600 full-time and casual staff. From the Torres Strait to Whitsundays and out to Mount Isa, I cannot emphasise enough the importance of training in our remote communities. I can provide an example of this from Townsville, with our Indigenous housing repairs and maintenance program. In Townsville, a Building our Futures program was a collaboration between ABIS Housing Community Co-operative Society, TAFE Queensland and the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships. The program was designed to provide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with foundational construction and maintenance skills so they could seek apprenticeships or gain employment.

From the 16 students who were enrolled on the first day, 12 completed the program with either the full certificate II qualification or statements of attainment. Of the 12 completed students, eight have commenced employment. This includes Kai Delaney-Ross. Kai enrolled in the course to improve his chance of securing an apprenticeship. Kai said he believed the course would complement existing experience on his resume and show potential employers that he was willing to participate in training, get a qualification and work hard. Without this supportive course, students like Kai may not have had the opportunity to gain hands-on skills and equitably compete for a spot in a competitive apprenticeship market. Kai at the moment is successfully employed with an Indigenous service provider within the maintenance team, and he is working towards getting an opportunity to join an apprenticeship but he is yet to obtain that.

Another example I would like to share is from our Mount Isa region, with the Mount Isa Mines Trade Excellence Awards winner. For well over a decade, TAFE Queensland has worked closely with Mount Isa Mines, which is one of the world's largest mining complexes and the home of Glencore's copper and zinc operations in Queensland. TAFE Queensland provides apprenticeship training and has developed mining-specific courses to meet Mount Isa Mines' needs. Currently, around 150 Mount Isa Mines apprentices are participating in training at our Mount Isa campus. At the 2020 Mount Isa Trade Excellence Awards, TAFE Queensland recognised Ernest Henry Mine electrical apprentice Aaron Wehrman as the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Trades Student of the Year. Upon receiving his trophy, Aaron was described as a bright, hardworking apprentice who has become a wonderful mentor inspiring other apprentices to strive for high standards.

Ms Campbell: We have, as you would know, many examples across the state. I hope that that has provided the committee examples of some of the work that we are doing at the local level across our communities in Queensland.

CHAIR: It is such a vast and diverse range of opportunities regionally. It is quite incredible.

Mr O'ROURKE: As well as the Cherbourg community, there are a number of other Aboriginal communities throughout the state. Are we doing any other TAFE related things within community elsewhere?

Mr Campbell: Yes, we are. We deliver training into communities on the cape. We do a lot of Indigenous primary health care. One of our flagship programs is the Remote Area Teacher Education Program, which is a relationship between ourselves and the Department of Education. The Department of Education appoint a mentor in the regional schools. They mentor our students.

One of the delivery methodologies that Jo talked about earlier is where we actually deliver with a mentor online, with lots and lots of great content material, but then prospective teachers from the area come down and do some away-from-base teaching on the campus. That relationship is also with our local James Cook University. The idea is that the teacher aide delivery that we do—certificate III and certificate IV diploma—will then lead on to opportunities for the Bachelor of Education. That relationship is well developed and an absolutely fantastic model and it has had really great outcomes for the teacher aide program in communities.

We can also talk about Doomadgee and Palm Island. Our delivery is too extensive. Just last week I was in conversation with a jobs agency that wants to develop a partnership on Palm Island with us. Rainbow Gate have contacted us. They have some ideas about some really good programs. We will then talk to them about how TAFE can assist them with resources or expertise and developing those programs very close to what we think we do well.

Mr SULLIVAN: When you say mainly online but then they come down to campus, is that down to Cairns?

Mr Campbell: That one is, yes, mainly because of the flights and transport. They come into Cairns. They spend a week at the beginning of the program. They go away and are mentored and then they come back for another period. They finish off their workbooks and logbooks and then hopefully come down for graduation.

Mr SULLIVAN: Were you able to continue last year when, I know for good reasons, the cape communities were shut down?

Mr Campbell: Exactly. TAFE shut down. In fact, we did have some delivery going on at the time and we had to get people back as quickly as possible before it closed down. It was a mammoth operation.

Mr SULLIVAN: Absolutely, but it is back up and running for 2021?

Mr Campbell: Yes.

