

# Workforce Connect Fund

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# ● Introduction

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- The **Workforce Connect Fund** is a key action under the *Queensland Workforce Strategy 2022-32* and aims to increase investment in industry and community-led projects that address attraction, retention, and participation issues within the workforce.
- **\$20 million** is available under the initiative which is made up of the following components:
  - **\$18 million** to fund large-scale, industry and community-led projects
  - **\$2 million** to provide HR support to small businesses.



# Large-scale projects



**Queensland**  
Government

Department of  
Employment, Small Business and Training

# ● Overview

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- Two fully contestable funding rounds
- Industry peak bodies and community peak organisations will be able to apply for funding up to \$1 million
- Funded large-scale projects are expected to have the capability to effect systemic change within the industry's workforce

# ● Why industry and community peaks?

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- Workforce planning at the sector level is critical and must be underpinned by industry leadership, as those responsible for job creation, employing people and shaping the future state of the workforce
- Communities play a vital role by supporting employers to tap into workers they have not traditionally accessed, and supporting Queenslanders to work in jobs they never thought available to them

# ● Partnership is key

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- Connecting, collaborating and working together is key to delivering successful outcomes under the Workforce Connect Fund
- Industry and community peaks must connect and partner with each other, other organisations, employers, and key stakeholders, to deliver innovative and flexible solutions to address these workforce needs.

# ● Partnerships in practice



# ● What systemic change looks like

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- Systemic change could be seen as:
  - transformational changes to workplaces to shift mindsets or stigmas within an industry
  - structural changes to workforce infrastructure or systems to change the way an industry operates
  - attracting, skilling up, or training non-traditional cohorts to work within a specific industry
  - collaboration and partnership with a diverse range of stakeholders at the local and industry level



# ● Project examples

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- Development of:
  - **new platforms or systems** that enhance or address issues to workforce participation
  - **new programs and approaches** that support specific cohorts within the industry and **address issues of stigmatism** with workplaces
  - innovative **pre-employment programs, industry inductions, simulated work environments**, or standardised industry-specific entry requirement materials for new cohorts of jobseekers
  - **innovative, new, mentoring or coaching strategies** that trial new approaches to retention of employees.

# ● Assessment criteria

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- Applications will be assessed against set criteria as per Guidelines
- There are six criteria:
  1. Capacity to manage
  2. Addressing and responding to industry need
  3. Connections and partnerships
  4. Linkages
  5. Outcomes and evidence
  6. Cost/value for money

# ● Evidence Requirements

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- **Applications** must include the following documentation:
  - Two years of audited income and expenditure statements
  - Organisational structure, governance, risk management and reporting framework documentation
  - Staff resumes or background information and/or relevant position descriptions on Project leads and/or teams
  - Letters of support from industry, community, local employers relevant to how this project will address industry needs and confirming linkages
  - Letters, MOUs or agreements confirming partnering organisations and the roles and responsibilities of each
  - Documentation to support analysis undertaken on why the project is most suitable and how the outcomes will be achieved
  - Letters from organisations confirming dollar value of in-kind contributions

# ● Expected outcomes

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- The following **standard KPIs** will be applicable:
  - At project completion, a measurable increase in retention and/or participation rates (depending on the project's target assist) is expected to be reported across the funded organisation's employer network
  - Where funded organisations have a member base, a minimum of 10% of employers supported are non-member employers (including small businesses) within the industry
  - Of jobseekers assisted, a minimum of 55% are successfully employed at completion of the project
  - Other project KPIs may be established based on approved project specifications

# ● Application and assessment process

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- Applications accepted online
- Applications assessed and prioritised by an Assessment Panel
- Applicants notified and Services Agreements issued (to approved applicants)
- Project delivery to commence from February/March 2023 onwards

# Key dates

Contract period: 28 November 2022 to 31 January 2026





# HR support for small business

# ● Overview

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- \$2 million is available under this component to provide immediate HR support and advice to eligible small businesses.
- Eligible small businesses will be able to apply for a grant of up to \$5,000 to address the identified HR need.
- Small businesses must work with Industry Workforce Advisors who will assist in identifying eligibility and the application process.

## Eligible HR Support

- Specialised recruitment strategies or practices
- New workforce systems or tools
- Other new and innovative approaches that support workforce attraction, retention or participation.



# ● Industry Workforce Advisors

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- Industry Workforce Advisors are being established to provide tailored assistance to small to medium employers by developing workforce plans to address their workforce gaps.
- Industry Workforce Advisors identify and connect employers with existing available support from Queensland Government programs, grants and initiatives, relevant to the small business's particular workforce challenges.

# Timeline



## Mid November

Industry Workforce Advisors to be established and onboarded.

## December 2022 onwards

Industry Workforce Advisors begin to engage with small businesses and develop workforce plans.

## December 2022 onwards

Small businesses will begin to request applications from DESBT for the HR support grants.



**Thank you for your time**

**[www.desbt.qld.gov.au/employment/workforce-connect-fund](http://www.desbt.qld.gov.au/employment/workforce-connect-fund)**

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