



QUEENSLAND
FUTURES
INSTITUTE

A BETTER QUEENSLAND

BETTER IDEAS

THE FUTURE OF EDUCATION
AND TRAINING IN QUEENSLAND

Better Ideas

THE FUTURE OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN QUEENSLAND

Wednesday 12th May

7:30am – 9:00am

Customs House, 399 Queen St, Brisbane

PANELISTS:



MARY CAMPBELL

Chief Executive Officer
TAFE Queensland



PROFESSOR CAROLYN EVANS

Vice-Chancellor and
President
Griffith University



MYRA GEDDES

General Manager -
Social Impact
Goodstart Early Learning



PROFESSOR GERALDINE MACKENZIE

Vice-Chancellor
University of Southern Queensland



PROFESSOR NIC SMITH

Acting Vice-Chancellor
and President
Queensland University
of Technology



PROFESSOR DEBORAH TERRY AO

Vice-Chancellor and President
The University of Queensland



**MODERATOR:
PROFESSOR IAN FRAZER AC**

Ambassador and Chair
Translational Research
Institute Foundation

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SNAPSHOT

The key theme from the 2021 Queensland Futures Institute *The Future of Education and Training* forum was the strong societal and economic benefits the sector provides Queensland, especially in the current COVID-19 situation. The outlined opportunities and challenges for education and training providers, for both current and future students, and the workforce, still reflect the discussion of last year. There is need for funding support, especially for early learning, and a policy environment which allows international students back into Australia.

Panel Comments



Mary Campbell, Chief Executive Officer, TAFE Queensland

- Vocational education and training form an important part of the economic landscape
- Correct training upskills play an important role for the development of the workforce and communities
- Working closely with industry, TAFE provides practical and relevant training to 120,000 students, providing 460 qualifications across 60 locations
- There is clear need for perpetual education with industry, not just in the education sector
- A recent training program started by TAFE to keep jobs in defence supply chain in Queensland, exemplifies collaboration with industry to keep jobs in the state
- Skills are the local and global currency of 21st Century; education and training providers must keep this in mind.



Professor Carolyn Evans, Vice-Chancellor and President, Griffith University

- Australia needs a mature policy conversation around higher education which aligns financial and policy incentives with the needs of industry development
- Universities should be powerhouse of economy, working with industry and enterprise to bring strong meaningful job opportunities to the regions, and provide opportunities to lower socioeconomic areas
- Universities also play a role in promoting democracy amongst international students, bridging communities across international borders, developing soft power, and allowing researchers to work with overseas colleagues
- Government must align policies, rather than only provide reflexive incentives. Budget incentives are needed as more investment is required to enable high quality education in Queensland
- Government must also ensure international students' visa regimes are sufficient to encourage diverse student markets to be reached
- Government must finally reduce the regulatory burden placed on universities to enable the agility of the higher education sector.



Myra Geddes, General Manager - Social Impact, Goodstart Early Learning

- There are 70,000 children at Goodstart Early Learning every day
- Following the 2021-22 Budget announcement there is a need for a conversation around the economic recovery of the education sector. As we think about repaying the large but necessary levels of debt / deficit in the future, we must consider that in 15 years, toddlers and pre-schoolers will be finishing school and looking for education and work, contributing to the economic recovery spending of today
- We have an opportunity to secure the state's future by maximising productivity and providing opportunity for Queensland children to go on to secure the best paid jobs of the global economy and achieve long-term economic prosperity
- Victoria, New South Wales and the ACT Government are already delivering 2 years of early learning; Queensland Government must catch up.



Professor Geraldine Mackenzie, Vice-Chancellor, University of Southern Queensland

- USQ's campuses at Toowoomba and Ipswich make the university an anchor institution within communities as it makes a critical contribution to the economic and intellectual capital of regions
- Flagship areas including space and defence, as well as aviation, agriculture, and health, provide regional development and enormous contribution to communities
- Considering the wider education ecosystem within Toowoomba highlights the need for early learning, collaboration with schools, and investment in the jobs of the future to best equip the children of today for the jobs of tomorrow.



Professor Nic Smith, Acting Vice-Chancellor and President, Queensland University of Technology

- The metrics considered by universities should consider what they are good for and what they are good at
- Universities are good for ensuring new technologies are translated into facilitating the future of industries, creating a sustainable and circular economy, and contributing to social expression and cohesion
- The university experience is evolving for students, with interaction with peers being challenged on campus given the COVID-19 restrictions
- Skills around leadership, communication, and the ability to rationalise uncertainty are important – translating these core skills into work integrated learning and making them relevant for industry both today and in the future is a key role for universities.



