

ANNUAL REPORT 2021–2022



Acknowledgement of Country

The Department of Employment, Small Business and Training (DESBT) respectfully acknowledges the First Nations people in the state of Queensland and acknowledges the cultural and spiritual connection that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have with the land and sea.

We respectfully acknowledge Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people as two unique and diverse peoples, with their own rich and distinct cultures, resilience, and strengths. We specifically acknowledge the unique history and cultural heritage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Peoples of Australia.

We pay our respect to the Elders past and present. We are dedicated to the inclusion of cultural knowledge and values as critical factors in the development, implementation and evaluation of strategies and actions to support First Nations people.

About this report

Purpose

This Annual Report summarises financial and corporate performance information about the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training (DESBT or “the department”) for 2021–22. It has been prepared in accordance with the *Financial Accountability Act 2009*, the *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2019* and the Annual Reporting Requirements for Queensland Government agencies.

Enquiries and further information

This Annual Report, including additional information not reported in the published version is available online:

<https://desbt.qld.gov.au/about-us/reports>

Contact details for additional hard copies:

Website: <https://desbt.qld.gov.au>

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Interpreter Services



The Queensland Government is committed to providing accessible services to Queenslanders from all culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. If you have difficulty in understanding the annual report, please call Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) on telephone 131 450 and we will arrange an interpreter to effectively communicate the report to you.

Open Data

DESBT's implementation of the Queensland Language Services Policy during 2021–22 is available online: www.data.qld.gov.au

For 2021–22, DESBT had no expenditure to report for consultancies or overseas travel.

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Attribution

Content from this annual report should be attributed as:

The State of Queensland, Department of Employment, Small Business and Training
Annual Report 2021–22.

Feedback

We continually strive to meet best practice reporting standards and value the views of our readers. We invite you to provide feedback on this report by completing a survey on the *Get Involved* website:

www.getinvolved.qld.gov.au/gi/consultation/10150/survey/8951/view.html?cid=30513

Social Media Sites



www.au.linkedin.com/company/department-of-employment-small-business-and-training



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www.facebook.com/skillsforqld



www.youtube.com/channel/UCap30iZpq88qX7vMf-Jap9w

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Letter of compliance

29 September 2022

The Honourable Dianne Farmer MP
Minister for Employment and Small Business and
Minister for Training and Skills Development
PO Box 15483
City East Qld 4002

Dear Minister Farmer

I am pleased to submit for presentation to the Parliament the Annual Report 2021–2022 and financial statements for the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training.

I certify that this annual report complies with:

- the prescribed requirements of the *Financial Accountability Act 2009* and the *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2019*
- the detailed requirements set out in the Annual report requirements for Queensland Government agencies and as outlined in the compliance checklist (refer Appendix 1).

Yours sincerely



Warwick Agnew
Director-General
Department of Employment, Small Business and Training

Message from the Director-General

In 2021-22 the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training has continued to deliver programs and initiatives to achieve our vision of 'skilled Queenslanders and a vibrant small business sector growing our economy'.

I am proud of how our work has contributed to Queensland's strong economic performance emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2021-22, the department has been at the forefront of the Queensland Government's response to support practical actions to alleviate workforce pressures.

In March 2022 the department delivered the Queensland Workforce Summit, a whole-of-government event, which brought together more than 350 industry and business leaders to develop innovative solutions to current workforce shortages and plan for the future of work.

The outcomes of the summit, combined with input from industries and regions across Queensland and underpinning research, informed the development of Good people. Good jobs: Queensland Workforce Strategy 2022-2032 which was released in August 2022.

The Queensland Workforce Strategy includes a focus on building partnerships with key industry groups to support employers and ensure our state leads the nation with a strategic approach to grow, build, and develop its workforce.

In 2021-22 the Queensland Government invested more than \$1 billion in publicly-funded training and skills initiatives which contribute to building Queensland's workforce to support our economic recovery and growth.

As a result of this investment, over 226,000 Queensland government-funded students have undertaken vocational education and training in 2021-22.

We know that each dollar invested in skills and training for Queenslanders pays dual dividends by enriching the lives and employment prospects of students and by fuelling the state's economy with a highly trained workforce.

I am also incredibly proud of the commitment of my department to support small businesses in 2021-22, particularly those impacted by the ongoing pandemic and floods.

Our regional team provided face-to-face tailored support to small businesses and our Small Business Hotline, Business Queensland website, and grants programs also provided Queensland's small businesses with critical information and resources.

The 2021 COVID-19 Business Support Package delivered more than \$320 million to over 35,000 businesses which lost revenue due to the lockdowns.

We are also leading the roll out of the Small Business Wellness Package to ensure small businesses are better prepared for adversity when it strikes and have measures in place to relieve the pressures. The package will make a vital contribution to supporting the mental health of Queensland's small business owners.

During Queensland Small Business Month in May 2022, we marked the 20th anniversary of the Mentoring for Growth program and celebrated the volunteer mentors who give their time and expertise to help small business grow and thrive.

Also in May, the Queensland Small Business Commissioner role became permanent as a vital resource for the small business sector. Coupled with the formation of a new grass-roots Queensland Small Business Advisory Council we continued to strengthen the voice of small business.

I thank my team at DESBT for your work and collective achievements in 2021–22 and look forward to 2022–23 as we continue to work to prepare Queensland's workforce for the future, improve Queenslanders' lives and strengthen our small business sector.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'W Agnew', with a small dot at the end.

Warwick Agnew
Director-General
Department of Employment, Small Business and Training

Our department

Our strategic objectives



Employment

Preparing Queensland's workforce for the demands of current and future industries



Small Business

Helping small businesses to start, grow and employ



Training and skills

Connecting people to quality training and skills



Our DESBT culture

Supporting a high performing and contemporary organisation to adapt and add value in delivering priorities

Our vision

Skilled Queenslanders and vibrant small businesses growing Queensland's economy.

Our purpose

We support Queensland's future workforce by connecting Queenslanders to learning opportunities through quality training, employment opportunities and by helping small businesses to start, grow and thrive.

Our values

Our values are the Queensland Public Service values, which underpin everything we do and are the building blocks of our workplace culture. They guide our behaviours, decision-making and the way we support our future workforce in delivering better outcomes for Queensland.



Customers first

- know your customer
- Deliver what matters
- Make decisions with empathy



Ideas into action

- Challenge the norm and suggest solutions
- Encourage and embrace new ideas
- Work across boundaries



Unleash potential

- Expect greatness
- Lead and set clear expectations
- Seek, provide and act on feedback



Be Courageous

- Own your actions, successes and mistakes
- Take calculated risks
- Act with transparency



Empower people

- Lead, empower and trust
- Play to everyone's strengths
- Develop yourself and those around you

Our contribution to Queensland Government objectives

The Queensland Government's objectives for the community were built around *Unite and Recover – Queensland's Economic Recovery Plan*.

We contributed to the following government objectives:

- **Supporting jobs** – by delivering programs to get people back to work and support small businesses to employ and assist jobseekers.
- **Backing small business** – by helping small businesses to start, grow and thrive through grants and support programs and to help keep Queenslanders in jobs.
- **Making it for Queensland** – by working together with other agencies to increase access to new markets for regional small businesses and working with industry to adopt innovative manufacturing techniques to enhance global competitiveness.
- **Building Queensland** – by upgrading and building new TAFE Queensland infrastructure and facilities to ensure we have world-class learning environments.
- **Growing our regions** – by supporting and maintaining regional partnerships and working with regional business and industry on projects and programs to support economic resilience and growth.
- **Investing in skills** – by connecting people to quality training and skills to prepare them for work now and in the future.
- **Backing our frontline services** – by connecting people to COVID-19 safe work training and investing in infrastructure that will be used for teaching new skills to frontline staff to help keep Queenslanders safe.

Our operating environment

The major environmental factors that had an impact on DESBT and its service delivery during 2021–22 involved:

- financial and economic conditions that evolved in response to COVID-19, and extreme weather events
- changing growth and investment rates
- digital acceleration
- shifting economic, labour market, business, and skill requirements.

We proactively monitor and manage enterprise and strategic risks, that may impact our ability to:

- deliver critical government initiatives and/or carry out core functions with sufficient workforce capacity or the right capability
- demonstrate consistently the leadership behaviours needed to achieve the department's vision and purpose
- provide customer service delivery using our ICT systems
- build and maintain relationships with external stakeholders
- identify or respond appropriately to a fraud or corruption event
- provide health, safety, and wellbeing support to employees, contractors, or visitors
- measure and quantify the impact of activities and outcomes to aid in decision making.

We also pursue opportunities for advancing our strategic objectives by:

- applying resilience and learnings to improve our responsiveness to COVID-19 and natural disasters
- leveraging regional networks to maximise our resources in being responsive to customer needs
- strengthening and valuing our relationships with the community, industry, and government agencies to drive policy and program success
- supporting a safe, healthy, and wellbeing conscious culture
- modernising our ICT systems in providing continued customer service delivery.

During 2021–22 we worked collaboratively with government and stakeholders in delivering the following key achievements and government commitments:

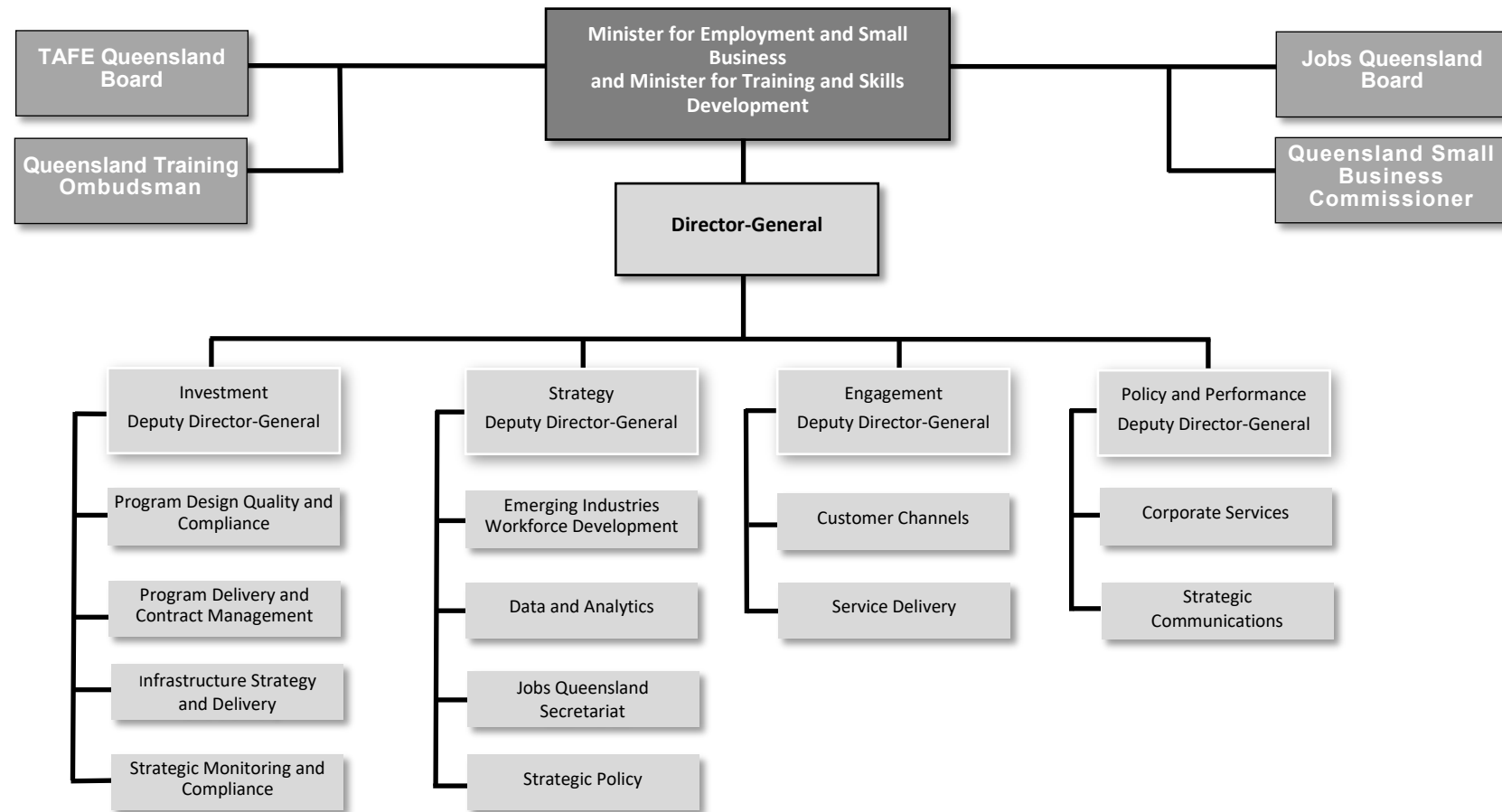
- In March 2022, the department led the delivery of the Queensland Workforce Summit 2022, bringing together experts, thought leaders and change makers to plan the future of work in Queensland.
- At the summit, the Queensland Government made a number of key announcements:
 - the development of a Queensland Workforce Strategy
 - the release of Jobs Queensland’s *Anticipating Future Skills* employment projections
 - investment of \$15 million for new training and skills strategies as part of the VET Emerging Industries initiative under the Future Skills Fund
 - the launch of the Growing Workforce Participation Fund in target areas, providing one off grant funding of between \$20,000 and \$200,000 to support jobseekers who experience greater disadvantage in the labour market.
- Throughout Queensland Small Business Month in May, we, and our partners, ran events across the state to celebrate our diverse small businesses and connect them to support, grants and partnerships that will help them thrive.
- We commenced the investment of \$100 million in funding over three years to upgrade TAFE campuses and improve training programs as part of the broader Equipping TAFE for Our Future initiative.
- We provided Free TAFE and Free Apprenticeships for Under 25s through a \$21 million investment which provided Queenslanders aged under 25 with free Certificate III courses across 26 priority skills areas including agriculture, manufacturing, health services, engineering, aged and disability support and early childhood education as well as free apprenticeships across 139 priority qualification areas including carpentry, mechanics, electrical and hospitality.
- We invested more than \$1 billion to continue delivering high quality training and skills initiatives which contribute to building Queensland’s workforce to support our economic recovery and growth.
- Through the 2021 COVID-19 Business Support Package, we delivered more than \$320 million to over 35,000 businesses which lost revenue due to the lockdowns.

