NDIS Training and Skills Support Strategy Advice Project

Technical Advice Report

27 June 2019

Executive Summary

The WorkAbility Queensland *National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Training and Skills Support Strategy (NTSSS) Advice Project* is providing strategic advice to industry and governments on matters related to the NDIS workforce in Queensland.

This Technical Report outlines the findings of research and consultation that sought to identify where changes to the VET Investment Plan might better support training and workforce development in the Queensland disability sector, and where other actions are needed to address issues affecting training uptake.

This summary is based on state-wide consultation which identified the following issues:

New Workforce

- challenges related to the recruitment of staff are significantly impacting the industry.
- while some disability service providers (employers) are seeking to recruit new workers with qualifications and others support their workers to undertake nationally recognised training once they are employed, many employers within the sector do not place value on accredited qualifications.

Training Barriers

- resource constraints in a tight operating environment are impacting the ability to pay for training of both new and existing workers are the biggest barriers to training and workforce development across the sector.
- many employers are unaware of the range of training and funding options available to them.

Regional Intelligence

- people with disability consider that having workers with "the right values" or attributes is far more important than having workers with qualifications. This view is now being reflected in the employment practices of employers and the trend is toward meeting these criteria before putting them through training.
- disability service providers have shown considerable interest in the potential development of skill sets or other non-accredited training for addressing immediate needs for the induction of new workers and to upskill existing workers.
- employers have indicated the need to upskill managers and leaders particularly in the areas of current NDIS practices and processes, mentoring and debriefing.
- current training options that are available to the broader disability sector (for both existing and new workers) do not prepare workers for work within the NDIS.

Existing Workforce

- employers are seeking specialist skills for working with specific client groups (e.g. participants with specific medical or behavioural support needs)
- there is a requirement for training in mental health support for new and existing workers

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These findings have led to the following recommendations:

Priority Skills List

- **Recommendation 1** - DESBT to add the CHCSS00098 Individual Support – Disability Skill Set to the Priority Skills List to enable upskilling and cross-skilling of workers with existing community services and health qualifications

- **Recommendation 2** - DESBT to add the CHCSSS00082 Lead and Mentor Skill Set and CHCSS00084 Lead and support colleagues Skill Set to the Priority Skills List to enable upskilling of leaders and managers in the disability sector.

- **Recommendation 3** - DESBT to add the CHCSS00065 - Workforce Planning Skill Set to the Priority Skills List to enable upskilling of managers in workforce planning.

- **Recommendation 4** - DESBT to add the CHCSS00094 - High Support and Complex Care - Disability Skill Set to the Priority Skills List to enable the upskilling of existing workers in the disability sector in specialised support needs.

- **Recommendation 5** - Explore the potential inclusion of additional accredited skill sets to meet the demand for skills in:
  - mental health support
  - specific medical supports.

- **Recommendation 6** - Identify non-accredited training options to address immediate skills gaps in relation to the NDIS structure, principles, guidelines, quality and safeguards framework, choice and control and workforce mental health.

- **Recommendation 7** - DESBT to consider the removal of eligibility restrictions for C3G funding of the Certificate III in Individual Support (Disability) for individuals who have gained employment in the sector.

- **Recommendation 8** - Review the funding for traineeships in the Certificate III in Individual Support (Disability) in relation to those for C3G pathways.

New Workforce

- **Recommendation 9** - Implement strategies for screening of suitability of potential workers and students (including education of Job Active providers and RTOs) to ensure the 'right values' exist for potential workers.

- **Recommendation 10** - Implement strategies to 1. support the attraction of new workers into the industry and 2. promotion of training options, pathways and funding.

Industry Intelligence

- **Recommendation 11 -** Continue consultation, ongoing research and monitoring of industry needs, including via the use of regional networks and reference groups.

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About this report

This report forms part of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Training and Skills Support Strategy (NTSSS) Advice Project, which has been designed to provide strategic advice to industry and governments on matters related to the NDIS workforce in Queensland. The report has been developed for WorkAbility Qld by Sue Goodwin of Sodalite Projects and Rachel Healy of Rachel Healy Consulting.

This report has been developed to enable WorkAbility Queensland to make recommendations to the Department of Employment Small Business and Training (DESBT) on the effectiveness of training activities and investment in supporting the development of the NDIS workforce, including any recommendations for changes to the VET Investment Plan.

The two key questions this report seeks to answer are:

1. What changes to the VET Investment Plan are needed to better support training and workforce development in the disability sector?
2. What other actions are needed to address issues affecting training uptake?

The recommendations presented in this report are based upon the findings of the *NTSSS Research Report No. 1*, and of consultations with more than 280 representatives of the disability sector across the state. This included:

- Eight group discussions with members of disability service provider networks in Logan, Ipswich, Redland, Cairns, Brisbane, Sunshine Coast, Gold Coast/Tweed and Toowoomba (involving more than 180 people)
- Ten individual in-depth interviews with representatives of service provider organisations, including large, small, metropolitan and regional-based providers, and providers delivering services to children, self-managed NDIS participants and NDIS participants from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities and from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- 29 responses to an online survey, representing service provider organisations, self-managed NDIS participants, Disability Employment Service providers, advocates and training organisations
- Workshops with groups of service providers regarding workforce sustainability in Gympie and Brisbane (involving 25 people)
- Four in-depth interviews with RTOs that have Pre-Qualified Supplier PQS status and are delivering training to the disability sector
- Discussions with the NTSSS Industry Reference Group and the NTSSS RTO Reference Group, including validation of the research findings and recommendations (involving 35 representatives of disability service providers and RTOs).

