

WorkAbility Qld – NDIS Issues for Vocational Education and Training

The NDIS Education and Training Issues Paper was presented to the September 2016 meeting of the WorkAbility State Advisory Group and approved for further stakeholder consultation. The purpose of consultations was to formulate our advice on any funding, policy, coordination or implementation changes in the Queensland VET and employment sectors that may be required to support NDIS jobs.

To date we have consulted with state-wide, North Queensland, WIM and South West Queensland skills ecosystem groups, our State-wide Stewardship Group (relevant government agencies), and Services Union Organisers, RTOs and key Disability service providers.

In general, stakeholders agreed with the content of the Issues Paper and the priorities identified.

Attached is a summary of the key issues identified in the consultations. This paper proposes a set of recommendations intended to respond to these issues and ensure the Queensland VET system supports NDIS success.

Recommendations for the VET Investment Plan

1. **Second chance** funding be provided for students enrolling in CHC33015 *Certificate III in Individual Support* who are ineligible for Certificate 3 Guarantee. This measure will assist in rapidly filling the almost 30,000 new Queensland disability jobs required to support the NDIS over the next three years. In particular, it will support those changing careers and those returning to the workforce, both critical labour markets for the NDIS.
2. CHC33015 *Certificate III Individual Support* be added to the Queensland Training Subsidies List for **VET in Schools** delivery to support senior secondary students into disability and aged care careers. The rate of subsidy should be similar to the concessional students' rate for the same qualification.
3. The skill set CHCSS00081 *Induction to Disability* be added to the Queensland Training Subsidies List to support the entry of new workers into the disability sector. This skill set is important for both jobseekers and career changers wishing to take up NDIS jobs.
4. CHCSS00096 - *Disability Work - Behaviour Support Skill Set* be added to the Queensland Training Subsidies List for existing workers in the disability sector. This skill set is important to support higher level skills in relation to implementing behaviour support plans and reducing the use of restrictive practices.
5. CHC22015 *Certificate II in Community Services* be added to the Queensland Training Subsidies List for **VET in Schools** delivery as a pathway qualification for senior secondary students considering a career in disability, aged care and other community services sectors.
6. WorkAbility undertake further consultation with industry to determine the level of demand for the following skill sets, with a view to recommending Queensland Government subsidies where appropriate demand exists:

- CHCCSS00076 *Coordinate Client Directed Services*
 - CHCCSS00094 *High Support and Complex Needs – Disability Skill Set*
 - CHCCSS00098 *Individual Support – Disability Skill Set*
 - CHCCSS000100 *Individual Support – Home and Community Care (Disability) Skill Set*
 - CHCSS00103 *Mental Health Peer Work Skill Set*
 - CHCSS00090 *Supporting Children and Families with Complex Needs*
7. VET Investment Plan prioritise avenues to upskills the current workforce in Disability and related sectors in relation to the requirements of the NDIS, including NDIS legislative principles, customer service skills, choice and control, and empowerment of people with a disability. In keeping with the principles of the NDIS, these efforts should include people with disability as central to program design and delivery.
 8. VET Investment Plan identify opportunities to support people with disability to become part of the VET workforce, including the delivery of Disability qualifications and skills sets.
 9. VET Investment Plan prioritise a comprehensive training program to upskill the current workforce with workplace language, literacy and numeracy skills – and a particular emphasis on digital literacy skills – to support implementation of NDIS in the future.
 10. Pre-Qualified Supplier arrangements related to community services qualifications and skills sets ensure that workplace language, literacy and numeracy skills, including digital literacy skills, are embedded in delivery, assessment and student support strategies.
 11. VET Investment Plan prioritise professional development for the Queensland VET workforce to ensure trainers and assessors have current competency in relation to the core principles of the NDIS and the implications for workplace skills and requirements.
 12. VET Investment Plan provide resources to support the design and implementation of VET in Schools programs focussed on Certificate II in Community Services and Certificate III in Individual Support, along with other school programs, to assist senior school student into NDIS careers.

