

TERTIARY TRADE AND TRAINING CONFERENCE REPORT – June 2024

The Tertiary, Trade and Training Portfolio encompasses a variety of policy areas concerning the future careers and the pathways for students living in Regional Queensland. The rapidly expanding and extensive nature of courses, facilities, skills and training, indicates that students are operating in extraordinary times.

In recent years, several motions have been presented at conferences calling for increased support for apprentices. In 2022, State Council contributed to the Queensland Training Ombudsmen's Review into apprenticeship and trainee support. Members concerns were robustly conveyed, with particular focus given to unique circumstances faced by rural and remote students, particularly those that were required to relocate to undertake their apprenticeship/training. In response to this Review, a new Apprenticeships Information digital card and app was launched in February. The Digital Card allows quick and easy access to the Apprenticeships Information contact number and includes a wide range of bite-sized guidance and support, including information on getting started, available financial assistance, a who's who guide to the apprenticeship process, and information on how to manage problems that may occur during training. Apprentices and trainees, or family members supporting students, can view this information and add the Digital Card to their mobile phone wallet. The release of this Digital Card/App has been a significant win for ICPA QLD and Regional students at large. I would like to commend the Department of Employment Small Business and Training (DESBT) for working collaboratively with Queensland State Council around these issues, particularly apprenticeship support, to enable such positive outcomes. State Council looks forward to hearing from students, or supporting parents, with any information that they may have regarding the usage of the Digital Card or the App.

At the 2023 Federal Conference, Queensland State Council presented two motions pertaining to the Tertiary, Trade & Training Portfolio. The first motion requested that the TAP (Tertiary Access Payment) be extended to include apprentices, and the second motion called for more timely and frequent audits of AASN (Australian Apprenticeship Support Networks) Both motions were successfully passed. Federal council continues to lobby these motions with a recent focus given to investigating possible funding within the apprenticeship sector for the TAP payment.

At last year's state conference, a motion was presented requesting ICPA to increase awareness amongst tertiary training providers, of the job opportunities that exist in Distance Education classrooms, for home tutors/governesses. A speaking opportunity at the Teacher Supply, Preparation, and Employment Partnership (TSPEP) meeting allowed for discussion and information sharing around this matter. The meeting was attended by the Director of the QCT, university representatives, and other education stakeholders.

The second motion presented at the 2023 conference, requested that a visual roadmap be developed for apprentices/trainees that includes important contacts at various crucial stages in their apprenticeship/training. This was discussed with DESBT at several delegations throughout the year and it is expected that the newly developed Digital Card/Wallet App will address these issues.

As a result of State Council's submissions into the *"Delivery of VET in Central Qld and Northern Queensland"* and the *"Delivery of VET in Regional Rural and Remote Queensland"* Councillors were invited to attend Parliamentary hearings in Brisbane and Roma, where they were invited to speak before the Education, Employment and Training Committee (EETC). These forums were aimed at understanding community and

stakeholder views and improving the delivery of vocational education and training in regional, rural and remote Queensland.

Queensland Council also provided face to face and online feedback into the VETis (Qld VET Strategy: VET in Schools/Stakeholders) forums and met with Dianne Britten (Manager: VETis Stakeholder Engagement and Communication) while in Brisbane at Delegations. Several ICPA families and VETis students were also involved in contributing feedback. The Delivery of VET in Regional, Rural and Remote Queensland (Report 43) was released in February and the summary of recommendations was discussed at length with Department Employment Small Business and Training (DESBT) and the Department of Education during March Delegations.

On the 25th of February the Universities Accord final report was released, containing 47 recommendations for Government consideration with the aim of creating a long-term reform plan for the higher education sector to meet the future skills needs. Specific reference was made to regional, rural and remote students throughout the report. The report drew attention to undergraduate university engagement rates of 19.8% within the sector and their growth target to 24% by 2035. Burden placed on students by unpaid, mandatory work placements and the support for expansion of Regional University Hubs were also featured. The full report can be found here: <https://www.education.gov.au/australian-universities-accord/resources/final-report>

In March 2024 the Hon Jason Clare, Minister for Education, announced the locations of the next 10 new Regional University Study Hubs and in early May a further \$2 million was committed by the Miles Labour Government to the Isaac Shire for establishment of Country University Centres. The hubs are a community driven enterprise. They support regional, rural, and remote communities to establish and operate their own high-tech facilities and assist local students to successfully pursue higher education and vocational studies, while remaining in their communities with family, friends and local employment.

ICPA Queensland continues to support investment in the Regional University Study Hubs/Country University Centres, meeting regularly with CEO/Founder, Duncan Taylor and local and state government stakeholders. There are currently 34 Regional Hubs operating across the nation and pursuant to the Universities Accord, this number will double to include 20 more, with 14 more in outer suburbs of larger cities.

Queensland Hubs currently operating or in development include:

- CUC Balonne (St George/Dirranbandi)
- CUC Cape York (Cooktown)
- CUC Maranoa (Roma)
- CUC Mt Isa
- CUC Goondiwindi
- Tablelands University Centre (Atherton)

The Recently Announced Queensland Hubs were:

- Country Universities Centre RAPAD (Longreach, Barcaldine, Blackall, Winton, Boulia, Bedourie, Birdsville and Jundah, QLD)
- Country Universities Centre Southern Downs (Warwick, QLD)
- Country Universities Centre Western Downs (Chinchilla, QLD)
- Innisfail Regional University Study Hub (Innisfail, QLD)
- Isaac Region (Moranbah and Clermont)

As a Key Issue and focus of ICPA Queensland's advocacy, the announcement and subsequent expansion of the university hubs, was particularly well received. We look forward to supporting members and local governments with the view to seeking funding and expanding the Queensland network into new rural and remote regions and hearing about the variety of ways that the hubs are utilised by students.

It has been a busy, yet exciting year for the Tertiary Trade and Training Portfolio with some traction finally evident. I personally appreciate the support that has been afforded to me from various government departments, stakeholders and state and federal colleagues. Collaboration has allowed us to achieve significant and rewarding progress, which I trust will benefit students and families. As this will be my final report, I wish the Incoming portfolio leader all the very best and students every success in their chosen pathway.

Anneli Day
TTT Portfolio Leader