Our legislation

Information about the legislation and responsibilities administered by us, is available at:

- <https://desbt.qld.gov.au/about-us/our-department/legislation>
- the Queensland Government Administrative Arrangements Order webpage: <https://www.qld.gov.au/about/how-government-works/government-responsibilities>

Organisational structure



Outlook planned priorities for 2022–23

Employment

In 2022–23, the department is committed to delivering employment policies and programs to increase employment opportunities for Queenslanders, in particular, disadvantaged cohorts and unemployed jobseekers. Our objective is to continue preparing Queensland's workforce for the demands of current and future industries. This includes:

- delivering a Queensland Workforce Strategy to position Queensland's workforce as a key enabler of the state's prosperity, by helping to build the workforce that the state needs now and, in the future.
- continuing to deliver targeted employment programs to assist employers and disadvantaged job seekers as well as supporting innovative solutions to industry-specific employment challenges through the revitalised Back to Work program (up to \$140 million)
- supporting workforce adaption to high-growth and emerging industries including the hydrogen industry
- delivering strategic advice on future skills needs, workforce planning and development.

Small Business

In 2022–23, the department is committed to delivering small business policies and programs to ensure small businesses are supported to start, grow, and thrive. This includes implementation of:

- increased funding of \$10.1 million over four years and \$3.2 million per annum ongoing to establish a permanent Queensland Small Business Commissioner's office to provide information and advocacy support to small businesses and assist in resolving commercial tenancy disputes
- increased funding of \$39.1 million over four years and \$12.6 million per annum ongoing to continue to provide small business grants and the Mentoring for Growth program. These programs will support digital capability and upgrades, strategic business and marketing advice, staff management and future business development and planning.
- continuing to strengthen the capability of small businesses through the Big Plans for Small Business grants programs and other small business services that support small businesses at various stages, from new and emerging to fast growing businesses
- continuing to implement the Queensland Social Enterprise Strategy and Social Enterprise Jobs Fund
- a \$6.75 million package to support the mental health and wellness of small business owners. In implementing the Small Business Wellness Package, the department will be partnering with the Queensland Mental Health Commission, the Queensland Small Business Commissioner and the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Training and Skills

In 2022–23, the department is committed to facilitating access and participation in VET pathways, enabling Queenslanders to gain employment in current and future industries. Our objective is to connect people to quality training and skills. This includes:

- developing a VET Strategy to ensure that Queensland's \$1.2 billion annual investment in skills and training is tailored to meet current and future workforce needs
- continuing to contribute to Queensland's economic recovery by funding quality skills pathways and opportunities, including Free TAFE and apprenticeships for Queenslanders under the age of 25 in priority skills areas
- implementing the VET Emerging Industries \$15 million investment in skills development, including for the agribusiness, energy, manufacturing, and the screen and digital sectors
- investing additional funding of \$100.6 million over two years to support the delivery of VET services by Queensland's public training providers
- delivering investment in infrastructure through the Equipping TAFE for Our Future program to meet significant growth in training demand and ensuring that our training facilities are equipped to provide these emerging skills
- delivering a First Nations Training Strategy to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to develop skills relevant to local needs and be able to compete for jobs in the future economy
- continuing the Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative to assist up to 15,000 disadvantaged Queenslanders each year through a suite of targeted skills and training programs
- investing additional funding of \$3.3 million over four years to support the implementation of several key initiatives included in the Queensland Resources Industry Development Plan. This includes the Queensland Future Skills for All program to assist industry, businesses and individuals seeking to enter, upskill and reskill in autonomous technologies fields and to develop pathways into higher education courses for those interested in pursuing a career in automation.
- investing \$16.5 million to establish Manufacturing Skills Queensland, an independent, not-for-profit, industry body to support both existing workers and new entrants into the manufacturing industry.

Financial performance summary

This financial summary of the department's performance and position provides an overview of the key financial information for the year ended 30 June 2022 and a statement by the Chief Finance Officer. A complete view is provided in the financial statements section of this report.

Financial performance

The department's 2021–22 total income was \$1.55 billion and total expenses of \$1.519 billion, resulting in a net surplus for the year of \$31.2 million, compared to a deficit of \$5.4 million in 2020–21. The year-end positions in both years have been driven by land revaluations with an increment in 2021–22 and a decrement in the previous year.

Table 1. Summary of financial results of the department's operations

| Category | 2021–22 \$'000 | 2020–21 \$'000 | 2019–20 \$'000 |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Total income | 1,550,051 | 1,309,617 | 1,105,339 |
| Total expenses | 1,518,818 | 1,314,974 | 1,107,512 |
| Operating result for the year | 31,233 | (5,357) | (2,173) |

Income

The primary source of the department's revenue in 2021–22 was \$1.459 billion of appropriation from the Queensland Government, which accounted for 94 per cent of the total income. Further sources of revenue comprised \$34.9 million for a land increment, \$50.1 million from other revenue which included grant recoveries and contributions from TAFE Queensland for the Southbank Education Training Precinct Public Private Partnership (SETP).

The department also received \$3.2 million in grants and contributions as well as \$2.7 million of user charges and fees, mainly related to the hire of facilities and property income from TAFE Queensland facilities, controlled by the department.

Table 2. Income by category for the year ended 30 June 2022 and previous years

| Category | 2021–22 Percentages | 2021–22 \$'000 | 2020–21 \$'000 | 2019–20 \$'000 |
|---|------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Appropriation revenue | 94.1% | 1,459,156 | 1,271,505 | 1,073,112 |
| Other revenue | 3.2% | 50,146 | 30,811 | 24,880 |
| Land increment | 2.3% | 34,948 | - | - |
| User charges, grants, and contributions | 0.4% | 5,801 | 7,301 | 7,347 |
| Total revenue | 100% | 1,550,051 | 1,309,617 | 1,105,339 |

Expenses

Expenses totalled \$1.519 billion in 2021–22, which included \$1.26 billion (83 per cent) of grants and subsidies mainly related to training and skills programs (\$855.6 million), and another \$354.8 million was for small business programs predominately for the COVID-19 Business Support Grants.

The department expensed \$96.9 million on supplies and services with the largest spend on building maintenance and associated costs. To support the department's workforce, \$70.5 million was expensed on employee expenses. There were 570 full time equivalents at 30 June 2022 compared to 537 full time equivalents in 2021. Depreciation of \$57.8 million was incurred which predominately related to TAFE Queensland buildings controlled by the department, and a further \$21.7 million for finance/borrowing costs associated with the SETP finance liability, which will continue to 2039.

Table 3. Expenses by category for the year ended 30 June 2022 and previous years

| Category | 2021–22 Percentages | 2021–22 \$'000 | 2020–21 \$'000 | 2019–20 \$'000 |
|--|---------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Grants and subsidies | 82.9% | 1,259,759 | 1,083,123 | 873,745 |
| Supplies and services | 6.4% | 96,940 | 75,582 | 88,126 |
| Employee expenses | 4.6% | 70,488 | 66,142 | 69,443 |
| Depreciation and amortisation | 3.8% | 57,782 | 54,035 | 48,435 |
| Finance/borrowing costs | 1.4% | 21,726 | 22,130 | 22,493 |
| Other expenses (including Impairment losses and revaluation decrement) | 0.8% | 12,123 | 13,962 | 5,270 |
| Total expenses | 100% | 1,518,818 | 1,314,974 | 1,107,512 |

Financial position

The net assets position or total equity reported in the financial statements shows the net worth of the department. As at 30 June 2022, this was \$1.513 billion.

Table 4. Summary of financial position – Assets, Liabilities and Equity

| Category | 2021–22 \$'000 | 2020–21 \$'000 | 2019–20 \$'000 |
|-------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Total assets | 1,970,888 | 1,850,266 | 1,807,759 |
| Total liabilities | (457,689) | (500,796) | (462,913) |
| Net assets | 1,513,199 | 1,349,470 | 1,344,846 |
| Contributed equity | 1,204,016 | 1,234,040 | 1,240,749 |
| Accumulated surplus/(deficit) | (75,054) | (106,287) | (100,929) |
| Asset revaluation surplus | 384,237 | 221,717 | 205,026 |
| Total equity | 1,513,199 | 1,349,470 | 1,344,846 |

Assets

As at 30 June 2022, the department held assets totalling \$1.971 billion. Assets consist primarily of \$264.4 million in cash, and \$1.694 billion in property, plant, and equipment. Property, plant, and equipment represents 86 per cent of total assets and consists predominately of \$453.4 million in land, \$1.109 billion in buildings and \$131.8 million of work in progress on buildings, which are all at TAFE Queensland sites controlled by the department.

The department delivered \$31.2 million in capital works during 2021–22 compared to \$68.9 million in 2020–21. The annual revaluation of buildings had a net increase of \$162.5 million, increasing the building asset revaluation surplus to \$384.2 million. The revaluation of land resulted in a \$34.9 million increment that is recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Income as the department has yet to establish a land asset revaluation reserve.

Liabilities

The department's liabilities as at 30 June 2022, totalled \$457.7 million consisting primarily of \$182.2 million in payables, \$202 million in interest-bearing liabilities, and \$70.2 million in provision for training services.

Payables relate to trade and capital creditors, amounts owed to grant and subsidy recipients and amounts payable to the Queensland Government to the Consolidated Fund.

Interest-bearing liabilities relate to the finance liability for the SETP, which will continue to 2039. A provision in training services is for obligations under contractual arrangements to registered training providers, for training delivery and assessment of students who commenced studies and did not complete their study prior to 30 June 2022.

Equity

The department's equity as at 30 June 2022, totalled \$1.513 billion consisting of \$1.204 billion contributed equity, a \$384.2 million asset revaluation surplus and \$75.1 million accumulated deficits. Contributed equity is predominantly made up of balances transferred into the department on establishment from the Machinery-of-Government changes in 2017–18 and ongoing appropriated equity adjustments to/from the consolidated fund. The asset revaluation surplus is for the building class and fluctuates with annual revaluations. The accumulated deficit position is predominately due to the annual land revaluations with the department yet to establish an asset revaluation reserve for the land class.

Statement by the Chief Finance Officer

In accordance with the requirements of the *Financial Accountability Act 2009*, the Chief Finance Officer has provided the Director-General with financial statements confirming the financial internal controls of the department are operating efficiently, effectively, and economically in conformance with Section 38 of the *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2019*. The statement was presented at the Audit and Risk Committee meeting in August 2022. The Chief Finance Officer has fulfilled the minimum responsibilities required by the *Financial Accountability Act 2009*.

Our Service Performance Highlights 2021–22

Employment

We prepare Queensland's workforce for the demands of current and future industries.

Workforce Summit

Queensland and the nation are experiencing one of the tightest labour markets in recent history, with businesses and employers continuing to face workforce and skills shortages.

On 11 March 2022, the Queensland Government convened the Queensland Workforce Summit 2022 (the summit), with a focus on cooperatively planning the next phase of Queensland's economic recovery. DESBT led the delivery of this whole-of-government event.