Professor Deborah Terry AO, Vice-Chancellor and President, The University of Queensland

- We are in an extraordinary period – during the height of the pandemic, UQ moved many courses online out of necessity. Work must now be done to think about this new business model and integrate this into a longer-term strategy moving forward, rather than just as a pandemic response
- Universities lay the intellectual foundations and shape the attributes of students, teaching them how to learn, providing a depth and breadth of education, and providing the purpose and human skills critical in the future in environment increasingly being disrupted by technology
- Given the current situation, a new challenge around online delivery is ensuring a value-add of campus experience can be provided to students
- Universities must work with all levels of government in thinking about the research ecosystem to deliver jobs and growth of the future.

Panel Discussion

1. Was last night's Budget advantageous for the education and training sector?

- There is a glimmer of hope with the reference to phased return of international students – it is important that the sector can facilitate this return, as the absence is hurting universities and impacting the wider economy. For example, a lack of foreign workers is resulting in workforce shortages, particularly skilled workers – there are currently medical students studying offshore – these students need to have experience in Australia, and benefit our economy and communities when they live and work here
- Early education, aged care and other similar areas was well represented in the Budget. With ongoing funding for childcare in Queensland, this shows an evidenced-based decision being made to fund this sector. This \$2bn commitment must be planned and managed well to enable all children access to quality education. The measures around workforce participation and the tax rate of take-home pay are also beneficial for early education
- There is currently a lack of support for disability, mental health, and family violence, and as such all related measures in the Budget are welcomed. Addressing these issues will result in opportunities being created for the sector. For example, aged care will enable opportunities for nursing graduates etc.
- The Job Trainer extension of \$500m will improve retention rates and assist people getting into the workforce. This is particularly helpful for apprentices and trainees in critical industries.

2. I would argue that Queensland's tertiary institutions are one of the cornerstones of the success of our modern society. Yet there appears to be limited support from the broader community as to their value - particularly in terms of providing the necessary financial support during these challenging times. Do you think that this is true or false and the basis for your position?

- Tertiary education and training are benefiting from philanthropy-based funding
- Society's confidence in truth, and attention span of societal issues is at an all-time low. Education and training that provides critical thinking skills is the solution to this. Trust in public institutions and politics must be restored in the broader community
- Critical skills shortages are becoming more prevalent especially in the regions. There is strong support for universities in regional areas - never negative representation in the media, likely due to the close ties and integration with regional communities. This is harder to achieve in metropolitan areas
- UQ has recently held a successful campaign for funding from the public to support for research. This also resulted in promotion of the importance of education and training
- Recent research shows that 68% feel positive about universities, education, and research, but 44% know little about universities, and 44% think university is not affordable, despite HECS funding, and results in poor employment prospects. Clearly the role of universities is poorly understood by average Australians. This must be addressed moving forward – the perception of universities must not be aloof and elitist, but rather strong institutions which have a commitment to developing communities
- Throughout the pandemic, researchers and experts gave advice and commented on the pandemic. This provided a public forum through which universities were represented in public. The sector must sure up the public understanding of universities' role in society.

3. With the rapidly changing nature of work, how are you ensuring the future employability of your students?

- Neuroscience shows that the development of the brain occurs in the first 5 years of life, giving people the ability to cope well under pressure. This ability has been demanded throughout the pandemic. We must invest early in children to ensure flexibility and agility
- The sector has recently done well to develop the future employability of students, though there is still room for improvement. Universities are integrated with employers, and teachers require resources and collaboration between academia and industry. There are opportunities across all disciplines in working with employers to develop scalable and exciting opportunities. For example, in collaboration with Gilmore Space, Engineering and IT students have been working on a functional satellite, gaining hands-on experience. This sets people up to perform well in the future workplace
- There is a community experience gained through university for that period of a student's life. Universities must ensure their community is providing something unique and encouraging the development of skills and ways of thinking to set students up for careers and experiences ahead. They must also provide diversity of experience and allow people to find their talent and passion. This is the unique role that universities must focus on now for the skills and jobs of the future, rather than provide training for skills needed right now.

4. What is the one key action that could be undertaken in the next 12 months that would greatly contribute to the success of Queensland's education and training sector?

- Collectively across sectors, there is need to have a discussion around international students. There is an ethical dimension to this – students chose Australia, so the reputation of Australian education will be damaged if we just shut access for the international education market
- There is not enough qualified and skilled people to provide childcare training. Workforce strategy is key in the next 12 months, along with investment, to unlock quality early education and ensure every cohort of children reaches their full capacity
- We must stop thinking about budget cycles and look at a 10–20year plan, thinking about the future of Australia, and ensuring proper funding to achieve this
- Queensland's education sector must work with industry to deliver economic and social prosperity for the region.

Audience Questions

There is a lack of professionals in the regions and therefore great demand to fill this gap. What is the policy and strategy to meet this demand?

