

# MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR- GENERAL

I am pleased to present the 2017–18 Annual Report for the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training.

The creation of our department in December 2017 recognises the important relationship between employment outcomes, strong small businesses and a skilled workforce to the wellbeing of Queenslanders and their communities.

# Director-General's foreword

Our services and initiatives play a key role in the Queensland Government's objectives for *Our Future State: Advancing Queensland's Priorities* particularly through our commitment to create jobs in a strong economy.

Our achievements include a strong investment in training so that Queenslanders have the skills that industry and employers need for the economy of the future. Through a \$768.9 million commitment in the *Annual VET Investment Plan* we have supported Queenslanders to gain the qualifications they need to enter and stay in the workforce. This has secured opportunities for those wanting to upgrade or diversify their skills through training, ensuring they are competitive in the ever-changing job market and leading to the creation of more jobs.

Through the Plan, we are guiding and supporting a training sector that meets current demands, plans for future growth and can respond to emerging needs, and via the *User Choice, Certificate 3 Guarantee and Higher Level Skills* programs, we are supporting Queenslanders to undertake training that leads to a real job or to further their career ambitions. Our ongoing work will address the way the future of work is being impacted and influenced by factors including disruptive technologies and emerging industries, preparing Queenslanders for changes that are already happening.

Responding to these changes will include:

- Supporting our current and future Year 12 graduates to successfully transition into the workforce by offering free training in high priority areas under the Free tafe initiative;
- Partnering with selected regions to identify current and emerging jobs and design tailored solutions to ensure a supply of skilled local people to meet this demand through the Regional Skills Investment Strategy; and
- Providing eligible Queenslanders who have substantial industry experience the opportunity to complete a priority trade qualification via the Trade Skills Assessment and Gap Training Program.

The \$420 million *Skilling Queenslanders for Work* initiative, also part of the plan, aims to support up to 54,000 Queenslanders into work through training and skills development over a six year commitment. In 2017–18, \$72.43 million has been invested to provide nationally recognised training, skills development and job opportunities to 12,434 disadvantaged Queenslanders.

The *Back to Work Regional Employment* package is a \$369 million package that provides businesses with financial support to employ jobseekers and boost regions facing challenging economic times. It is designed to give businesses the confidence to hire unemployed jobseekers, provide an economic boost to Queensland businesses and support disadvantaged jobseekers into employment. As at 30 June 2018, over \$117 million in *Employer Support Payments* were made to more than 7000 employers employing more than 14,000 jobseekers in Queensland.

The number of small businesses in Queensland increased by 11,000 in 2016/17 and the state now has more than 426,000 small businesses (based on available data). An allocation of \$22.7 million over three years to the *Advancing Small Business Queensland Strategy 2016-2020* from the \$650 million Advance Queensland initiative has been provided to small businesses. This includes a suite of grants and support programs to assist small businesses in growing, increasing their workforce and accessing advice to support their business potential.

We have achieved a lot in the first financial year of our new department. In the year ahead, we will be working towards integrating the services and programs of our department. Aligning like-work areas will allow us to provide a seamless service to our stakeholders, particularly to those in regional locations, and while the future of work is still evolving, we will reposition the department to best prepare job seekers and workers for the roles and opportunities the economy presents now and in the years ahead.

I also want to recognise the commitment of our department staff. It is through their enthusiasm and wiliness to embrace change that we can ensure an agile and diverse organisation that delivers increased value to our customers.

I look forward to continuing our efforts to ensure that all Queenslanders have the skills and opportunities to participate and prosper in the economy.

**Mary-Anne Curtis**  
**Director-General**