The summit's theme – Building our Future, Together – reflected the importance of a collaborative partnership approach to building the workforce needed to ensure Queensland's continued prosperity. The summit delivered on a commitment made through the Big Plans for Small Business Strategy 2021–2023.

The summit brought together over 350 international and Queensland community, industry and economic experts, all levels of government (federal, state, and local), thought leaders and change makers to address current and future workforce challenges and plan for the future of work in Queensland.

The summit focussed on six key themes identified as priorities by industry, small businesses and the education and training sectors:

1. 'Growing your own' workforce in regions
2. Shaping work-ready Queenslanders through improved school-to-work experiences
3. Maximising workforce participation
4. Attracting and retaining staff in the new norm
5. Skills development pathways aligned to industry needs to ensure Queensland's workforce is ready for now, and the future
6. Harnessing workforce opportunities in emerging and growth industries in Queensland.

Summit delegates focussed on the key themes, to co-design innovative and practical solutions to ensure that Queensland has a ready workforce to support growth, strengthen our communities and keep Queensland at the forefront of new economic opportunities.

A key commitment made at the summit to develop a workforce strategy to strengthen Queensland's current and future workforce has been fulfilled by the government. The Queensland Workforce Strategy, which was launched in August 2022, outlines a shared vision for the future and the importance of industry, business, communities, and government working together to ensure the state's workforce is positioned to capitalise on the opportunities ahead.

Jobs Queensland's Anticipating Future Skills Series provided the central evidence base for the Workforce Summit. The employment projections from 2020–21 through to 2024–25 helped to identify current and future workforce challenges and guided the discussions around planning for the future of work in Queensland.

Back to Work Program

The Queensland Government has committed \$140 million over the next four years for the revitalised Back to Work program.

The program offers employers, often from the small business sector, financial and non-financial support, including payments of up to \$15,000 when they employ Queenslanders who have experienced a period of unemployment and up to \$20,000 youth boost payments when they employ eligible Queenslanders under the age of 25. As at 30 June 2022, more than 80 per cent of employers who benefited from the Back to Work program were small businesses.

As Queensland entered the latest phase of economic recovery, the Back to Work program included additional support for employers and jobseekers to support long-term and sustainable employment.

Back to Work has new programs to support jobseekers and employers to gain and retain employment opportunities beyond the first year of employment. These include:

- **Back to Work Incentive Payments** – including Back to Work Support Payment and Youth Boost Payments
- **Small Business Support Pool** – capped funding up to \$2,000 to support Back to Work employee retention
- **Small Business Short Courses** – free online courses to upskill small business employers to support Back to Work target groups
- **Pre-Employment Support Program** – helps jobseekers to determine career pathways that best suit local needs and personal aspirations
- **Jobseeker Support Pool** – funding to support jobseekers to overcome economic barriers to employment.

During the 2021–22 financial year, payments were made to 768 employers that assisted more than 942 previously unemployed Queenslanders who identified as belonging to one or more of the program's target groups. The successful jobseekers¹ were:

- 599 young people (63.6 per cent of approved applications)
- 498 long-term unemployed people (52.9 per cent of approved applications)
- 158 people with disability (16.8 per cent of approved applications)
- 150 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (15.9 per cent of approved applications).

Back to Work continued to support employers and jobseekers under the previous program during the 2021–22 financial year.

As at 30 June 2022, the previous Back to Work program had supported 27,613 previously unemployed Queenslanders into employment with 12,858 employers.

Back to Work is available throughout regional Queensland and in the Ipswich, Lockyer Valley, Logan, Moreton, Scenic Rim, and Somerset Local Government Areas (LGAs) in South East Queensland.

¹ Target group numbers represent the total unique number of jobseekers in each group. Jobseekers may identify as being from more than one target group, therefore the totals do not match the program's jobseeker total.

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| 27,613 | 12,858 | 7,745 |
| employees assisted | employers supported | apprentices & trainees supported |
| an increase of 2,067 (approximately 8.1%) on 2020–21 | an increase of 833 (approximately 6.9%) on 2020–21 | an increase of 744 (approximately 10.6%) on 2020–21 |

Growing Workforce Participation Fund

In March 2022, as part of the Back to Work initiative, the department launched the \$1.5 million Growing Workforce Participation Fund. This fund enables eligible organisations to apply for grants of \$20,000 to \$200,000 to trial new programs that will help jobseekers and employers to connect.

The fund is targeted at industry groups and recognises the importance of industry engagement in creating long-term sustainable employment outcomes for people who experience disadvantage in the labour market.

The fund enables and encourages industry partnerships, including organisations which represent target groups supported through Back to Work, to trial new approaches aimed at creating improved job matching, industry specific pre-employment pathways and the development of resources for both jobseekers and employers.

A mandatory criterion is that the projects must benefit Back to Work target groups and be delivered within the Back to Work eligible areas. Successful projects to be funded under round 1 of the Growing Workforce Participation Fund were announced in July 2022.

Queensland Business and Skilled Migration program

In partnership with Migration Queensland, the department supports the delivery of Queensland's business and skilled migration programs, including by setting the skilled occupation lists that support state visa nominations.

In 2021–22, due to international border restrictions, state visa nominations focused on securing skilled visa holders who were already onshore to help meet Queensland's critical skills needs in sectors impacted by COVID-19.

Regional Jobs Committees

The Regional Jobs Committees are part of our plan to work with all stakeholders to create more jobs, improve training pathways and drive economic activity across the state. The committees form one of the key actions of the Skills for Queensland – Great training for quality jobs strategy and the Big Plans for Small Business Strategy 2021–23.

The committees provide an opportunity for local stakeholders to work together to align regional skills and workforce development with local industry and employer needs.

The committees bring together local business, government, community leaders, training providers, industry representatives, high schools, and unions to develop and implement collaborative place-based solutions to workforce challenges and opportunities within their regions.

There are now nine committees operating across the state, in Cairns, Townsville, Mackay, Bundaberg, Fraser Coast, Redlands, Gold Coast, Springfield and Toowoomba.

These committees help drive job growth in their regions and plan for the future by:

- developing strategies that address local workforce and skills issues
- identifying new skills and maximising local employment opportunities
- providing regional industry advice to identify trends and opportunities in the local area
- ensuring the local workforce has the skills needed to fill future jobs.

The committees will continue to play an important role in understanding localised place-based workforce matters including the challenges that are encountered by small businesses and will support the department to better understand regional workforce needs and find local solutions.

The committees have a strong focus on engagement and local leadership to address skills and workforce challenges and are funded through the \$200 million Future Skills Fund.

The department acknowledges the role of Jobs Queensland in supporting the committees during 2021–22. Jobs Queensland's employment projections and tailored labour market resources have supported the committees to identify local workforce and skills issues; develop strategies to maximise local employment opportunities; and to ensure the local workforce has the skills needed to meet demands for future jobs.

The practical workforce planning tools and training, also delivered by Jobs Queensland, have provided the committees with a greater understanding of the benefits of, and have assisted in building capability and skills in workforce planning. This allows the committees to support small businesses within their region to undertake workforce planning and grow.

Supporting the transition of North Stradbroke Island (Minjerribah) workers

The department continued to support Minjerribah workers to upskill, reskill and transition to new employment opportunities, including supporting workers impacted by the cessation of sand mining on Minjerribah through the North Stradbroke Island Workers Assistance Scheme.

The scheme that was due to end in May 2021 was extended until 30 June 2022, to give former and current Sibelco workers more time to access assistance. The intent of the scheme was to supplement, not replace, the assistance package Sibelco provided to its workers. Under the scheme, a range of assistance measures were available, with different eligibility requirements. All eligible former and current Sibelco workers were offered support under the scheme.

Since 2016, a dedicated Employment Services Manager has been providing advice and case management services to affected Sibelco workers to ensure that they were aware of the assistance available to them.

During this time, the department provided support to 184 Sibelco workers, more than originally anticipated.

The North Stradbroke Island Workers Assistance Scheme ceased on 30 June 2022. Beyond 30 June 2022, affected workers will remain a priority cohort for the department.

Case studies

Back to Work – Attention to Detail, Townsville LGA

North Queensland based luxury car detailer, Attention to Detail has utilised the previous and new Back to Work programs to help two young people find employment.

Business owner, Philip Moravcik employed Josh in 2020 after he met him during a work-experience placement for school students. In November 2021, Philip accessed the Back to Work program to employ Robbie. Both Josh and Robbie love working on cars including Porsches and other luxury brands that most people can only dream about.

Philip recently accessed Back to Work's Small Business Support Pool payment of \$2,000 to send Robbie on a specialist training course, which now allows him to work autonomously when installing paint protection films. This has assisted Robbie to build his skill set and maintain ongoing employment in the business.

Philip claimed that Back to Work's assistance, together with other supports provided by the Queensland Government, helped his company expand, leading to the recent opening of a second location in Cairns.

Back to Work – General Panel Works, Rockhampton LGA

With over 40 years' experience, General Panel Works is a third generation, locally owned and operated business in the heart of Rockhampton. It prides itself on providing quality customer service and repairs to a high standard. Co-owner Tammy Jamieson says that Back to Work support has relieved the financial pressure on the business and allowed it to invest time in training and supervising its staff.

The business has accessed the previous Back to Work program and the revitalised program to employ two apprentices.

Joel is currently completing his third year in his Certificate III in Automotive Refinishing Technology apprenticeship. Joel aims to be the best spray painter in town and Tammy says he's going well to achieve this.

Mace started working at the business earlier this year and has commenced a Certificate III in Automotive Body Repair Technology.

Tammy said without Back to Work's support, the business would not have been in a financial position to support these two additional full-time employees. Funding has been used for staff onboarding and buying parts and paint products from local suppliers. The funding was also invaluable when the business had to temporarily close shop recently when employees contracted COVID-19.

Small Business

We help small businesses to start, grow and employ.

97%

of all grant recipients told the department their project funded by the grant was a success

98%

of grant recipients were satisfied or very satisfied with their interactions with the department

Supporting businesses to adapt through COVID-19

2021 COVID-19 Business Support Grants

Following COVID-19 lockdowns in July and August 2021, the Queensland Government delivered a range of support measures including the 2021 COVID-19 Business Support Grants program (jointly funded by the Queensland and Australian governments).

Approximately \$320.87 million was paid to 35,487 Queensland businesses through the 2021 COVID-19 Business Support Grant and Border Business Zone Hardship Grant programs.

Further support provided to businesses in the border zone region included:

- \$1 million Play Money Reward vouchers for Gold Coast residents to support border zone businesses and tourism operators
- \$700,000 worth of mental health services
- \$50,000 in financial support for marketing campaigns such as 'Essentially Coolly'.

The Queensland and Australian governments committed to supporting Queensland businesses impacted by COVID-19 lockdowns. They provided significant support to keep businesses open during crucial times, assisted them in adapting, and allowed them to continue trading throughout this difficult time.

Over 98 per cent of businesses continued to trade with the support of the COVID-19 Business Support Grant program. In addition, these grants supported more than 167,000 jobs in industries most impacted by the pandemic.

Small Business COVID-19 Adaption Grant Program

The Small Business COVID-19 Adaption Grant Program supported small businesses that were subject to closure or highly impacted by the COVID-19 shutdown restrictions announced by the Queensland Government. Grants of up to \$10,000 were made available to eligible small businesses to access resources, specialist advice, digital technologies, services, and equipment so they could adapt, sustain operations, and build resilience.

Small Business COVID-19 Adaption Grant Program: Snapshot

| | | |
|-----------------------|--------------|--------------------|
| 20,498 | 67 | \$182.2M |
| applications approved | LGAs covered | paid to recipients |

Regional network of support

To assist small businesses in regional Queensland to stay afloat and keep their employees employed during COVID-19, in late 2020, the department established a network of Regional Stakeholder Managers in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland. Seven officers were employed to help local business communities become aware of and access available government support and other assistance, information, grants, and programs. Regional Stakeholder Managers were in place for 12 months, to respond to the immediate impacts of the pandemic and concluded service delivery on 12 November 2021.

DESBT Regional Offices continue to connect small businesses with government services, establish local partnerships and foster collaboration to promote grants programs and services to assist small businesses impacted by the pandemic.

Business Queensland website making it easy to access services

The Business Queensland website, managed by the department, provides information and resources on a wide range of topics supporting business and industry. During 2021–22, key information included COVID-19 and disaster recovery support and advice. The website achieved its largest number of visitors in 2021–22 with over 8 million users, which is 12.7 per cent more than the previous year.

Small Business Hotline answering the call

The department operated a Small Business Hotline to assist Queensland small businesses that were impacted by COVID-19 by directing small businesses to relevant support and information including health updates and travel restrictions. During 2021–22, the hotline assisted 19,380 callers.