Mr DAMETTO: My question is around enrolments with TAFE. A lot of public money is being spent—for example, Certificate 3 Guarantee. How is TAFE screening potential trainees to make sure that they are lining them up with the right training for their skill set but also making sure that training then leads on to successful employment opportunities?

Ms Campbell: Again, that is an excellent question. With the various funding streams that are available, one of those is the ability for each Queenslanders to have a certificate III—the C3G funding, where they have a fully subsidised qualification. We do a range of work across the state, both locally and in our marketing and communication, to give our potential students a really good view of the kinds of pathways and jobs that come from each of those entry level qualifications, because they get that one opportunity. That is where we use the full range of our support services—our counsellors and our student ambassadors.

We often have previous student ambassadors whom students can come and talk to about what is in that course for them and whether it is the right pathway. Again, we do not stop people from enrolling, obviously, but we provide a lot of material throughout our TAFE Queensland web and also face to face when students come and talk to a range of experts across the organisation about what they are enrolling in and also that they qualify. They talk to our customer service centre operators to ensure they meet the eligibility requirements as well.

CHAIR: I have lost the name, but there is a program used in a lot of our secondary schools that does that assessment piece around what that particular individual's skills—

Ms Campbell: Yes, we use the Harrison—

CHAIR: That is it—Harrison.

Mr DAMETTO: In particular, Chair, you want people taking on courses that they have the ability to the complete as well.

CHAIR: Correct.

Ms Campbell: Certainly. That is so important at any age. It is really important for people to feel that they are going to be successful. I think part of what sets us apart in a contestable marketplace is the care we put into ensuring that those students are qualified and make that really important decision with as much information as possible. We also have BKSB—what is known as our literacy and numeracy screening tool. For certain courses they go through that as well. That gives a good indication of what level they are at. We talk to them then about what would be the most appropriate training for them.

Mr DAMETTO: That is the mechanism TAFE has compared to some privatised RTOs that are perhaps more profit driven than outcome driven. Congratulations to the department and to TAFE for undertaking things this way.

CHAIR: That is possibly a delightful segue to the next question. Thank you, member for Hinchinbrook.

Mr DAMETTO: I try my best, Madam Chair.

CHAIR: We are keen to hear from you in terms of the role of private versus public providers in the VET space.

Ms Campbell: I am delighted to talk about the role of TAFE Queensland as the largest public provider in Queensland. The Department of Employment, Small Business and Training will later speak to the role of private provision of VET in the Queensland market.

As you know, we are Queensland's largest public provider. We continue to demonstrate that we have a broader remit than the delivery of training and education services alone. I think we have seen from the examples this morning that we have a key role in providing substantial services to the public to support local communities as well as being that significant employer in regional Queensland.

I would like to share with you what the Queensland Audit Office stated in their 2019-20 report *Investing in vocational education and training*. They stated—

The role of public providers goes beyond delivering training. The government expects public providers to:

- provide strong leadership in the delivery of quality VET services
- provide access to training across regional and remote areas of Queensland
- maintain a community presence that supports Queenslanders in gaining the types of vocational skills and training needed now and into the future
- have regard to the government's commitments to employment security and make every effort to explore options to support employees affected by workplace change
- provide services in VET market gaps where needed, such as low demand or additional priority qualifications.

I would also add to the list that public providers support Queenslanders in areas of market failure, picking up the training of students where for-profit providers no longer operate. Therefore, the public charter that TAFE Queensland fulfils is extensive and differentiates us from other providers as our commitments are wideranging and include the breadth of education and training offered even where there may be low demand.

Our widespread campus locations across the state include a full range of support services, as I stated earlier. Many of the initiatives that we run in rural and remote areas are to support communities, reduce social exclusion and provide training to disadvantaged or marginalised cohorts rather than to increase profits or pursue purely commercial objectives. That can often present a significant financial challenge to TAFE Queensland in such a highly dispersed state.

It is widely recognised that some Queenslanders need extra support to be able to take advantage of economic opportunities and create that inclusive growth. This is very much where the role of the public provider is vital to the communities of Queensland. By increasing access to training opportunities and providing additional support for priority groups and students with high needs—including, as we stated earlier, people with a disability, migrants and refugees, our Torres Strait and Aboriginal communities—we endeavour to help every Queenslanders to thrive socially and economically.

