

13 October 2015

Research Director  
Education, Tourism and Small Business Committee  
Parliament House  
George Street  
Brisbane Qld 4000

Dear Research Director

The Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland (CCIQ) wishes to advise that it was consulted in the preparation of the Jobs Queensland Bill 2015 by the Department of Education and Training.

CCIQ wishes to confirm that it supports the Bill and the objective to establish Jobs Queensland as an independent statutory entity to provide strategic industry-led advice to government on skills demand and long-term workforce development and planning.

As Queensland's peak industry body, CCIQ wishes to work with the State Government to achieve the best Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector in Australia.

While previous governments have, over the years, put in place a number of positive skills and training initiatives (both at the state level and in concert with the Commonwealth Government through the Council of Australian Governments), there is much more to be done to realise the potential of the VET sector to enable Queenslanders to make a significant contribution to our economy.

In particular, the sector must continue its recent improvement in employer relevance, flexibility, quality and accessibility. CCIQ believes that the Queensland VET sector can directly support economic growth, productivity and industry competitiveness if it provides the skilled workforce required by business. It is therefore CCIQ's position that the VET sector must be better geared to prepare users for jobs in our state's major current and emerging industries.

Accordingly, it must continue to shift to a demand-driven, industry-led market, under which close consultation with industry will serve to identify key occupations and skills. This in our view requires a continued transition to a system of contestable funding, to ensure that funds are directed to higher priority skill areas, particular in occupations that have a strong link and reliance on VET pathways.

In bringing the focus of the VET sector back to its largest end-users – employers - Queensland's VET sector must be tailored to suit the conditions unique to Queensland, namely, our patchwork economy, and the corollary problems of skills shortages and oversupplies, labour mobility and low workforce participation in particular demographics.

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In addition to improving the quality and value of the VET sector, it is also necessary to better its useability and accessibility. This not only applies with respect to student access to VET, in terms of providing better accessibility, guidance, and pathways from vocational to higher education, but to the level of direct engagement that the Government has with employers with respect to VET initiatives, information and available government funding.

While CCIQ is cognisant of the fiscal constraints on the Queensland Government right now, we consider that this should serve as greater impetus for ensuring that funds are being used in the most effective and innovative manner.

For the above reasons CCIQ supports the Jobs Queensland Bill 2015.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Nick Behrens', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Nick Behrens  
**Director - Advocacy**