Keeping small businesses connected

The department's Small Business Connects monthly e-newsletter and frequent email alerts provided updates to small business subscribers, keeping them informed about the services and support available.

The department also communicated changes to COVID-19 restrictions, small business grants and access to natural disaster support. Small businesses have been using LinkedIn and the Business Queensland Facebook page to stay informed and ask questions.

Promoting the value of small business

During 2021–22, the department actively supported and promoted the following activities.

Queensland Small Business Month (QSBM)

QSBM highlights to communities across the state that small businesses are an important contributor to the state's economy. In 2022, the focus was on showcasing small businesses that drive our economy, create local jobs, and build strong communities.

During May 2022, 167 events, including expos and activities were registered on the Business Queensland calendar. Focus areas were:

- raising the awareness of procurement opportunities
- providing small businesses with the tools they need to expand their business
- celebrating our multicultural small businesses
- promoting the value social enterprises bring to the community.

Feedback from events highlighted those attendees:

- appreciated the networking, connections and support offered by the events and the Queensland Government
- were not aware of the full range of resources and support available for small businesses
- would like to see more events delivered throughout the year.

The Love Your Small Business social media campaign, which ran in conjunction with QSBM, was expanded from 2021 to include a month-long celebration of local small businesses.

The success of the 2022 campaign was reflected by an increased social media reach, from 7,500 in 2021 to 69,800 in 2022.

As part of QSBM, Jobs Queensland hosted webinars to allow attendees to learn and gain skills in workforce planning. The refreshed Workforce Planning Connect suite of resources were showcased, which offered tangible support for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises to undertake a workforce planning process to overcome economic and labour market challenges.

Grants helping small businesses bounce back better

Since launching in 2021, more than 4,440 grant recipients have been supported by the Big Plans for Small Business grant programs, with commitments totalling more than \$25 million.

New programs under the Big Plans for Small Business program provide an increased focus on new and emerging sectors and embracing revitalised or innovative technologies that have emerged through the COVID-19 response.

The grant programs are designed to:

- assist small businesses to build resilience and grow
- improve small business innovation and growth
- assist small businesses to access new markets.

The grants programs include:

- The **Business Basics Grants** of \$5,000 each provides support to businesses to increase core skills and adopt best practice.
- The **Business Boost Grants** of up to \$15,000 to support small business to invest in advancing operational efficiency and increasing productivity.

The Business Growth Fund with grants of up to \$50,000, for small and medium-sized businesses experiencing high-growth to buy specialised equipment to help unlock their growth potential, increase production, expand the workforce, and maximise economic returns.

Toowoomba launches national Indigenous Business Month

On 1 October 2021, the national launch of Indigenous Business Month, established by the alumni of the Melbourne Business School's MURRA Indigenous Business Master program was held in Toowoomba. The national launch was held at the Highfields Cultural Centre and included an exhibition of Queensland Indigenous businesses and a panel discussion on Indigenous innovation and entrepreneurship.

Collectively Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses contribute more than \$1 billion a year to the national economy, with revenues growing on average at 12.5 per cent annually.

Be Kind at Check In Time campaign

The Be Kind at Check In Time campaign was delivered from 15 December 2021 to 14 January 2022, to encourage people to be respectful to workers managing the entry of vaccinated customers to hospitality and entertainment venues. The campaign promoted a positive message through radio and social media advertising and in-store posters to support businesses and their staff as they played a vital role in the state's public health response.

Get Ready Small Business campaign

From 17 October 2021 to 27 November 2021, the Get Ready Small Business campaign promoted the importance of disaster preparation and business continuity for small businesses in Queensland's north and far northwest through radio and digital advertising. Advertising targeted small business owners and operators in the 14 local government areas affected by the 2019 monsoon trough event and encouraged them to 'Get Ready' ahead of the traditional summer storm and cyclone season.

The campaign encouraged the use of Small Business Disaster Hub resources on the Business Queensland website and participation in local engagement activities including information events and expos in Townsville and Port Douglas, local outreach activities across all 14 local government areas and a series of Get Ready webinars. This activity was delivered as part of a \$10 million support package jointly funded under the Commonwealth and Queensland Government's Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements.

Mentoring for Growth – partnerships, prosperity, potential

During 2021–22, the department continued to deliver the Mentoring for Growth program, which celebrated its 20th birthday in 2022. The program offers eligible businesses free access to volunteer business experts who provide insights, options and suggestions relating to challenges and opportunities. Mentors are drawn from a Queensland-wide pool of registered mentors who have expertise and experience in coaching or developing businesses.

In the first half of 2021–22, the department worked on the administrative management of the program, including identifying key stakeholders for targeted cohorts, implementing a mentor recruitment strategy, and managing the intake and onboarding of mentors.

As part of the Big Plans for Small Business Strategy 2021–23, Mentoring for Growth targets regional areas, and specific cohorts including Aboriginal peoples, Torres Strait Islander peoples, women, culturally and linguistically diverse people and start-ups.

Overall, in 2021–22, 424 Mentoring for Growth sessions were held, with 397 unique businesses and mentors providing 625 volunteer hours of customised business mentoring. The program has been a great resource for businesses, which have had to change the way they operate, expand, and manage staff retention throughout the pandemic. Furthermore, tapping into other experienced business minds could potentially provide a new outlook and open new opportunities.

Small business regulatory reform

The department continued to work with the Office of Productivity and Red Tape Reduction (within Queensland Treasury) and the Queensland Small Business Commissioner to identify and champion regulatory reform activities being undertaken across the Queensland Government, to make it easier to do business. As part of this work, the department released the Better Regulation Update 2021 which showcases Queensland Government reforms that are reducing regulatory compliance requirements and costs for businesses, making processes easier and more straightforward and improving regulatory practices.

The department oversaw the implementation of the Queensland Government response to the Better Regulation Taskforce's Regulatory Review project related to artisan food and non-alcoholic producers.

The department also continued to lead the implementation of the \$60.1 million Small Business Regulatory Reform Agreement between the Queensland and Australian governments, which saw the delivery of seven transformative digital projects, by a range of Queensland Government agencies. These projects, which include DESBT's Queensland Business Launchpad, are streamlining regulatory compliance processes for small business.

Business health check

The \$140 million Big Plans for Small Business Strategy 2021–2023 includes a focus on providing easy access to information on running a business through the Business Ready initiative.

Business Ready will deliver a range of improvements to how the Queensland Government supports its business community through the Business Queensland website.

In June 2021, the department launched the 'Business health check', as part of the Business Ready initiative.

The 'Business health check' tool was designed to support small businesses recover from the impacts of COVID-19 and get into the best possible shape for future growth. The tool helps Queensland businesses find out how ready they are for change and how they can improve their resilience. By answering a series of questions, the health check provides each business with a personalised report and resources to help them address potential weaknesses.

Advocating for small business

Queensland Small Business Commissioner and supporting office

The Queensland Small Businesses Commissioner (QSBC) has continued to advocate for small business issues and assist small businesses under the *COVID-19 Emergency Response Act 2020* and Retail Shop Leases and Other Commercial Leases (COVID-19 Emergency Response) Regulation 2020. Further details are provided in Appendix 4 of this report.

The Queensland Small Business Advisory Council

Small business in Queensland gained a strengthened voice with the reinvigoration of the Queensland Small Business Advisory Council (QSBAC) to represent small business interests to the Queensland Government.

Council membership reflects the breadth and depth of small business in Queensland, with members representing a wide range of industries and locations. Members also represent a balance of voices from women in business, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business, culturally and linguistically diverse business and social enterprise.

On 5 May 2022, the first meeting of the QSBAC was held during the opening week of Queensland Small Business Month. This meeting illustrated the importance of supporting and promoting the small business sector. The council will meet four times per year, including in regional locations.

The inception of the QSBAC came after the role and supporting office of the Queensland Small Business Commissioner was made permanent on 3 May 2022.

Together, the QSBAC and the Small Business Commissioner will help ensure that Queensland's small businesses have a strong voice and direct input to the government on issues important to them. Further details are provided in Appendix 5 of this report.

Rebuilding stronger following natural disasters

During 2021–22, Queensland experienced nine events of enough significance to activate Disaster Recovery Funding Assistance to support recovery of Queensland communities (eligible disasters).

In four of these instances, impacted small businesses could receive grants and loan assistance to recover and return to viable operations:

- Central, Southern and Western Queensland Rainfall and Flooding, 10 November – 3 December 2021
- Ex-Tropical Cyclone Seth, 29 December 2021 – 10 January 2022
- South East Queensland Rainfall and Flooding, 22 February – 7 March 2022
- Southern Queensland Flooding, 6 – 20 May 2022.

South East Queensland Rainfall and Flooding

The department supported Queensland businesses that were affected by the rainfall and flooding events during 22 February to 7 March 2022.

To understand the impact of the event, the department initiated a natural disaster business impact survey within South East Queensland. The survey was used to inform a joint Australian and Queensland Government disaster recovery assistance package worth \$558.5 million, including grants and loans for small business.

The department immediately mobilised regional staff to work with the Small Business Hotline to help connect small business owners with available support and to determine additional support that may be needed.

Departmental staff had direct engagement with flood-affected businesses as well as district disaster management working groups. The department collaborated with local councils to coordinate recovery support for small businesses and assisted with developing links to Australian and Queensland Government services to support small business owners.

The department provided information and referral to a wide variety of support including Queensland Government personal hardship financial assistance; Australian Government disaster recovery payments; the Queensland Small Business Commissioner's advice and support in lease dispute mediation and advocacy to government; natural disaster legal aid; industrial relations advice and support for mental health and wellbeing.

The department continued to provide employment, training, and small business programs to support businesses to grow and recover. These included: Mentoring for Growth and Recovery programs; Small Business Solutions through TAFE Queensland; Back to Work; and Skilling Queenslanders for Work employment programs and ongoing support for apprentices and trainees through the Queensland Apprenticeship and Traineeship Office.

As at 30 June 2022, 2,896 businesses had been contacted and received vital information and referrals to grant providers and business advisory services.

North and Far North Queensland Monsoon Trough

In 2020–21, a \$10 million Small Business and Industry Support Package was activated under Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements following the North and Far North Queensland Monsoon Trough event in 2019. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the program was extended and concluded on 30 June 2022.

Over \$4.6 million of the \$10 million package was provided directly to the small business community in grant funding. Applications closed in June 2021.

The Small Business Recovery Centre in Townsville continued to provide direct support to small business operators up to December 2021 with ongoing support provided through regional offices.

Under the Go Local funding, \$1.86 million of the \$10 million package was allocated for projects that supported locally led initiatives celebrating local small business, buy local campaigns and community events.

Small Business Concierge pilot program

In October 2021, the department launched the Small Business Concierge pilot program to provide direct and tailored support to small businesses to build capability and resilience to support long-term sustainability. Small businesses were provided with direct access to business specialists and a suite of subsidised tailored business support programs. Business support programs covered practical topics such as business fundamentals, human resources, digital literacy, and marketing. During the pilot program, 180 small businesses were supported.

This pilot program was funded under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements.

Get Ready Small Business campaign

In October 2021, the department partnered with the Queensland Reconstruction Authority to support “Get Ready Queensland” week with a specific focus on small business stakeholders. The Get Ready Small Business campaign was conducted during October and November 2021 and promoted disaster preparedness and business continuity planning for small business. The department provided access to tools and resources that included the small business disaster hub and app with direct access to business specialist support services.

The department facilitated Get Ready expos in Townsville and Port Douglas which were attended by approximately 65 small business stakeholders. Webinars were delivered daily during the campaign period, aimed at building participant capability in the fields of digital marketing, grant writing basics, business continuity planning and workforce management.

This initiative was funded under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements.

Southern Queensland bushfires: 6 to 12 September 2019

During 2021–22, the department continued to support four Go Local initiatives implemented as part of a \$6 million tourism recovery package to support bushfire-impacted communities.

The Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements delivered \$600,000 to support the design and commencement of locally led activities, tailored to the specific needs, audiences, and opportunities in the following LGAs:

- Scenic Rim Regional Council – agribusiness/agritourism focus initiatives, including a 10-year strategic road map and ‘Shop Scenic Rim’ EFTPOS gift card program
- Noosa Shire Council – activities to drive tourism in the region including a ‘Discover the Noosa Villages’ online campaign with landing page and interactive online/printed maps, and sharable video and imagery
- Southern Downs Regional Council – multiple initiatives to assist local businesses, including support for marketing, business growth, shop local card and skills attraction program
- Sunshine Coast Regional Council – support for new or start-up and home-based businesses to fill long-term empty retail spaces and reinvigorate local high streets.