We are committed to that delivery of high-quality training that leads to employment of further study outcomes. We continue to invest in our products and into our teachers and to add real value to our students. We are seen as a benchmark of quality in this state, and we are very proud of that. Our chief academic officer, Jo Pyne, is going to provide you with several examples of the role that we undertake across the state as a key public provider.

Ms Pyne: TAFE Queensland is expert in the delivery of quality vocational education and training. We have expertise in developing, delivering and creating high-quality teaching resources. As a result of these skills, we are frequently asked to partner with other organisations to support delivery in a range of niche areas. During the 2018 Commonwealth Games, TAFE Queensland was the official training partner and delivered training to over 15,000 volunteer 'Games Shapers' across a whole range of activities. This training has now been put online and is available to other volunteer organisations, and it has just been run successfully across the northern part of the state.

We also partner with many not-for-profits and enterprises to ensure that Queenslanders receive excellent skills development and that our economy prospers. For example, we have recently partnered with Skills Lab, which is an RTO of Sage Automation in South Australia, which assists us to offer and deliver the Diploma of Applied Technologies at TAFE Queensland as part of our higher level apprenticeship. Providing training around Industry 4.0 is critical to our economy, and this is a really important program that we are rolling out.

We also work with Dyno Nobel Asia Pacific, which operates in a niche market and is a lead explosives supplier to the resources sector. We have knowledge of the training sector; we combine that with their knowledge of explosives and we are able to support high-quality training into the resources sector more widely. We also work with Huxley School of Makeup to support the delivery of specialist make-up training for the Diploma of Screen and Media.

The Nissan Mentored Apprenticeship Program is a world-class mentored apprenticeship technician program which offers competency based accelerated apprenticeship qualification which can be completed in 2.8 years. Most automotive apprenticeships are completed in four. We deliver that in our state-of-the-art TAFE facilities across Australia, including TAFE Queensland's Acacia Ridge training facility. That is done in conjunction with the Nissan Learning Academy.

Each year, TAFE Queensland delivers the Automotive Industry Ambassador Program, targeting late-stage apprentices and early people just into the trade who demonstrate leadership potential in their industry. The five-day program delivers the skills needed to supervise and lead a team in the automotive industry. It is offered free to members of Motor Trades Association of Queensland, along with members of other automotive industry associations including Heavy Vehicle Industry Australia, the Construction Mining Equipment Industry Group and the Institute of Automotive Mechanical Engineers.

During COVID-19, TAFE Queensland delivered COVID-safe training to staff in at-risk occupations. This training was developed over a very quick period and has since been delivered externally to 225,000 Queenslanders. Over the last 10 years, TAFE Queensland worked with Rainbow Gateway and Myuma Aboriginal Corporation at Camooweal to provide registered training organisation services for their program to support young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and women into jobs in the mining sector. It is an award-winning program. It combined our knowledge of quality delivery and our understanding of the training regulations with Myuma's understanding of the mining industry and the cultural issues facing First Nations people.

We also work with Russell Mineral Equipment to deliver specialised training in Thunderbolt recoilless hammer and mill relining machines. Russell Mineral operates internationally and uses really highly specialised equipment in very remote locations. Consequently, they are not able to access training providers at their operation sites, so we support them doing the delivery in offshore sites such as Canada, Russia, China, the Philippines, Utah, Chile, South Africa and Papua New Guinea.

At the moment, TAFE Queensland is really examining issues around outcomes of the aged-care commission, and we are working very closely with the industry to support initiatives to support workers and employers going forward. We know that the recommendations are going to include the expectation that the industry has a duty to train their staff and any staff working in individual care areas, and we know that the industry will be looking to us for support to deliver the outcome.

At TAFE Queensland, we have a lot of very knowledgeable industry relevant teachers in the business. Many of our teachers are also members of key industry bodies in the aged-care area and have a strong commitment to ensuring our students meet the needs of that industry. Our facilities in

aged care and health have been designed in consultation with industry and give individuals access to both foundation and state-of-the-art equipment. Students learn with equipment like Juno manikins that are able to behave as a real person, patient slings, hoists, electric beds, vital signs monitors, ECG machines and more, and in the future we are looking at augmented reality hologram patients.

TAFE Queensland is ready to fast-track increased delivery in the skills that have been identified by the commission. These include accredited programs, nationally recognised short courses, skill sets and micro-credentials. Our current courses include a range of certificate and diploma programs and short courses and micro-credentials in dementia care, palliative care, oral health, mental health, pressure injuries and wound management. TAFE Queensland is also ready to deliver increased cultural safety and trauma informed service level training, which is another expectation of the committee.