- Despite QUT normally serving school-leavers from metropolitan Brisbane historically, as a response to COVID-19, 30 new courses have been offered in online mode, attracting 1,400 new students from outside Brisbane
- Distance learning is now popular and can serve rural and regional cohorts
- We must keep reminding people that we have fantastic education in the regions. There are many opportunities for students of USQ, as from employment statistics, we know graduates have the highest starting salary in Australia.

What are the challenges and opportunities for P-12 education in Queensland?

- We must focus on the roles of the future and encourage females into non-traditional pathways. This is being achieved through collaboration between universities and schools to define the critical skills of the future
- Of children who are coming into prep, 1 in 5 do not have the foundational skills to be successful at school. Closing this gap is challenging, regardless of resource spend, because for many children, they did not have opportunities in early education in the first 5 years of life. We must instill a value of learning to realise the benefits and opportunities of P-12 education in Queensland.

What are the challenges and opportunities for ATSI education and training in Queensland, especially around addressing the gap that currently exists for this cohort?

- There has been systematic and generational ATSI exclusion from education in Australia. ATSI students come through the education system with different skill building opportunities and from different pathways, reflective of different life experience, so the education sector must be supportive and respectful of different experiences, giving this cohort support educationally and culturally
- In early years, culturally appropriate opportunities must be developed to highlight the importance of cultural diversity.

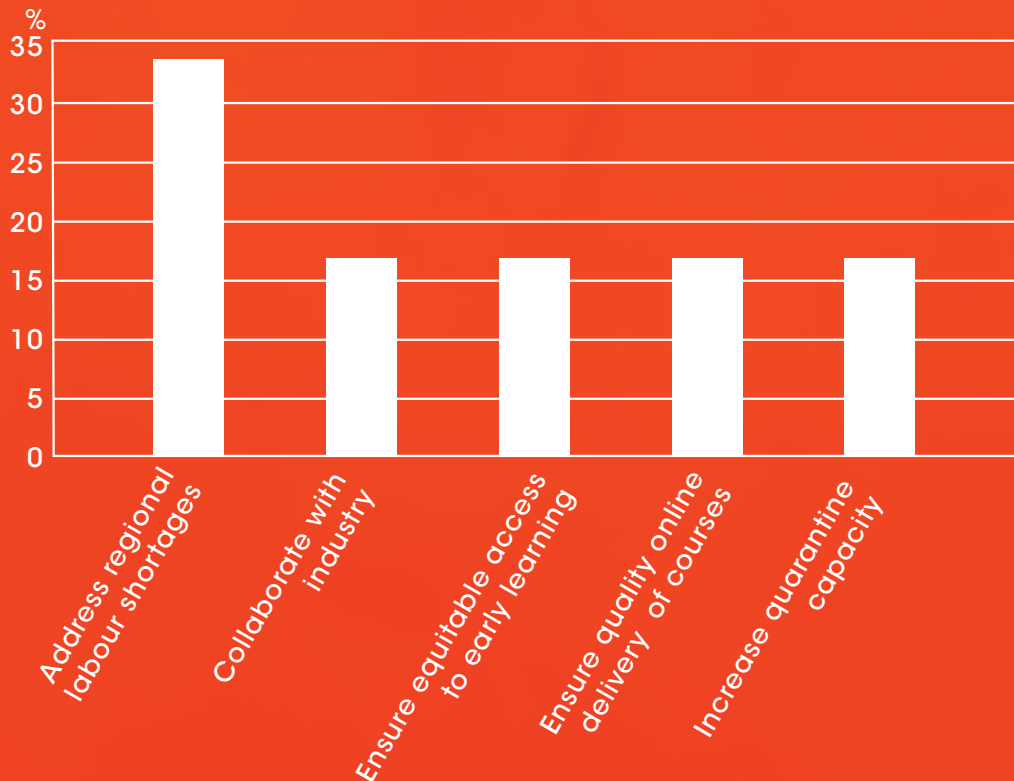
Where does the industry stand on the Toowoomba quarantine hub?

- The sector needs support for bringing back international students and vulnerable Australians, both now and with the future need of pandemics.

SUMMARY OF

Attendee Comments

TOP IDEAS AND INITIATIVES



SUMMARY OF

Ideas

- We must address the current regional shortages of labour and access to education and training through wider reaching education services, and enabling foreign workers and students to come back into Australia through wider quarantine capacity
- Collaboration with industry is key to developing training around the key skills being demanded both now and in the future
- Given the importance of early learning, we must ensure equitable access, so all children have the necessary development to achieve their full potential in the education ecosystem
- Given the shift towards online learning, universities must ensure the quality is still high

QFI Members





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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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