Paying businesses sooner – On-time Payment Policy

The department has continued to implement the government’s On-time Payment Policy which commenced on 1 July 2020 to ensure that registered small business suppliers get paid faster. Under the policy, small businesses are to be paid within 20 calendar days following receipt of a correct, undisputed invoice. If they do not receive payment within 20 calendar days, they can claim penalty interest.

The On-time Payment Small Business Register on the Business Queensland website allows small businesses to register enabling agencies to identify small business vendors to ensure they are paid on time. This is a simple but important way that small business suppliers can make sure that they are easily identified in agency financial systems for faster payment under the policy. Small businesses are still able to apply for late payment penalty interest, even if they have not registered.

Queensland small business: Snapshot as at 30 June 2022

Small businesses are a cornerstone of the Queensland economy. Small businesses operate across every industry and are found in every local community. They are an important source of investment and create jobs, particularly in our regions and provided an estimated \$120 billion gross state product to the Queensland economy as at June 2022.

448,000

Small Businesses in
Queensland and counting

979,000

Queenslanders employed
by Small Businesses

Case studies

Bundaberg's Business Basics Grant recipient

Bundaberg's Nathans Boutique was one of the businesses to receive funding in the first round of Business Basics in 2021. Owner Sue Hargreaves said the \$5,000 would make a real difference.

Sue said the business, which has been going for more than 30 years, had reinvented itself three years ago to start designing and making their own ladies clothing from their new location.

"I am thrilled to be getting this Business Basics grant and the first job is upgrading the website and getting it ready for the new season because along with my other seamstress we're kept busy with pattern making and stitching the clothes, and I don't get time to upgrade the website," Sue said.

"I also want to revamp the shop front here to help promote that this is a custom-made local dressmaking business along with our social media. We have suffered during the lockdown like many others and this grant will be invaluable for us."

Business Boost for Pioneer Valley restaurant

Owner-Directors Nicholas Flack and Emily Goss established The Flackyard bush tucker restaurant just four months before the COVID-19 pandemic hit and said the \$12,000 grant could not have come at a better time.

"We're passionate about using Australian bush tucker, sourcing native ingredients, supporting local farmers, growers and producers, and employing locals," they said.

"This grant will help us create a new 'Wider Whitsundays Package' to attract more visitors from the Mackay, Whitsundays, and Isaac region, redevelop our website and online bookings, and lift our business profile.

"Our goal is to continue to build relationships and partnerships with local producers, Indigenous food and beverage suppliers and harvesters, and make business connections with other locally owned and operated establishments."

Training and Skills

We connect people to quality training and skills.

Queensland apprenticeships and traineeships: Snapshot

The latest data on apprenticeships and traineeships in Queensland for the 12 months to 31 December 2021, indicates that:

80,085

in training

56,650

new
commencements

20,685

completions

Queensland Training Ombudsman's review

In January 2022, the Queensland Training Ombudsman's *Review of support provided to Queensland Apprentices and Trainees, with a focus on female apprentices in male-dominated occupations* was released. The Queensland Government accepted all 12 recommendations.

The key findings from the review indicate that, while major systemic changes are not required, enhancements can be made that focus on:

- preparing prospective employers and apprentices and trainees
- supporting apprentices, trainees, and their employers throughout their training contract
- ensuring that where intervention is required it happens in a co-ordinated manner and as early as possible.

The department will work collaboratively with the Queensland Training Ombudsman, other government agencies and apprenticeship and traineeship stakeholders throughout 2022–23 and beyond in progressing activity in response to the review's recommendations.

With more women pursuing careers in traditionally male-dominated occupations, it is particularly important to ensure a focus on their personal experience and what barriers and challenges may be hindering obtaining, progressing, and successfully completing apprenticeships. This activity builds on important work across the Queensland Government supporting improved outcomes for women such as greater economic security.

The literature review that informed this work, specifically focused on women in trade apprenticeships; workplace culture (bullying and harassment) and support mechanisms; and future apprenticeship models.

Supporting the social enterprise sector

In May 2021, the Queensland Government announced \$8 million over the next two years for the Social Enterprise Jobs Fund, as part of the Future Skills Fund.

The Social Enterprise Jobs Fund will continue to build on the commitments under the Queensland Social Enterprise Strategy to support the development of a sustainable and thriving social enterprise sector. Four grants' programs are being delivered under the Social Enterprise Jobs Fund.

Community Social Enterprise Development Grants

The Community Social Enterprise Development Grants program provided grants of between \$5,000 and \$20,000 to experienced non-profit community-based organisations to increase the capability and capacity of the social enterprises they operate.

In 2021–22, 36 projects across Queensland were awarded a total funding of \$604,900. All approved projects provided support to the growth of existing social enterprises that assist disadvantaged Queenslanders and have direct links to increasing employment outcomes or social enterprise sustainability.

Social Enterprise Growth Grants

The Social Enterprise Growth Grants program provides grants of between \$5,000 and \$25,000 to established Queensland social enterprises for capability and capacity building that supports the business to scale up or adapt. A total funding of \$635,692 has been awarded to 30 projects across Queensland.

Sector Development Grants

The Sector Development Grants program provides grants of between \$10,000 and \$200,000 for larger-scale projects that support the development and growth of the social enterprise ecosystem in Queensland including in regional areas. Eight projects across Queensland have been awarded total funding of \$990,800.

Social Enterprise Development Grants

The Social Enterprise Development Grants program will provide grants of between \$5,000 and \$25,000 for approved projects to support newly established or early-stage Queensland social enterprises to build capability and capacity and increase business resilience and confidence. Applications for this grant closed on 30 June 2022.

Strengthening quality

The Skills Assure framework, introduced in June 2020, supports students, parents, and employers to identify Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) that have met the criteria to deliver training and assessment that is subsidised by the Queensland Government.

Queenslanders can easily recognise Skills Assure Suppliers through the Skills Assure logo the suppliers display on their webpages and marketing materials.

Skills Assure safeguards the integrity and quality of training in Queensland for students. In 2021–22, the department continued to monitor its investment in vocational education and training and to reinforce its compliance model. RTOs who fail to meet requirements determined by the department will no longer be able to deliver government-subsidised training.

As at 30 June 2022, 412 Skills Assure Suppliers were contracted to deliver government-funded activity to Queenslanders.



Free TAFE and Free apprenticeships for under 25s

The department has funded the cost of training for apprentices and trainees under the age of 25 who enrol in, or are undertaking, one of the 139 priority apprenticeship and traineeship qualifications.

Under Free TAFE, the department has funded the full cost of training for eligible Queenslanders under the age of 25 years in 26 priority qualifications, with delivery of courses available at TAFE Queensland and Central Queensland University.

More than 50,000 young Queenslanders have been supported to date under these two free programs.

The Free TAFE and Free apprenticeships programs support government priorities to minimise skills shortages, focus on training for jobs that are in demand in our critical industries, and increase the number of Queenslanders with formal post-school qualifications.

Gateway to Industry Schools program

As part of the department's industry engagement framework, the Gateway to Industry Schools Program supports school students when they transition from school to their future career. The program also assists industries to meet their future workforce requirements.

The program promotes school–industry engagement in 10 industries considered priorities for Queensland's economic growth. As at 30 June 2022, there were 503 memorandums of understanding with 296 Queensland schools.

Pre-Apprenticeship Support program

Funded through the Future Skills Fund, the Pre-Apprenticeship Support program is being delivered with Group Training Organisations (GTOs) and has helped people not only to get into apprenticeships, but to complete them too.

For this new pre-apprenticeship pathway, we have worked with seven GTOs who have recruited and trained 301 people aged between 15 to 24 years old to complete a Certificate I in construction, engineering, or hospitality. Those who completed the program will be supported to transition into a subsequent apprenticeship, being employed by either the GTO or another employer.

This pathway allows people to explore the different options available to them before embarking on an apprenticeship, which means that when they decide to enrol in an apprenticeship program, they are more likely to successfully complete it.

Skilling Queenslanders for Work

The Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative (SQW) continues to achieve success on social, economic, and fiscal fronts, with an ongoing annual investment of \$80 million to support up to 15,000 Queenslanders into work each year.

The initiative represents a commitment to increasing workforce participation, driving job growth, and strengthening the performance of the Queensland economy by improving skills development and work opportunities for disadvantaged Queenslanders. SQW funds the community sector and follows a place-based approach, which is tailored to specific disadvantaged cohorts and communities.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of support for those in the community most vulnerable to reduced employment opportunities.

Tailored, local community-based support is offered to young people, mature-age job seekers, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, people with disability, women re-entering the workforce, Australian Defence Force veterans, recently released prisoners, and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. SQW comprises of eight community-based training programs: Community Work Skills; Work Skills Traineeships; Get Set for Work; Community Foundation Skills; Skill Up; Ready for Work; Youth Skills; and one traineeship incentive program (First Start).

The two new programs added are Community Foundation Skills and Skill Up which will deliver a range of personal, social, and economic benefits. Community Foundation Skills supports people to build their language, literacy, numeracy, and digital skills to get prepared for further study or entering the workforce. Skill Up targets adult workers who have been retrenched or displaced and women returning to the workforce. It provides industry-focused training to help people get started on new career paths.

In 2021–22 one funding round was available for community-based organisations, during which they could apply for funding under the eight community-based training programs. On 17 November 2021, the results of the 2021–22 SQW funding round were announced with 279 projects totalling \$63.7 million to assist 8,835 disadvantaged Queenslanders approved.

Since 2015, more than 69,000 disadvantaged Queenslanders have been assisted under SQW, more than 44,100 people have secured a job as a direct result of SQW and more than 76 per cent of participants are in work or further training 12 months after exiting the initiative.

Helping kick-start careers

The SQW First Start program is part of the ongoing commitment to support training pathways and employment opportunities in local communities. This program, managed in partnership with the Local Government Association of Queensland, supported 66 local councils and a statutory authority to employ an additional 400 apprentices and trainees. More than half of the 2021–22 positions are with councils outside of South East Queensland, including 10 First Nations Councils. The program allows young people to continue to live and work in their local communities by providing local opportunities.

Case studies

Cairns Indigenous Art Fair – CIAF Evolution Project

Cairns Indigenous Art Fair Limited (CIAF) was awarded \$115,900 under the Work Skills Traineeships program to deliver the CIAF Evolution Project and employ four Indigenous job seekers as trainees for up to 26 weeks. The trainees completed a Certificate I in Business on-the-job and emerged with first-hand knowledge of what it takes to stage Australia's Premier Indigenous Art Fair and work and make connections in the creative arts industry.

CIAF represents 1500 Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists and plays a critical role in strengthening culture by providing artists the opportunity to share stories, collaborate, experience Indigenous culture, and showcase artwork in an ethically run marketplace. CIAF culminates in an annual five-day festival.

The trainees were simultaneously immersed in the traditions of culture while learning new technology skills and gaining practical experience in administration, event production and exhibitions, marketing and visual and performing arts. Work activities included digital skills; film and media activities; project management; streaming live conversations for broadcast on social media; photography; installing, hanging, and packing artworks; curating and community engagement activities. Culturally appropriate wrap around support included social and emotional well-being, mentoring, job search, employability skills, personal grooming, language literacy and numeracy assistance and specialist services referral.

The project ended in October 2021. Four trainees were employed on the project, with all completing a nationally recognised qualification, and 10 gaining ongoing employment.

Participant profile:

Catherine, 19 years old, relocated from Cook Town to Cairns to begin her training and employment journey. Catherine said: "Being part of this program feels like a dream". Catherine was involved in many opportunities at CIAF including the Ben and Jerry's Mural Project on the Cairns Esplanade. With support from the CIAF Exhibition Manager, Catherine produced three concept images in response to a brief supplied by Ben and Jerry's new ice-creamery. Catherine submitted a formal proposal, complete with original images, artists' biography, and statements about the art.

Catherine was commissioned as the lead artist for the new store fit out mural. Catherine's mural pays tribute to Tropical North Queensland and her Torres Strait Islander culture. Catherine was offered an opportunity for further employment at CIAF and has enrolled in a Certificate III in Business traineeship.

Multilink Community Services Inc – Warehousing

Multilink Community Services Inc was awarded \$90,900 under the Community Work Skills program to assist disadvantaged job seekers – primarily people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and people from Pasifika communities to gain skills and experience for employment in the warehousing industry. Developed in partnership with Logan Samoan Advisory Council, the project provided participants with cultural support from their community leaders while they completed Certificate II in Warehousing Operations and competencies from Certificate II in Skills for Work and Vocational Pathways.

Tailored wrap around support for the participants included life skills, employability skills, networking, job preparation, job search and support for three months after participating in the project. Additional support included personal protective equipment (PPE), transport assistance, learner driver assistance, First Aid and Forklift licence training.

The project ended in December 2021, after assisting 25 people, of whom 23 completed accredited training and 22 (88 per cent) gained employment.