As Mary mentioned before, we have also seen the impact on students when registered training organisations close and students are unable to complete their training. In these situations, the public provider has taken on those students. We assess their current skills. We complete their training. This is often done without additional funding as the students have often exhausted their training subsidies. Communicating with worried and anxious students, negotiating the task of data collection and creating appropriate gap training is challenging. However, TAFE Queensland sees the importance of ensuring confidence in the VET system and providing solutions to those whose training was interrupted through no fault of their own.

Ms Campbell: As you can see from some of these examples, our remit is quite extensive. I would now like to ask the deputy director-general to speak to the role of public providers in our contestable marketplace.

Mr Koch: There is a variety of different types of RTOs in the Australian VET sector. They range from TAFE institutes, community and not-for-profit RTOs, school RTOs, enterprise RTOs—which are RTOs who normally train their own staff—and private RTOs. In Queensland there are currently around 1,200 RTOs that have registered with the national regulator, the Australian Skills Quality Authority. Around a third of all RTOs in Australia are located within Queensland.

The current VET investment framework that Queensland manages is largely through demand driven training arrangements. I wanted to cover a few of the key features of those arrangements. The first one is a network of preapproved RTOs that we call Skills Assure suppliers, and that includes both the public and private providers. The department also publishes a list of qualifications or skill sets, under the Priority Skills List, which are the eligible qualifications that the government funds in those areas that are based on the industry engagement that we spoke about earlier. That provides the choice for individuals and employers to select the qualification and the training provider that best meets their need, the mode of delivery—whether it is online, face to face or a blend of both—the value for money and the potential for securing employment.

Mary mentioned before the Queensland Audit Office's *Investment in vocational education and training* report, a performance audit from August 2019. That audit outlined that the demand driven VET market has the aim of stimulating the efficient use of public funds through the network of training providers the department engages. The audit also concluded that the department is effectively managing the risk of funding both public and private training providers in a contestable market. It also provides students and the Queensland public with greater assurance that training providers are delivering quality, industry-standard training.

There are four public training providers in Queensland that the department currently supports. TAFE Queensland is obviously by far the largest public provider and RTO in Queensland. There are three other public providers: the subsidiary company of TAFE Queensland which is Aviation Australia; Central Queensland University, which is a dual-sector tertiary education and VET provider in Central Queensland; and the Aboriginal Centre for the Performing Arts, which is a bespoke RTO and an Aboriginal cultural performance organisation.

In terms of private training providers and training providers overall, the department is currently contracting with 444—440 private providers and four public providers in Queensland.

CHAIR: To clarify, there are 1,200 registered training organisations in Queensland with the national regulator. There are 440 Skills Assure RTOs, so that leaves a substantial number of RTOs registered that are not meeting the prequalification of skills?

Mr Koch: That is right, and those RTOs are not eligible, therefore, to receive any government subsidies. To receive government subsidies for eligible students, an RTO needs to be contracted with the department.

CHAIR: That is for state funding. Are they eligible for federal funding?

Mr Koch: The federal funding through the VET Student Loans works through different processes and different arrangements that they have directly with the federal government and loan arrangements that the students may be able to undertake. Those qualifications tend to be a diploma or higher level, so higher level qualifications as well.

It is also important to recognise the number of qualifications that we have on the Priority Skills List in Queensland. There are 429 training products or qualifications that we currently fund for students in the state, and 162 of those currently are not delivered by public training providers. Those qualifications are delivered by private or other community based RTOs and provide those students with the choice to go to those training providers. It provides that mix of different delivery pathways and links into skills in demand by industry as well.

Madam Chair, you mentioned the eligibility or the requirements to become a prequalified or a Skills Assure supplier in Queensland. The department has continued to strengthen that year after year over recent years. That is quite a vigorous process where we look at the RTO being required to provide us with their training delivery history, their industry linkages and employer references, financial viability check and also all of their training history with their students and data on that information as well. We have also recently strengthened that to include that a Skills Assure supplier will only be accepted or approved where the department assesses that there is a need in the market for additional suppliers or a gap in the provision of choice for students. We continue to focus on strengthening our approach there through the recent Skills Assure initiative where we have continued to focus on quality and compliance with our contractual arrangements.