Recommendations for WorkAbility Queensland

The following recommendations are intended to support future priorities and planning for the WorkAbility Queensland project. Decisions about uptake of these recommendations will be subject to available resources and other priorities within the project.

13. WorkAbility Queensland consult with industry stakeholders to develop clear advice to the Queensland Department of Education and Training on criteria to apply to registered training providers seeking approval for Pre-Qualified Supplier status in relation to disability qualifications and skill sets.
14. WorkAbility Queensland work with Queensland Department of Education and Training to support flexible funding arrangements for disability training priorities, including funding for

competencies, skills sets, clusters of competencies and non-accredited training to support implementation of NDIS.

15. Subject to available funding, WorkAbility should undertake further research with Disability sector employers to investigate the barriers to uptake of traineeships and identify strategies and supports to increase the number of Disability traineeship commencements and completions.
16. WorkAbility Queensland work with the Queensland Government and non-government services to support a larger number of quality Skilling Queenslanders for Work projects that target the NDIS workforce.
17. WorkAbility Queensland explore avenues to support pre-employment programs for new entrants to the Disability sector that include values-based selection and industry-supported delivery of key competencies.
18. WorkAbility Queensland explore opportunities to support coordination and support for quality vocational placements in Disability services for those undertaking Certificate III in Individual Support courses. This work may also support a 'try before you buy' recruitment approach for employers.
19. WorkAbility Queensland explore funding and other opportunities to pilot Allied Health Assistant roles in disability services in Queensland.
20. WorkAbility Queensland engage with universities delivering Allied Health qualifications to ensure curriculum is relevant to NDIS and student clinical placements include exposure to disability service settings.
21. WorkAbility Queensland explore opportunities to include the aged care workforce in relevant project activities to support the dual reforms and significantly shared workforce between the two sectors. Work in this area should be subject to the contracted focus on the NDIS workforce and should not impede or detract from the projects efforts in relation to the NDIS.
22. WorkAbility Queensland develop advice for individuals, training providers and job active services regarding the entry requirements for NDIS jobs. In particular, this should include advice about values and attributes, working with vulnerable people checks, first aid certificates, drivers licences and other potential requirements such as a smart phone and registered vehicle.
23. WorkAbility Queensland consider the development of consumer resources to support employers as well as individuals choose quality training courses and quality training providers.

24. WorkAbility Queensland place-based efforts explore opportunities for organisations to pool resources and share training efforts to achieve economies of scale and consistency in training efforts across organisations.
25. WorkAbility Queensland trial industry validation networks to improve assessment outcomes and support stronger industry-RTO relationships at the local level.

Attachment A: Summary of Issues Arising from Consultations

Below is a summary of key issues identified in the consultations regarding the NDIS Education and Training Issues Paper. These issues have informed a set of recommendations for consideration by the WorkAbility State Advisory Group in March 2017.

Key Issues:

- Need for values-based selection tools to support employers to select, and jobseekers to self-select, the right people for NDIS careers. This might include other issues like police check, Blue Card, drivers licence etc.
- Need for an agile, responsive training system at the local level to respond to emerging skill needs as they arise, including the development of local responses to local needs.
- Need for specialist skill sets to augment entry-level support workers qualifications that support working with particular disability cohorts (for example autism or behaviour support skills) or specific job roles (for example using hoists or PEG feeding).
- Significant need for language and literacy skills development is required, particularly for direct support workers – both current and future workers.
- Significant demand for upskilling of the current workforce with the right skills and values to facilitate choice and control for people with a disability and their carers and families.
- Skill shortages among Allied Health Therapists are likely to be significant, and specific strategies will be required to address this, including closer work with universities, university students and potential Allied Health Assistant trials.
- There are existing models for school-based traineeships in individual support roles in SEQ that have focussed on aged care and hospital settings, but these programs have the potential to be expanded to include Disability sector roles.
- Disability employers require additional support in order to provide significantly greater number of vocational placement opportunities that will be required to train the number of new workers required.
- Many new workers entering Disability roles are career changers and women returning to work after a period of care. Typically these people have a prior qualification and are therefore ineligible for Certificate III Guarantee funding. There is some provision for second chance funding, however this is generally restricted to Qld TAFE, and Qld TAFE have only a minority of the market delivery in these qualifications.
- There are opportunities to align many of the attraction and skilling strategies for the NDIS with the needs of aged care sector, particularly because of the parallel reform in consumer directed care in that sector. There is also a significant number of employers who provide both disability support and aged care services.
- Disability workers report there are few opportunities for employer-paid training or paid time off for training except for mandatory matters such as first aid, health and safety, manual handling, medications assistance, etc.

