



Cairns Skills and Workforce Planning

Good People. Good Jobs.

Growing a stronger and more diverse workforce through effective skills and workforce planning.

Access to a skilled workforce is a critical foundation for industry growth and broader economic development and resilience. The Queensland Government's Regional Labour Force Analysis for January 2023 indicates 142,600 people were employed in the Cairns SA4 Region. This represents growth of 9,500 jobs (7.1%) compared to the prior year and has already significantly exceeded forecasts by Jobs Queensland.

Acute workforce and skills shortages are currently being experienced across the Cairns region with unemployment rates also at historic lows. Anecdotal feedback from local businesses and industry representatives indicates

workforce and skills shortages are widespread and represent a major impediment to business growth and success. This feedback is consistent with the results of the recent CCIQ Pulse Survey of Business Conditions (Dec 22 quarter) where 'Retaining and Recruiting Employees' ranked as the biggest constraint to business growth.

In addition to the current workforce shortages, significant growth opportunities in certain industry sectors and the changing nature of skills required to meet those opportunities also present challenges.

Targeted skills and workforce planning is needed to address these challenges.

At a glance

What we need:

Queensland Government commitment to support the preparation of the Cairns Region Workforce Plan for the Aviation, Marine and Construction sectors through either: direct preparation of the Plan by Jobs Queensland (preferred); or provision of funding (est. \$250,000) to enable an independent consultant to be engaged to prepare the Plan.

Electorates:

Cairns, Barron River, Mulgrave, Cook, Hill and Hinchinbrook

Government Alignment:

Queensland Workforce Strategy 2022-2032; Department of State Development Priority Industries (and related plans/road maps); CRC Council Economic Development Strategy 2022 -2026; Cairns Local Jobs Plan

Community benefits

- 1** Identifying and addressing current and emerging skills shortages
- 2** Skilling the local workforce for the jobs of the future and in the areas where growth will occur
- 3** Supporting the attraction of new investment, business and economic development opportunities
- 4** Increasing overall productivity and economic output/growth in the Cairns region
- 5** Improving workforce participation and inclusion and reducing unemployment rates in the longer term
- 6** Identifying opportunities to collaboratively work with education providers (primary, secondary, tertiary and vocational) to develop 'work-ready' graduates
- 7** Creating greater efficiencies in education and training investment linked to regional economic growth.



Vision

In response to the current challenge, effective skills and workforce planning is required.

The Cairns Region Workforce Plan (CRWP) would initially focus on two of the region's high-value and high-growth potential sectors (Aviation and Marine) as well as the Construction sector, which plays a critical role in the effective delivery of the infrastructure and housing required to support broader industry and economic growth.

These three sectors also have potentially competing skills and workforce needs and, accordingly, it is important they be considered in parallel. The proposed sectors align strongly with local and State industry priorities.

Many of the businesses in the supply chain for these sectors are small businesses (employing fewer than 20 people) with limited individual capacity to undertake workforce planning.

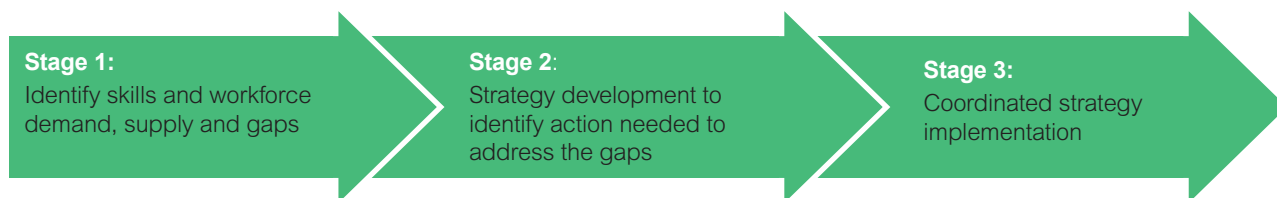
It is proposed that the CRWP be prepared by either Jobs Queensland or a suitably qualified independent consultant with strategic oversight provided by a formal Project Advisory Group (PAG) comprised of local industry, training provider and government representatives.

The proposed PAG would have an enduring role providing strategic oversight during the CRWP's implementation phase.

Cairns Regional Council would provide secretariat support.

The CRWP would adopt a staged approach to skills and workforce planning following the Jobs Queensland Region and Industry Workforce Planning Guide. It would focus on the Cairns SA4 Region and have a 5-year horizon (2023 to 2028).

While the Aviation, Marine and Construction sectors would be the initial focus of the CRWP, there is potential to expand it to other sectors in future, including Agriculture, Manufacturing, Retail, and Professional and Scientific Services. Other key employing industries, including Health and Social Assistance, and Education and Training, could also be considered and incorporated via data from current and emerging planning processes.



Proposed approach to skills and workforce planning