Mr SULLIVAN: I think you said that 162 private providers fill a gap. Is that a gap in terms of expertise or specialist services, or is it a gap geographically? What are we talking about?

Mr Koch: It could be a variety of different aspects. There could be a number of thin markets where there is a limited demand for certain qualifications and there may be only one or two RTOs in Australia that actually deliver that qualification. It may be an industry requirement or there may be some regional delivery, noting that, of course, TAFE Queensland, as the largest public provider, has a large number of campuses, as we heard earlier, and delivers right across the state. A lot of it is around trying to ensure that, for those skills and qualifications that industry are requesting or engaging with the department on, there are providers available to deliver those qualifications.

Mr DAMETTO: First I want to acknowledge the importance of private and public partnerships when producing training packages and providing training across Queensland. It is a necessary partnership. In terms of the 444 providers across Queensland that TAFE and the government are engaged with on a contractual basis, there is a fair responsibility on TAFE to make sure that those providers are doing the right thing. Would someone from the panel be able to describe to me exactly what sort of auditing process is going on with those providers to make sure that students are getting the best outcomes and Queenslanders are getting bang for buck when it comes to training provided?

Mr Koch: In terms of monitoring training providers, the department has a number of different strategies and activities that we undertake on a very regular basis. I mentioned earlier that training providers need to provide data and information to the department. Our contract management team do a great job every month reviewing all of the data and the submissions that are put in by RTOs, and looking at trends, such as student growth, and looking at where there may be compliance issues. We have a monthly checklist that we go through, checking all of the data and all of the submissions that are put in by the training providers. We also have a number of complaints processes and a number of other activities that we undertake, such as outbound calls to students. If we suspect there may be an issue with a training provider or a compliance issue, we have a variety of intelligence that we look at, working with our regional team members. With regard to the outbound calls I mentioned, our customer centre may ring some of the students and receive feedback from the students on the training provider. That is very valuable.

The most important one, though, is that we have a contractual audit schedule. We use that intelligence, that data, to feed into a risk indicator model that then provides us with a guidance as to contractual audits that the department undertakes. Our quality and compliance team within the department then reviews student files from those RTOs, meets with the RTOs, and provides an audit report to the RTO as well. I also highlight that that is on top of what the national regulator also does in terms of their legislative audits and requirements under national standards.

CHAIR: Noting that we have 15 minutes to go and two very important topics to cover, we might see if we can do them in combination. I will leave it your hands, Mary, but the last two points were the incentives and fee support, and I was interested in understanding how TAFE is looking at employment outcomes for women, particularly in non-traditional female industries—those that have been male dominated.

Ms Campbell: We will try to push through, because they are both very important questions.

CHAIR: We are happy to take written submissions if you want to provide any further information to us.

Ms Campbell: Thank you. I would like to start by saying that in Queensland the setting of government subsidies for vocational education and training is the role of the department. What I can talk to you about today briefly is the role of incentives and fee support on TAFE Queensland students, our employers and our wider communities. I would like to preface this by saying that we all know that the benefits of employment are not simply economic. What we found at TAFE Queensland is that a job has a profound impact on family, community life, health and wellbeing, and that is at the heart of what we do best—delivering relevant vocational education and training to develop those real skills for work.

We are also aware, though, that our students' training decisions are often very price sensitive. We also know that our students wish to train with us because of our great facilities and the great educators we employ. We have noticed that when there are substantial government training incentives offered in our contestable marketplace, TAFE Queensland is inundated with inquiries and people signing up to train. Our general manager of operations, Nik Babovic, will now talk to you briefly about some recent incentives, and then we will ask John Tucker from our SkillsTech campus to talk to apprenticeships and traineeships and what we have seen in the marketplace with recent incentives.

Mr Babovic: The increased enrolment numbers indicate that incentive plays a really important role in student success at TAFE Queensland. One of the most recent incentive programs is the JobTrainer program, which I would like to talk about today. It is a jointly funded Commonwealth and state initiative that provides additional free and low-fee training places for jobseekers, school leavers and young people under 25. Training is being delivered across 110 training programs in areas of identified skills need and employment growth in TAFE Queensland. The JobTrainer program commenced on 9 September 2020, and enrolments in the training programs will continue to be accepted until 30 September 2021.