Participant Profile:

Aaron, a 31-year-old, has a disability and had been unemployed for more than 12 months. Aaron was struggling to obtain employment without qualifications or a driver's licence and past personal experiences that posed a real barrier to getting a job. Aaron excelled on the project, participating fully in every class, and showed great initiative by mentoring and supporting other participants. He made the most of all the available support and was also successful in obtaining his provisional driver's licence, First Aid Certificate and Forklift licence. Aaron also benefitted from other support provided: such as transport assistance; computer training; language, literacy, and numeracy assistance; resume writing advice; job search training; and a personal makeover session with Suited for Success. Aaron's determination was second to none, and upon project completion he successfully gained a part-time position with Remondis Australia at Rocklea, a global end-to-end waste management and recycling company.

Skilling Queenslanders for Work: Snapshot as at 30 June 2022

6,300

people assisted
into work

76%

participants engaged in
employment, training or a
combination of both, 12
months after exiting the
program

\$8

returned Queensland
economy for every dollar
invested

Investing in world-class training facilities

The department undertakes TAFE facility upgrades and new infrastructure developments across 42 TAFE campuses in Queensland to future-proof training infrastructure and to ensure businesses have the skills for more jobs in more industries.

During 2021–22, the department managed and delivered the following:

- Completed the Advancing Our Training Infrastructure initiative that invested \$112 million across several training sites as part of the long-term plan to revitalise the training portfolio. This investment supported the redevelopment and refurbishment of seven TAFE training sites: Pimlico, Toowoomba, Southport, Ashmore, Mount Gravatt, Alexandra Hills, and Cairns.
- Continued key training infrastructure projects under Queensland's COVID-19 Economic Recovery Plan, including:
 - a maker space and new shade house at Bohle TAFE
 - modernisation of health training facilities at Bowen
 - general refurbishments at Bundaberg and Cannonvale
 - government's grant funding of a new Renewable Energy Training Facility at Pinkenba and stage two of the Queensland Apprenticeship Centre at Beenleigh incorporating hydrogen training facilities.
- Received \$10.6 million in grant funding from the Australian Government's Revitalising TAFE Campuses Across Australia initiative towards the following projects:
 - upgrade of electro-engineering training areas at Alexandra Hills TAFE
 - a new training plumbing tower at Ashmore TAFE
 - modernisation of trade facilities at Bundaberg TAFE
 - modernisation of metal manufacturing facilities at Bundamba TAFE
 - a new marine training facility at Coomera TAFE
 - upgrade of engineering and trade workshops at Mount Isa TAFE
 - a maker space at Bohle TAFE.
- Progressed the first year of the three-year Equipping TAFE for Our Future initiative including achieving:
 - new cyber security training facilities at Mooloolaba and Southbank
 - stage two of the Agricultural Centre of Excellence at Toowoomba
 - upgrade of nursing and allied health upgrades at Hervey Bay
 - a contribution to the fit-out of the new leased TAFE campus at Robina.

VET snapshot

Queensland is a leader in VET in schools, having the nation's highest participation rate in 2021, with nearly 100,000 students or 39.7 per cent of the national total. Queensland is also the national leader in school-based apprenticeships and traineeships, recording 55.1 per cent of the national total in 2021. This means more Queensland students are gaining world class training that will prepare them for their future.

VET participation in 2021

962,565

Queenslanders undertook some form of nationally recognised VET in 2021 an increase of approximately 13.0% compared to 2020

9%

Nationally, the number of students participating in VET increased by 9%

28%

Queensland participation rate was the highest of all jurisdictions. The national rate was 24%

53.5%

of 15-19 year olds participated in VET, the highest of all jurisdictions. The national rate was 44.6%

37.5%

of 20-24 year olds participated in VET, the second highest of all jurisdictions behind Tasmania (39.0%). The national rate was 34.9%

Source - [National Centre for Vocational Education Research - https://www.ncver.edu.au/](https://www.ncver.edu.au/)

Awards celebrating the power of skills

The Queensland Training Awards is the most prestigious and longest-running training sector awards program in the state, providing individuals and organisations with a unique opportunity to showcase their achievements, best practice, and innovation in training.

Across 14 categories, the annual awards celebrate the success stories of Queensland's outstanding apprentices, trainees, VET students and trainers, as well as employers, training providers and community-based organisations.

The winners and finalists of the 2021 Queensland Training Awards and regional winners were announced in September 2021. Due to COVID-19, the event was conducted online rather than in-person. To view the award winners, visit our website at <https://desbt.qld.gov.au/training/qta>

Our people

Our dedicated employees are essential for delivering government commitments and services to Queenslanders. They make a difference to people's education and training, careers and working lives. During 2021–22, the department continued to support employees with flexible work agreements enabling them to balance work and home life commitments, while ensuring operational requirements were met. Employees were able to work in hybrid teams.

The department's Flexible Work policy and procedures includes provision for flexible working hours, leave arrangements, part-time work and job sharing.

Maintaining service delivery

During 2021–22, the department's Rapid Response Group was activated when needed to ensure business continuity of service delivery for our customers, partners, stakeholders, and employees.

The Rapid Response Group includes leaders from across the department who play key roles in coordinating and facilitating critical business functions. This also includes information-sharing actions across the department, and with other government agencies, our customers, and stakeholders.

Our ethics and employee relations framework

Our ethical values underpin our workplace culture and management of employees. During 2021–22, the department continued its commitment to high behavioural standards and supported employees to do the right thing through educational training and administrative policies and practices.

The department continued its commitment to transparency and accountability, by complying with the public sector ethics principles set out in the Public Sector Ethics Act 1994. Employees completed online, annual refresher training in the Code of Conduct for the Queensland Public Service, as well as fraud and corruption. Employees who hold procurement and financial delegations also completed annual refresher training.

The department is committed to supporting ethical decision-making and has a policy and procedure to support the reporting of wrongdoing, including making public interest disclosures.

The *Industrial Relations Act 2016*, the *Public Service Act 2008* and the following instruments comprise our employee relations framework:

- *Queensland Public Service Officers and Other Employees Award – State 2015*
- *State Government Entities Certified Agreement 2019.*

During 2021–22, the department actively consulted with the Together Union through the Agency Consultative Committee regarding employee and industrial relations matters, including flexible workplace arrangements and workplace change.

Maintaining employee wellbeing

The Queensland Government has formal support options in place for employees who are experiencing domestic and family violence. The department is committed to providing a positive, ethical, and healthy workplace, and recognises that employees may face difficult situations in their work and personal life, such as domestic violence.

In May 2021, supporting Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month, the Director-General and the Executive Leadership Team released their commitment statement supporting any employee experiencing domestic and family violence. In June 2021, the department received White Ribbon re-accreditation. A formal presentation ceremony recognised this re-accreditation on 27 May 2022.

During 2021–22, the department continued to roll-out health, safety, and wellbeing support mechanisms for DESBT employees and encouraged participation through a range of activities, including:

- continuing to support free flu vaccinations for employees
- providing influenza vaccination and flexible working arrangements to attend COVID-19 vaccination clinics during work hours
- supporting a Mental Health Support Officers Network, which provides a comprehensive approach to mental health and wellbeing to help employees experiencing mental health issues
- building awareness and support of a diverse organisation through celebrating and promoting annual recognition events including National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) Week, Disability Action Week, Harmony Week, White Ribbon Day, and International Women's Day
- providing information resources assisting employees with ergonomics to suit individual needs in the workplace
- implementing rehabilitation and return to work policy and procedures and supporting employees and their managers/supervisors on their return to work from injury and illness
- promoting an external employee assistance service that provides free, professional, and confidential counselling services to assist employees and immediate family members with both personal and work-related problems
- providing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employee support line via our employee assistance provider, Benestar.

Workforce profile

Table 1. Workforce profile data

| Total FTE for Department of Employment Small Business and Training | FTE |
|--|--------|
| Total FTE ¹ | 567.77 |

Note:

1. 567.77 full-time equivalent employees as per the Minimum Obligatory Human Resource Information full-time equivalent data for the fortnight ending 17 June 2022 (the last full pay period for 2021–22).

Valuing inclusion and diversity in our workplace

Table 2. Target Group data

| Gender | Number (Headcount) ^{1,2} | Percentage of total workforce (Calculated on headcount) |
|--|--------------------------------------|--|
| Woman | 453 | 71.9% |
| Man | 177 | 28.1% |
| Non-binary | 0 | 0 |
| Diversity Groups | Number (Headcount) | Percentage of total workforce (Calculated on headcount) |
| Women | 453 | 71.9% |
| Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islander Peoples | 13 | 2.2% |
| People with disability | 27 | 4.5% |
| Culturally and Linguistically Diverse – Born overseas | 35 | 5.8% |
| Culturally and Linguistically Diverse – Speak a language at home other than English (including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages or Australian South Sea Islander languages) | 21 | 3.5% |
| Women in Leadership Roles | Number (Headcount) | Percentage of total Leadership Cohort (Calculated on headcount) |
| Women in Leadership Roles ³ | 35 | 68.6% |

Notes:

1. Data is based on Minimum Obligatory Human Resource Information full-time equivalents for the fortnight ending 17 June 2022 (the last full pay period for 2021–22)
2. People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds are reported for the first time replacing the People from a non-English speaking background from 1 July 2021
3. Women in Leadership Roles are considered those positions that are Senior Officer and equivalent and above.

Strengthening our workplace culture

Strategic workforce planning

During 2021–22, the department continued to implement effective human resources policies and practices and progressed the following workforce planning initiatives to attract, recruit and retain an inclusive, diverse, and capable workforce. We continued to implement the DESBT Disability Service Plan 2020–21, ensuring people with disability have access to the same departmental services, information and facilities that are available to the broader community. This plan details the actions being undertaken to improve this access, including:

- supporting Queenslanders from diverse backgrounds to access VET, supporting Skills Assure suppliers with embedding the Inclusive Learning: A Way Forward framework by conducting scheduled audits
- ensuring our policies and programs reflect the needs and interests of people with disability and their carers
- promoting assistive technology that can support the participation of people with disability in VET
- promoting and creating opportunities for employees to participate in Disability Action Week activities.

We continued to implement the Cultural Capability Action Plan 2019–2023 as part of the Queensland Government Cultural Capability Framework. Cultural capability involves acquiring knowledge about the culture of individuals and groups of people, and integrating that knowledge into our standards, practices and attitudes and is about increasing our understanding of the historical and contemporary issues relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and engaging with them in a sustained, respectful, and participatory manner when developing policies, programs, and services.

We developed the DESBT Strategic Workforce Plan 2022–2024, implementation of which will commence in 2022–2023 and focus on talent acquisition, a contemporary and agile workforce, our workplace culture, and growing our leaders.

We developed key strategies to drive diversity and inclusion, capability development, reward and recognition, and wellbeing to ensure the department's workforce is diverse, agile, and capable and prepared for the current and future world of work.

Executive and senior leaders were identified to champion Queensland public sector priorities and initiatives by supporting and driving engagement across key workforce management focus areas.

Managing high performance

High standards of performance and clear behavioural expectations are aligned to the Queensland Public Service values and are communicated to all employees through our policies, procedures, and online mandatory training. During 2021–22, employee performance continued to be managed through annual performance and development plans as part of the Queensland Public Service Commission's Conduct and Performance Excellence service.

In supporting a high-performance culture, onboarding new employees through the induction process provides them and those transferring between teams the information they require to transition into a new work environment and new role as quickly as possible. Prior to commencement of new employees, managers are provided with a new starter checklist and information to implement reasonable workplace adjustments where required, to assist employees with disability and support an inclusive and diverse workplace.

The department measures collective performance against the Strategic Plan 2021–25. This includes the department's response rate to the annual Working for Queensland employee opinion survey (Target 85 per cent). The September 2021 results showed that, as a department, we maintained a similar high response rate as in 2020, at 81 per cent. This is 38 per cent higher than the overall Queensland Public Sector response rate of 43 per cent.

The department's survey results overall were positive, showing there were improvements compared to previous years in workplace factors such as job empowerment, workload and health, work group, manager, anti-discrimination, and innovation.

Encouraging learning and preparing for the future of work

During 2021–22, employees were actively supported and assisted with continued learning and development as part of annual performance and development planning. The MyCareer learning management system provided online mandatory training for departmental employees to keep the knowledge current and remain informed of developments.

The Senior Leaders met fortnightly during the COVID-19 pandemic response. This increased cross-departmental communication and collaboration. In 2021–22, the Senior Leaders continued to support a major review and development of the department's strategic plan.

Other activities undertaken to invest in the capability of leaders was the implementation of *Everyday conversations for healthy minds* online training to support the development of a mentally healthy workplace environment.