- A sample of union members identified priorities for further professional development (in addition to the basic Certificate III qualification) include: physical assistance, advanced support skills, admin, computer, time management, conflict management, communication and legal & ethical training.
- There is no clear pattern of skills assessment and upskilling or RPL opportunities for the current workforce. Related to this, much of the NDIS readiness training to date has focussed on information about the NDIS, timeframes, etc. and little about the knowledge, skills and values that will be required to work successfully in the NDIS.
- Need strategies to ensure currency of skills for Disability training workforce in relation to NDIS and individual choice and control, including focus on social and economic participation.
- Need to provide comprehensive advice to Department of Education and Training regarding criteria for Pre-Qualified Supplier RTOs to ensure public funds are not wasted on training that does not serve the success of NDIS.
- Need to support employers to understand how to choose quality training providers and to influence the content of training courses.
- Skilling Queenslanders for Work is missing some of the upcoming NDIS jobs growth opportunities because of the requirement for a job outcome at completion of the program.
- Additional eligibility requirements such as Blue Cards, drivers licence, police checks, etc. is a barrier to entry for some jobseekers.
- Promotion of NDIS jobs and the industry generally is required to encourage potential NDIS workforce to enter the field.
- Need to identify best practice packaging of qualifications and skill clusters to suit specific job roles.
- Significant need for non-accredited training to support NDIS. Key areas include: understanding the NDIS, customer service skills, choice and control philosophy, working with people and colleagues from other cultures, ATSI cultural awareness, working with particular disabilities.
- Need for ongoing analysis of support plans data and employer experience to stay ahead of the jobs growth and skills in demand.
- Traineeships have declined however this may be an important pathway to support jobs growth. Need to investigate options for increasing uptake of traineeships.
- Need for a review of training products as well as training tools and resources that are fit-for-purpose in relation to the NDIS.
- There may be opportunities to include both existing staff and the VET workforce in NDIS training together.
- Keen interest in the possibility of Therapy Assistant or Allied Health Assistant roles, however these are not generally used in disability services at this stage.

- Important to support school pathway programs, including ProjectAble, VET in Schools and Schools-Based Traineeships. The Health Hubs and Health Futures models provide some opportunity for broadening into disability.
- There is emerging interest in values based recruitment and in group selection processes. These could be embedded into pathways programs.
- Specific training priorities identified:
 - Autism
 - Epilepsy
 - Mental Health & Psychosocial Disabilities
 - Peg Feeding
 - Communication Aids
 - Auslan
 - Dual / Multiple Diagnoses
 - Professional Boundaries
 - Written communication / Report writing
 - Digital technology
 - Intake assessment and worker-client matching
 - Active Listening and Speaking
 - Working Legally and Ethically
 - ATSI, CALDB & LGBTIQ awareness
- There is an opportunity in smaller locations to facilitate collaborative training efforts – pooling resources to train staff from a number of agencies.
- Opportunity to support in-house training.
- RTOs are already experiencing difficulty in finding vocational placement opportunities for learners, and this will become more difficult as the number of people undertaking training increases.
- Opportunity to trial industry assessment validation networks to improve assessment outcomes and support stronger industry-RTO relationships
- Customer guide for choosing RTOs and quality training
- Cost is a significant barrier for existing workers to undertake training. Subsidies need to be considered to support upskilling.