JobTrainer incentives have impacted TAFE Queensland's total enrolments very positively. In the 110 JobTrainer approved programs, enrolments have increased by more than 50 per cent to the same point of time last year. The largest increases are in Certificate II in Electrotechnology; Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care; and Certificate III in Individual Support. They are the three biggest ones. We have also had significant increases in Certificate IV in Cyber Security and Certificate IV in Training and Assessment, which has not been funded previously.

An example of a typical student who is working under the JobTrainer program is Sarah Vohland. She is a great example of how incentives and fee support encourage students to invest in vocational education and training. Sarah was inspired to study individual support after seeing palliative care carers help a family member of hers in the last stages of their life. Sarah was also involved in a traumatic car accident which left her requiring care to recover, and this galvanised her determination to change careers from early childhood education to palliative care. Sarah wants to give people in their last stages of life dignity by taking care of them. Sarah is relieved that she does not have to add to her student loan and student debt with her current studies. That is typical of a lot of students who are coming into this area.

I will pass onto the general manager of SkillsTech, John Tucker, who will now update the committee with regard to apprentices and trainees.

Mr Tucker: Good morning, everyone. I appreciate the opportunity to contribute. TAFE Queensland trains almost 20,000 apprentices and trainees across the state. As the largest single provider in the state, we see the impacts of incentives. I will differentiate between incentives for employers and incentives for students and apprentices to participate. They are different. There have been a number of incentive programs over the years, certainly since I have been involved in this sector.

Free TAFE for under 25s, as an example, and free apprenticeships and other mechanisms have certainly supported apprentices and trainees, who are often on comparatively low wages at the early stages of their career, to help them to meet their financial commitments. In addition to incentives

directly available to apprentices and trainees, TAFE Queensland offers funded prevocational courses across the state. The uptake has been particularly impressive this year. In fact, in our prevocational courses that are pathways into apprenticeships and traineeships, TAFE Queensland has seen a substantial increase when compared to the same period last year. We have certainly found that our pre-apprenticeship graduates are hot property in the labour market and we have been easily able to place them through our Find Your Apprentice service, which is available to employers around the state.

Apart from direct financial incentives, the feedback that we get from our employers is that, where we see initiatives like Free TAFE or fee reductions, the benefit gained for SMEs from removing the need to administer fee payment is a significant administrative relief for them as well. Apart from the impact of the financial incentive itself, that is something that is particularly beneficial for them as individuals.

To give you an example to illustrate, Travis Hamilton began studying at TAFE Queensland while in year 11 undertaking a Certificate II in Plumbing through a TAFE at School program. Travis was inspired to pursue plumbing after a family friend came around to fix broken water pipes at his house. He was rather fascinated with the process to repair. Travis's placement employer, Beutel Plumbing, agreed to take him on as an apprentice, with the 19-year-old second-year apprentice now undertaking training at TAFE Queensland's Nambour campus. With the assistance of free apprenticeships for under-25s funding, Travis plans to one day start his own business in the industry. For now, he is focused on completing his apprenticeship and laying the groundwork, literally, for his career. I now pass over to Brent Kinnane, our general manager from south-west to add some information.

Mr Kinnane: Young people are vital to our future, and championing their skill development through technical and vocational education and training and development will help close the skills gap we are seeing in industries across the state. The importance of skilling was evident before the COVID-19 crisis and it has only increased with the pandemic. The TAFE at School and Free TAFE programs are important in solving that skills shortage. TAFE at School provides access to vocational training as part of our students' senior studies and, as mentioned by our general manager of operations, from 1 January 2021 Free TAFE for Under 25s was made available to eligible Queenslanders in 26 priority certificate III qualifications. This free training is giving our young people a pathway to secure their future by gaining skills that lead to job outcomes, and we are looking forward to seeing the outcome of that particular program.

I will give you one example. I did have a plumbing example written down, but I will choose a different one so as to not stick with plumbing. We had a student who finished year 12 in 2020 at Toowoomba Grammar School, a gentleman named Jake Hewitt. During his time at school he was able to undertake a Certificate II in Engineering Pathways, fully funded under the TAFE at School program, and, also whilst at school, he was able to undertake a Certificate III in Agriculture as a school based trainee, again fully funded and incentivised. Upon finishing year 12, Jake secured employment on a cattle station in the Kimberley. One of the things he said to us was that undertaking that engineering program had really given him the skills to make him useful when he rocked up to the Kimberley cattle station, along with his Certificate III in Agriculture. He brought the aspiration, TAFE Queensland provided the great training outcomes, and the funding initiatives removed the barriers to make it happen.

