

Please find below the Department of Education and Training's (DET) response to the queries raised by the Committee:

Clause 7 (Functions)

- 1. Submission 2 (Queensland Nurses Union) argued that Jobs Queensland needs to focus not just on the VET sector, but also on universities and higher education. Submission 7 (Queensland Teachers Union) proposed that Jobs Queensland's advisory function under clause 7(a) should include the "breadth of the VET system" not just apprentices and trainees. Could you please respond to these issues, including advising the Committee whether any of the functions suggested by the submitters are contemplated by the Bill as drafted?**

The policy intent of Jobs Queensland is to deliver on Working Queensland commitments to give a voice back to industry on skills development in Queensland, with a focus on identifying skill demands and future workforce planning requirements for industry.

It should be noted that higher education and training providers are increasingly operating across both Vocational Education and Training (VET) and higher education sectors, an example being Central Queensland University which has been recognised as a dual sector entity under the *TAFE Queensland Act 2013*.

It is important that the work of Jobs Queensland remains firmly focused on the future workforce needs of industry, for the purpose of informing VET investment by the Queensland Government. Universities and the higher education sector are regulated and funded by the Commonwealth Government and Jobs Queensland is therefore better placed to focus on the VET sector where it can provide valuable advice that informs Queensland Government policy and programs.

However, where higher education intersects and overlaps with the VET sector in industry sectors, such as the health industry, Jobs Queensland will have a role in providing advice on related workforce planning requirements and may include higher education providers in its broader consultation processes.

DET considers that clause 7(a)(i), which provides for Jobs Queensland to give advice to the Minister about *the skills it anticipates will be needed for particular industries and regional areas*, is broad enough to ensure that Jobs Queensland can effectively research and consult on future workforce and skills needs relating to the broader VET sector. The function relating to providing advice on *the apprenticeship and traineeship system in Queensland*, provides for a particular focus on this key pathway for the VET sector and for Queensland's economy, without focusing the entity exclusively on this one aspect of the system.

- 2. The Department's comments and advice is also sought on the proposal in Submission 7 that Jobs Queensland's functions be expanded to advise the Minister on the reliability and efficacy of training provided.**

Regulation of the quality of training providers operating in Queensland is undertaken by the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA), an independent national statutory agency. Through its pre-qualified training provider arrangements, the DET monitors and adjusts where appropriate the government subsidised training market to ensure providers are delivering value for money training in line with contracting requirements.

In addition, the Queensland Government has committed to establishing a Training Ombudsman. The Training Ombudsman will offer an independent review role for the provision of VET in Queensland, assisting VET consumers such as students, apprentices, trainees and employers. The Training Ombudsman will be able to receive complaints about the provision and quality of VET in Queensland.

Not having to focus on matters relating to the reliability and efficacy of training delivered will allow Jobs Queensland to focus on its core business of identifying the strategic skills needs of the economy and giving industry a voice on skills development.

3. The Committee notes that the advisory function in clause 7(a) includes the skills anticipated to be needed for particular industries and regional areas. Could you please advise whether the Bill is intended to encompass Jobs Queensland providing advice to the Minister about the current supply of skills and training?

It is proposed that Jobs Queensland will focus on identifying the future workforce needs of the economy at a strategic level and where necessary, plan for the deployment of these skills through the workforce planning and development function. This advice will then be provided to the Minister for Training and Skills and where necessary, DET will respond to the training related needs through the deployment of appropriate investment and program responses to meet demand. Essentially Jobs Queensland will focus on the demand for skills at a strategic level, with the Department to focus on the supply of skills more operationally to meet the identified demand.

However, in forming its advice to the Minister, it is expected that Jobs Queensland may wish to be cognisant of the supply of skills and may seek briefings or data from the Department on the operations of the VET market from time to time. The Board may subsequently choose to make recommendations on issues relating to the supply of skills and training and the Bill allows for this.

Budget allocation

4. The Committee noted the information in the Explanatory Notes that up to \$40 million over four years was allocated to establish Jobs Queensland. Could you please provide a broad outline of the expected areas of expenditure, upon which that allocation is based. For example, the committee would like to know the estimates of anticipated expenditure on staffing, consultation, research, travel and other matters.

The final detailed structure of Jobs Queensland is still under consideration. The outcomes of these deliberations, to be led by the Interim Reference Group, will inform the initial budget allocations for staffing and other costs. However, as an independent entity, it will be at the discretion of Jobs Queensland as to how the entity's resources are utilised to best perform its functions. However, broadly the budget for Jobs Queensland will be used to support:

- direct staffing costs for the Jobs Queensland secretariat;
- Board fees – to be determined in accordance with the Queensland Government's *Remuneration of Part-Time Chairs and Members of Queensland Government Bodies*;
- the provision of operational support to Jobs Queensland provided by DET; and
- program funding – including contracting research services, industry engagement and workforce planning.