In order to further prepare and position the department for the future of work, the following activities were undertaken:

- developed a foundational DESBT Capability Development Strategy 2022–2024 to drive contemporary learning and development across the department
- through the Small Business Engagement Framework project, invested in developing the capabilities of our frontline, regional staff
- continued to develop our workforce data analysis to understand trends and workforce issues in supporting workforce planning
- continued to participate in the sector's Strategic Workforce Council and associated work in the addressing strategic issues for the Queensland Public Service
- continued our Senior Leadership Network as a forum for departmental senior officers to share knowledge and innovative practices and harness contemporary perspectives.

Supporting our communities

During 2021–22, there were several occasions the department sought employee volunteers to participate in community recovery activities, including:

- COVID-19 contact tracing
- Vaccination hubs
- assisting communities impacted by natural disasters, including widespread flooding, heavy rainfall, and ex-tropical cyclone Seth.

Recognising employee excellence

During 2021–22, DESBT developed the DESBT Reward and Recognition Strategy 2022–2024, to be implemented in the latter half of 2022. This strategy will provide a strong foundation for the ongoing informal and formal recognition of employees and promote excellence in service.

Early Retirement, Redundancy and Retrenchment

No redundancy, early retirement or retrenchment packages were paid during the period.

Our governance

We have internal accountability mechanisms in place to ensure governance operates effectively and transparently. These mechanisms enable DESBT to support effective and efficient service delivery that is strongly aligned with our vision, purpose, and strategic objectives.

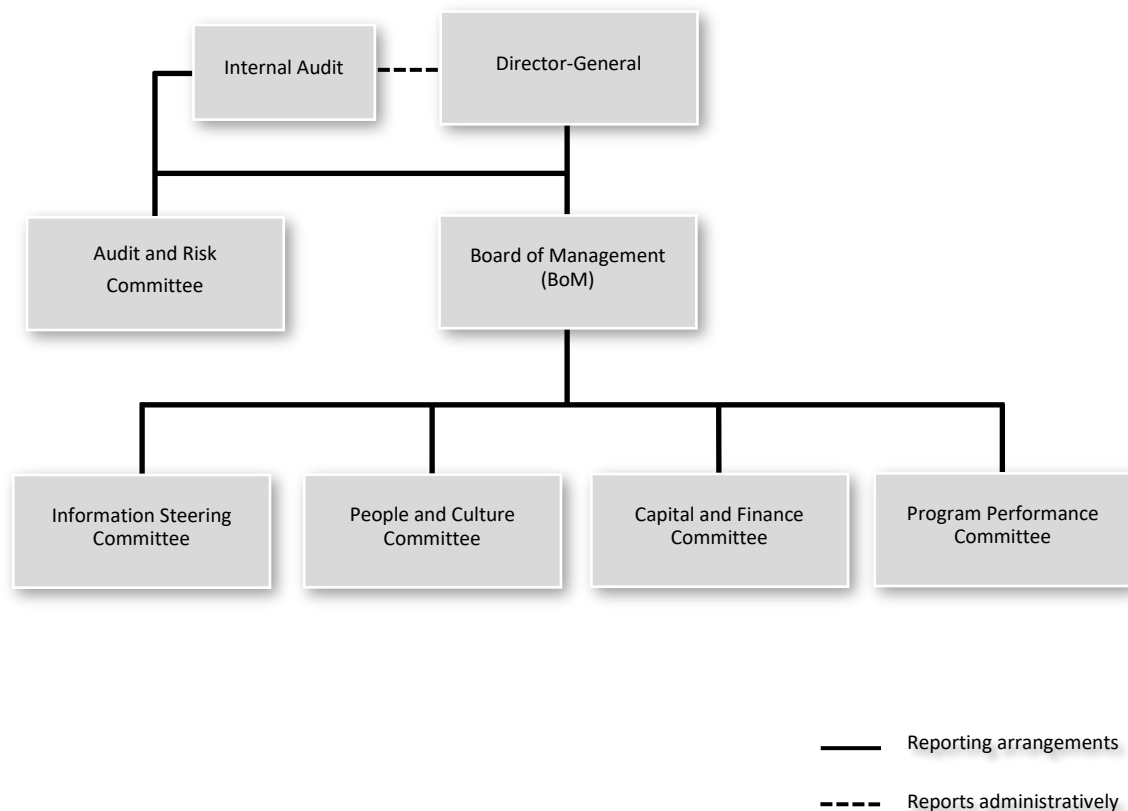
DESBT is committed to supporting good governance, by annually reviewing the Governance Framework that outlines the principles, elements, and mechanisms we use.

The department maintains a corporate governance structure using governance forums that provide leadership direction to the department's Board of Management and Executive Leadership Team. These governance committees and, where relevant, supporting sub-committees meet regularly to advise and support the Director-General and senior executives in discharging their responsibilities and ensuring that departmental priorities and objectives are met.

During 2021–22, following a review of the Corporate Governance Framework, three new sub-committees were established: People and Culture Committee, Capital and Finance Committee and the Program Performance Committee. These new sub-committees will focus on oversight, assurance and accountability, decision-making within delegated authority, and escalation of material matters supported by recommendations.

Governance framework

The department's governance arrangements are shown below.



Board of Management

The Board of Management (BoM) authorises strategic, budget, and operational decisions affecting DESBT and provides the Director-General with advice on issues relating to strategic policy, strategic planning, corporate governance, performance management, service delivery, culture, and values.

The role of the Board of Management is to:

- use analytics and insights to drive the department to provide engaging and relevant community programs to meet the department's vision
- assess the implications of whole-of-government priorities for the department in terms of policy and resourcing
- provide a forum for decision-making on key strategic and operational issues including:
 - monitoring performance and reporting requirements for department targets
 - reviewing risk treatment strategies and actions, and providing continual monitoring of the risk appetite for the department
 - managing departmental audit recommendations and subsequent implementation actions to ensure a robust, compliant department.

Membership

- Chair – Director-General
- Standing Members
 - Deputy Director-General, Investment
 - Deputy Director-General, Engagement
 - Deputy Director-General Strategy
 - Deputy Director-General, Policy and Performance
- Observers
 - Director, Office of the Director-General
 - Head of Corporate Services

Executive Leadership Team

The Executive Leadership Team (ELT) facilitates discussion and decision-making on initiatives and issues with the purpose of determining the strategic and cultural direction for the department.

The ELT's responsibilities include:

- to be the 'thought leadership' forum with a focus on the strategic direction of the department including implementation and alignment of the Strategic Plan and its objectives
- to design and maintain oversight on strategies that influence government decision-making regarding employment growth, small business, and skill development
- to advise the Director-General on the strategic direction, goals, and overall performance of the department
- to maintain awareness of mega trends and their impact on departmental operations
- to focus on the culture of the organisation.

Membership

- Chair – Director-General
- Standing Members
 - Deputy Director-General, Investment
 - Deputy Director-General, Engagement
 - Deputy Director-General Strategy
 - Deputy Director-General, Policy and Performance
- Observers
 - Director, Office of the Director-General - Secretariat.

Warwick Agnew Director-General

Warwick Agnew was appointed as Director-General of the department in November 2020. Before joining DESBT, Warwick held the position of Director-General, Local Government, Racing and Multicultural Affairs. He also has direct experience in social and economic policy issues facing all areas of Queensland.

Throughout his career, Warwick has led social and economic infrastructure projects, economic analysis and policy, legislative reform, financial and commercial procurement, and corporate finance advisory services.

Warwick's private sector experience includes commercial project development and senior advisory roles for global companies servicing the resources, energy, industrial, infrastructure, property, and defence sectors. He has also served on key government boards including Queensland Treasury Corporation Capital Markets Board, the Long-Term Asset Allocation Board and the Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority.

Warwick holds a Master of Applied Finance from the Macquarie University, as well as a Master of Social Science (Economics) and Bachelor of Economics from the University of Queensland.

Steve Koch Deputy Director-General – Investment

Steve Koch has over 20 years' experience in designing and delivering economic development programs and initiatives for government. He is passionate about the economic and social outcomes that these initiatives deliver, particularly the life-changing impact for individuals.

Steve has a strong background in vocational education and training (VET), employment, and small business, having held executive roles in departments responsible for these sectors over the past decade.

In Steve's current role, he leads DESBT's oversight of the state's training infrastructure portfolio, as well as program design and delivery for DESBT's suite of employment, small business, and VET programs. He is also a member of the Board of Directors of the Building and Construction Industry Training Fund (BCITF Qld).

Steve holds a Bachelor of Economics and a Bachelor of Business Management from the University of Queensland.

David Lucas**Acting Deputy Director-General – Engagement**

David Lucas was appointed to the position of A/Deputy Director-General, Engagement Division in October 2021. In this role, David leads the Customer Channels and Service Delivery areas of DESBT, including a network of departmental regional staff across Queensland. Prior to this current role, David was the Executive Director, Service Delivery within DESBT.

Throughout his public sector career, David has worked in a number of agencies responsible for the employment and skills and training portfolios with a focus on regional delivery and central policy program development. This includes a number of executive positions, providing David with a strong understanding of the importance of effective employment, training and small business-related program development and delivery.

Rebecca Atkinson**Deputy Director-General – Strategy**

Rebecca Atkinson joined DESBT in November 2020 to lead the Strategy division. In this role, Rebecca is shaping evidenced-based strategic policies that support employment growth, small business and increased economic readiness through skills and training, as well as overseeing data and analytics and facilitating employment and training pathways for emerging industries.

Rebecca has 10 years' experience in leadership roles across the Queensland Public Service and local government, including Acting Deputy Director-General of Arts Queensland, and Deputy Director-General, Strategy, Racing and Multicultural Affairs. Rebecca holds credentials from the Australian Institute of Company Directors and has non-executive director experience.

Leighton Craig**Deputy Director-General – Policy and Performance**

Leighton Craig joined DESBT in November 2021 to lead the establishment of the Policy and Performance Division which delivers corporate services, strategic communications, the coordination of policy advice and whole of government engagement.

Leighton has more than 25 years' experience in the public sector. In his previous role as Cabinet Secretary in the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, he was responsible for supporting the operation of the Queensland Government's Cabinet system, legislation program and performance management framework.

Leighton has worked in a diverse range of policy and project areas within government, including law and justice policy, disaster relief, legal and constitutional services, community engagement on significant infrastructure and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage. He was a Clerk of the Executive Council for 11 years and has been involved in the transitional governance arrangements for successive Queensland governments. Leighton holds a Bachelor of Laws from Queensland University of Technology and was admitted as a solicitor of the Supreme Court of Queensland in 1996.

Note: Ms Rhiannon Howell was appointed as Head of Corporate in May 2021 and was part of the BoM from 1 July 2021 to 10 November 2021. As part of an internal departmental realignment, the role of Deputy Director-General Policy and Performance was established which replaced the role of Head of Corporate as part of BoM membership. Mr Leighton Craig was appointed to this role, commencing 11 November 2021.

Risk management and accountability

The department's Risk Management function works with business areas to identify relevant risk mitigation strategies to be implemented by the respective business areas.

The department has a two-tiered structure of risk registers to ensure that all risks are reviewed, escalated, managed, and reported at an appropriate level within the organisation, including reporting escalated risks quarterly to the departmental Board of Management.

During 2021–22, the department reviewed and updated the overarching strategic risks and established new enterprise risks impacting the entire department and strategic risks impacting the department's strategic objectives.

The enterprise and strategic risk registers managed by the ELT as Risk Sponsors, supported by the new role of Risk Leads, are a key input into the department's annual planning cycle.

Internal Audit

The Internal Audit function reports administratively to the DESBT Director-General and functionally for operations to the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) through the Chair, with direct access to both if necessary.

The Internal Audit function operates in line with the ARC Charter and Internal Audit Charter, as well as relevant audit and ethical standards. The function is outsourced to PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) Consulting.

The charter is reviewed on an annual basis and is endorsed by the ARC.

Role and functions

Internal Audit has a primary responsibility to advise on governance, risk management and control issues and is required to report risks that are inadequately addressed and non-effective control processes to management and the ARC.

Internal Audit provides an independent and objective assurance and advisory service to:

- provide assurance to the department's Director-General and the ARC that the department's financial and operational controls are operating in an efficient, effective, economical, and ethical manner
- assist management in improving the entity's business performance
- ensure audits are performed in accordance with accepted professional standards and practices and by qualified, competent, and skilled persons
- prepare the risk-based Internal Audit Plan and its scope, and report progress in implementing the audit work plan
- report to the ARC any significant changes to the Internal Audit Plan, including any difficulties or restrictions on scope of activities, or significant concerns
- work cooperatively with other agencies' or service providers' Internal Audit units to ensure coverage of key risks, and appropriate coordination with the External Auditor
- review and monitor management's response to Internal Audit findings and recommended actions
- review the implementation of agreed management actions and where issues remain unresolved, ensure that satisfactory progress is being made to mitigate the risk associated with Internal Audit's findings.