Mr BOOTHMAN: You spoke about individuals under 25. What about individuals who are 50 and over? It is a question I normally get from my constituents asking what programs are in place for them for reduction of fees and potentially finding employment outcomes.

Ms Campbell: I will hand over to our director-general because, as I said earlier, the department sets the incentives. I would like to say, though, that we train 15-year-olds through to 85-year-olds. We have many people over 50 in training and we have many opportunities when we talk to the department to get programs going, particularly for upskilling and reskilling in our communities, as our training agenda changes.

Mr Koch: In terms of supporting mature-age students, the department, through our programs, has a number of supportive approaches. The Future Skills Fund that I mentioned earlier has a number of initiatives, including a workforce transition program within it, that will support those who are looking to reskill. The CEO of TAFE Queensland mentioned that reskilling element. That is a really critical impact of the pandemic as well, as we see some of those economic changes. Through our programs we have a number of second-chance training initiatives so that if someone already has a certificate III, they can work with our regional teams through the department and also with TAFE Queensland Brisbane

around opportunities to undertake second-chance training. The JobTrainer fund that the general manager mentioned before is a good example. If a jobseeker is looking for a job and eligible for that funding, they can undertake that training with no fees. Previous qualifications do not count towards that. There are a number of supportive programs that enable us to make sure we are supporting all age groups.

Mr BOOTHMAN: Can we get some literature on those important schemes? That is something we love to put out to our communities.

Mr Koch: Absolutely.

CHAIR: We have two minutes left for the last one.

Ms Campbell: I thank the committee for the question. It is a very important question and we will speak very quickly. We are very proud to say that over past years enrolments by women have been increasing across TAFE Queensland. We have seen a three per cent increase in the last 12 months and now 48.5 per cent of our student population is female. We are continuing as an organisation to support more women to commence and complete their studies and to build lifelong careers, particularly in our trades and non-traditional areas of the business where we spend a lot of time, from Try'a Trade, which I spoke to you last time about—particularly Try'a Trade for females participants in year 10 across the state—right through to our apprenticeships and to our international training in the South Pacific, where we have many wonderful female educators in the trades. I will quickly pass over to John Tucker from SkillsTech to give you some more information about how well we are doing and how proud we are of supporting women in sustainable careers, particularly in what were once male dominated industries.

Mr Tucker: It is a very important topic and close to my heart as general manager at TAFE Queensland's SkillsTech with a lead responsibility over apprentices and trainees particularly. I am very proud to say that 13 per cent of all the apprentices and trainees in the state training with TAFE Queensland are female. Whilst it is difficult to be proud of 13 per cent, that represents a significantly higher participation rate than most trade areas themselves. That is something we are very proud of at TAFE Queensland.

I would point to the number of partnerships that TAFE Queensland has with organisations like the National Association for Women in Construction. We are working with them very closely, as we are more recently with Top 100 Women as well, to sponsor more participation by females in trades. I can give you one quick example that is very recent. We are very proud that Jasmine Willoughby, a second-year metal fabrication apprentice who is employed by East Coast Apprentices and trained by us at TAFE Queensland, just last week was asked by the Lord Mayor of Brisbane to launch the new CityCat into the Brisbane River. Jasmine was asked to do that because she has been working with Aus Ships, her host employer here in Brisbane, and, using her significant welding skills, has secured the completion of three new CityCats that she has contributed to, at the same time setting, I think, a great example for young women to participate and be effective in these highly skilled trade outcomes.

CHAIR: That is fantastic news. We are absolutely out of time. That concludes the time we have for today's briefing. Thank you, officers, and thank you, Hansard. A proof of the transcript of these proceedings will be available on our committee webpage when it is completed. There were no questions taken on notice other than the request for circulation to the committee of material on the over-50s. Thank you all very much. TAFE Queensland is something that we should all be extraordinarily proud of and we look forward to seeing more of your great work continue across our great state. I declare this public briefing closed.

The committee adjourned at 12.02 pm.