Internal Audit Plan

Internal Audit's scope of work is based on an annual audit plan endorsed by the ARC. This encompasses the review of all financial and non-financial policies and operations, including evaluating the adequacy and effectiveness of the department's governance, risk management process, system of internal control structure and quality of performance in carrying out assigned responsibilities to achieve the department's stated objectives. The *2022–23 Internal Audit Plan* was endorsed in June 2022.

Achievement highlights

During 2021–22, Internal Audit:

- completed seven Internal Audit reviews scheduled for the period
- monitored and reported on the status of the Internal Audit Plan and internal audit reports at each ARC meeting
- followed up and reported on the progress of management actions at each meeting, including open and overdue actions
- developed the 2022–23 Internal Audit Plan, including the update of the three-year Internal Audit plan
- provided management with an annual assessment of the maturity of internal controls for the period against the Commission of Sponsoring Organisations of the Treadway Commission internal control framework.

External scrutiny

The department is subject to external review. The following reports applicable to the department were tabled by the Queensland Auditor-General in State Parliament during 2021–22:

- Education 2021 (Report 19: 2021–22)
- Enhancing government procurement (Report 18: 2021–22)
- Appointing and renewing government boards (Report 17: 2021–22) Contract management for new infrastructure (Report 16: 2021–22)
- State Entities 2021 (Report 14: 2021–22).

More information is available on:

- the Queensland Audit Office website at www.qao.qld.gov.au/reports-resources/reports-parliament
- the Queensland Parliament website at www.parliament.qld.gov.au
- the Queensland Training Ombudsman's website at <https://trainingombudsman.qld.gov.au>

Audit and Risk Committee

The Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) is appointed by the Director-General and plays an important role in providing independent oversight of the department's governance, risk management, financial reporting process and internal control.

The ARC operates under an ARC Charter (the Charter) in accordance with the *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2019* and is directly responsible to the Director-General.

The ARC has the authority to:

- conduct or authorise investigations into matters within its scope of responsibility
- access information, records, and personnel of DESBT for such purpose
- request the attendance of any employee, including executive staff, at committee meetings
- conduct meetings with the DESBT internal auditors and external auditors, as necessary
- seek advice from external parties, as necessary.

The annual review of the Charter was endorsed by the ARC at the meeting held in March 2022. The ARC met five times during 2021–22.

The role and functions of the ARC are to:

- assist the Director-General as the accountable officer to meet responsibilities under *the Financial Accountability Act 2009*, the *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2019* and other prescribed requirements
- provide independent assurance and assistance to the Director-General on:
 - the risk, control, and compliance frameworks
 - the department's external accountability responsibilities as prescribed in the relevant legislation and standards
 - the department's integrity framework
- review the implementation of external audit recommendations accepted by management.

The functions of the ARC do not replace or replicate:

- established management responsibilities and delegations
- the responsibilities of other executive management groups within the department
- the reporting lines and responsibilities of either internal audit or external audit functions.

Responsibilities

The ARC carries out a range of duties and responsibilities to maintain oversight of key financial, risk and performance management activities for our department including:

- financial statements—reviewing the appropriateness of our accounting policies, significant assumptions and critical judgements made by management, reviewing the appropriateness of disclosures in our financial statements, and analysing our financial performance
- integrity oversight and misconduct prevention—monitoring misconduct trends and prevention approaches and addressing any gaps in dealing with integrity issues in relation to misconduct. Monitoring the compliance of the department with relevant integrity legislation and whole-of-government policies, principles, and guidelines
- risk management—reviewing the effectiveness of our risk management framework, and processes for identifying, monitoring, escalating, and managing significant business risks
- internal control—reviewing, through the internal and external audit functions, the adequacy of our internal control structure and systems, including information technology security and control
- performance management—reviewing compliance with the relevant legislative and whole-of-government performance management and reporting requirements and identifying appropriate use of performance information
- internal and external audit—reviewing and endorsing our Internal Audit Plan and consulting with External Audit on our proposed audit strategy and reviewing findings and recommendations from audit activity accepted by management. Where issues remain unresolved, the ARC ensures that satisfactory progress is made to mitigate the risk associated with audit findings.

Achievement highlights

During 2021–22, Internal Audit:

- was chaired by an external member, with additional representation from an external public sector agency
- reviewed and endorsed the financial statements for 2020–21 and noted the Chief Finance Officer statement of assurance for 2020–21
- reviewed the 2021–22 Internal Audit Plan, with oversight of review outcomes
- reviewed and endorsed the 2022–23 Internal Audit Plan in June 2022
- endorsed the implementation of the International Standard 18: 2018 Information Security Annual Return and the International Standard 18: 2018 Information Security Attestation Letter for financial year 2020–21
- reviewed and endorsed the updated ARC Charter in June 2022
- reviewed and endorsed the updated Internal Audit Charter in June 2022
- increased maturity of departmental risk management processes.

ARC membership

Members, including the Chair, are appointed by the Director-General and are as follows.

| Name | Position | Committee role | Membership period |
|------------------|--|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Karen Prentis | Consultant | External Chair | July 2021 – June 2022 |
| Steven Koch | Deputy Director-General, Investment | Member, departmental | July 2021 – June 2022 |
| Maryanne Kelly | Deputy Director-General, Engagement | Member, departmental | July 2021 – August 2021 |
| David Lucas | A/Deputy Director-General, Engagement | Member, departmental | November 2021 – June 2022 |
| Rebecca Atkinson | Deputy Director-General, Strategy | Member, departmental | July 2021 – June 2022 |
| Leighton Craig | Deputy Director-General, Policy, and Performance | Member, departmental | November 2021 – June 2022 |
| Debbie Brooks | Chief Finance Officer, Queensland Treasury | Member, public sector external | July 2021 – June 2022 |

As an independent and external member of the committee, Karen Prentis received a remuneration of \$8,250 in 2021–22 to prepare for and attend meetings.

Customer complaints management

In 2021–22, the department received 16 customer complaints from external customers. None of the complaints were assessed as involving human rights.

The department provides a complaints management system, in accordance with section 219A (4) of the *Public Service Act 2008*, which gives people the opportunity to voice their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with our services. By 30 September each year, the department publishes the following information on its website: the number of customer complaints received, those resulting in further action, and those complaints that resulted in no further action. This information can be found at <https://desbt.qld.gov.au/about-us/reports>.

There is a formal process for documenting and assessing all complaints to determine the validity of the allegations raised.

Human rights complaints reporting

The department continued to implement the *Human Rights Act 2019* (HRA) and incorporate human rights considerations into its day-to-day operations. Building on past foundational actions, the department continued to be committed to respecting, protecting, and promoting human rights in our decision-making and actions.

Section 97(2) of the HRA requires that DESBT reports annually on details of actions taken during 2021–22 to further the objectives of the HRA, including details of reviews we undertook of policies, practices or services undertaken in relation to their compatibility with human rights.

The department is continuing to implement the HRA by delivering on this commitment, while managing day-to-day operations for skilling Queenslanders, assisting employment outcomes, and backing small businesses to support the wellbeing of Queenslanders and their communities. To further objectives of the HRA during 2021–22 the department has:

- continued to act and make decisions compatibly with human rights and
- incorporated human rights into DESBT's strategic planning processes
- ensured portfolio statutory bodies were aware of their obligations
- ensured human rights are central to the development of policy and legislation
- provided information about the HRA and compliance to Skills Assure providers via the Contract Connector newsletters
- raised awareness about human rights, including through articles about the Act, promoting Human Rights Day 2021 (10 December 2021), communicating the availability of human rights resources in the internal employees' newsletter and on the intranet, and circulating the Human Rights Newsletter
- ensured the mandatory online training module was available and completed by employees, including by new employees as part of the induction process
- maintained a dedicated human rights intranet page
- ensured any potential human rights complaints were managed through effective and accountable internal processes
- included human rights obligations in relevant contract processes
- ensured human rights compatibility was considered as part of decision-making in every executive briefing note.

Information systems and recordkeeping

The department is committed to meeting its recordkeeping requirements under the:

- *Public Records Act 2002 (Qld)*
- *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2019*
- Queensland Government Enterprise Architecture
- Records Governance Policy
- whole-of-government information standards.

The department implements appropriate strategies, processes, applications, and tools to ensure records of business activities are made and kept for as long as required, in accordance with the approved records retention and disposal schedules.

Information security attestation

During the mandatory annual Information Security reporting process, the Director-General attested to the appropriateness of the information security risk management within the department to the Queensland Government Chief Information Security Officer, noting that appropriate assurance activities have been undertaken to inform this opinion and the department information security risk position.

Communicating roles and responsibilities

As a commitment to good records governance and practices, the department:

- delivered mandatory online employee training in information security and information privacy to increase employee awareness of their role in good information security practices and responsibilities, with annual refresher training for all employees
- maintained published policies and guidelines that are accessible by all employees
- promoted Privacy Awareness Week to reinforce privacy rights, and employees' responsibilities and protection of information.

Improvements

During 2021–22, several milestones were delivered in changing the way we manage information in the department. Highlights included:

- continuing to scope the department-wide record-keeping strategy to support collaborative, accurate and effective record-keeping including initiation of a project to implement an electronic Document and Records Management System (eDRMS)
- continuing the staged migration of users of multiple business units and sites from the Department of Education network to the DESBT network
- updating and migrating both the externally facing Training website, and the Customer Relationship Management system, from the Department of Education onto the DESBT cloud and network respectively
- refreshing the DESBT Digital Strategy to ensure aligned ICT investment.

Managing digital records and systems

The department purchases transactional processing services from Queensland Shared Services and uses whole-of-government systems for finance and human resource management services.

As part of the department's information vision, and emphasising working digitally in an integrated way, several key milestones were achieved in 2021–22, including:

- greater use of SharePoint as a central communication platform within the department and managing digital records
- ongoing use of a Ministerial and Executive Correspondence System, and implementation of an improved information security classification to allow streamlined document workflow management
- improvements in cybersecurity protection of digital records and systems.

National and Whole-of-State Government Plans/Initiatives

National agreements and reform initiatives

During 2021–22, the department continued to lead the Queensland Government management of the *National Agreement for Skills and Workforce Development*.

The department continued to support training programs to meet the objective of the agreement, which is to achieve a VET system that delivers a more productive and highly skilled workforce, enabling all working age Australians to participate effectively in the labour market and contribute to Australia's economic future.

Queensland Government

During 2021–22, the department was responsible for leading and providing significant contribution to the following whole-of-government programs and initiatives:

- Back to Work program supporting eligible employers and jobseekers
- Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative, supporting Queenslanders back into work
- Queensland Apprenticeship and Traineeship system
- Big Plans for Small Business Strategy 2021–23
- Good people. Good jobs: Queensland Workforce Strategy 2022-2032
- Business Queensland website, communicating government business services online
- Skills for Queensland: Great training for quality jobs strategy
- Queensland Social Enterprise Strategy
- On-time Payment Policy
- Queensland Small Business Procurement Commitment.

Further information about these initiatives is provided in this report.

Queensland Business Launchpad

During 2021–22, the department continued to implement the Queensland Business Launchpad project as part of the Small Business Regulatory Reform Agreement between the Australian and Queensland governments. Work progressed during 2021–22 included:

- delivering the second and final Small Business Regulatory Reform agreement milestone of the Queensland Business Launchpad project. This makes it easier for food and beverage and residential construction businesses to identify and apply for licences and meet the regulatory obligations for their business activities
- this service is now available to businesses in every location in Queensland
- by signing-in to the service, businesses can keep track of the progress they have made in applying for licences and meeting other regulatory obligations
- establishing a scalable solution suitable for expanding to other industries, initially retail trade, accommodation and food services and the remainder of the construction industry.

JobTrainer Fund

Queenslanders continued to have access to low-cost or free training in key industries thanks to an additional \$200 million joint investment by the Queensland and Federal governments. Almost 60,000 Queenslanders have taken the opportunity to upskill or reskill under the JobTrainer program since July 2020.

During 2021–22, the JobTrainer Fund was jointly funded by the Queensland and Commonwealth governments to support people through no-fee or low-fee training in areas that have strong employment prospects and will help drive our economy forward. The JobTrainer Fund is addressing critical skills shortages by expanding its second round to include any Queenslanders, regardless of age or employment status, who wants to undertake training in aged care, disability care, childcare, and digital skills.

Fee-free training was available for a range of short courses and certificates with low-fee training available for higher level qualifications. These training places are providing skills needed to find work, re-enter the labour market or explore new work opportunities as Queensland's economy recovers from the impacts of COVID-19.