Many of the issues described below overlap with those discussed in the *NTSSS Training Package Advice Report* and the *NTSSS RTO Quality and Benchmarks Report*. Therefore, the recommendations made in this *NTSSS Technical Advice Report* should also be considered in conjunction with the findings of the other two reports.

Issues

The research and consultations conducted to date have identified a number of key issues affecting workforce development and the uptake of training in the disability sector.

Challenges faced by the sector

By far the two biggest workforce challenges being faced by the disability sector are difficulties in recruiting sufficient numbers of suitable workers and a lack of funding within the NDIS pricing structure to support the training and development of new and existing workers.

Although both issues sit outside the responsibility of the training system, understanding the dimensions of these issues is essential if any other workforce development and training strategies are to be successful.

Recruitment challenges

Service providers across the state are struggling to recruit enough suitable workers to meet client demands. One regional service provider spoke in terms of a shortfall of 400-500 support hours per week, which has to be met through using agency staff. Another metropolitan service provider reported that they could double their number of clients overnight if they were able to recruit sufficient numbers of suitable support workers. Each new client means recruiting 5 or 6 new workers.

Particular challenges were mentioned in relation to recruiting younger workers (aged 20-29), male workers and indigenous workers.

There were many reports across the consultations of people not turning up for interviews (around 50% of no-shows in several cases) or for inductions. One example was given of 10 people being recruited, only 3 turning up for induction and then only 1 or 2 continuing to become employees.

The lack of suitable candidates represents not only a recruitment challenge, but also considerable time and effort wasted in recruitment processes.

Those consulted had had little success with recruiting suitable candidates through Job Active providers. There were also reports of Job Active providers sending people off to do training who were completely unsuited to working in the sector.

Some service providers were having greater success in working closely with RTOs to identify suitable workers from amongst their groups of learners and in working closely with RTOs to develop strategic workforce development approaches. These successful approaches will be explored further in the second research report.

Lack of resources for training

The other major barrier to workforce development is a lack of resources (time and money) to train and induct new workers and to conduct ongoing training and upskilling with existing workers. This issue was raised across almost every discussion and interview conducted to date.

Amongst the 29 survey respondents, finding the resources to train and induct new workers was the most significant challenge, with 67% of respondents reporting that this was moderately or extremely difficult. The next most significant challenge was providing additional training to existing workers, with 64% of respondents rating this as moderately or extremely difficult. Recruitment challenges were slightly less significant,

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ranging from 59% reporting moderate or extreme difficulty in 'recruiting new workers with specific skills and capabilities', down to 46% for 'Recruiting new workers with appropriate personal attributes.

By contrast, accessing appropriate training options for workers was moderately or extremely difficult for only 39% of respondents.

The current NDIS pricing structure does not allow for sufficient training of workers. Even where participants have included training in their NDIS plan, the maximum allowed for is six hours of buddy shifts per participant. Given that each participant is likely to have five or six support workers, this represents about an hour of funded training per support worker.

One service provider estimated that it takes 38 hours of paid time to train a new support worker in the basics and then additional training to meet specific client support needs was on top of that.

Not surprisingly, some service providers (particularly smaller ones) are looking to externalise training costs and require new workers to have already completed a qualification. At the same time though, there is a lack of faith in the content and quality of much accredited training (see discussion below), creating a tension between a desire to do training in-house and wanting training to be funded.

Lack of value of accredited qualifications

As highlighted in the *NTSSS Training Package Advice Report* and *NTSSS RTO Quality and Benchmarks Report*, little value is placed on accredited qualifications in the disability sector.

Reporting by National Disability Services, using its Workforce Wizard data[1] showed that Queensland had the lowest proportion of newly recruited workers with a disability-related qualification of any state or territory, with 15% of new recruits formally qualified (compared with a national average of 20%). Victoria had the highest proportion at 30%.

The data also showed that small organisations were more likely to recruit people with a disability-related qualification than large ones.

This was reflected in consultation feedback which identified that many organisations (particularly large service providers) were not interested in their workers gaining formal qualifications and instead were developing and delivering their own in-house training programs.

> *"We don't require non-professional workers to have qualifications. If they have the right values, everything else can be trained on the job"*
> *(Disability Service Provider)*
>
> *"Support workers just need the right values and then all of the training is done in-house. Our OTs do the manual handling training, the Social Workers do the values training and the RNs do training in medication and other clinical skills" (Disability Service Provider)*

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[1] National Disability Services (2018) Australian Disability Workforce Report, 3rd edition - July 2018

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"We don't specifically look for workers with qualifications. Instead we look for values and reasons for wanting to work in the industry. We can do the training in-house" (Disability Service Provider)

"We don't push workers to do formal training. If they were required to do so, it would be at the request of the NDIS participant." (Disability Service Provider)

"We prefer to train people ourselves – we get better outcomes" (Disability Service Provider)

Many organisations in the disability sector do require potential workers to have accredited qualifications, or else encourage or support them to gain a qualification once they are employed. Reasons for this included:

- for risk mitigation, quality assurance and insurance purposes
- as a recruitment screening tool that "*at least provides an indication that they have made an effort and have initiative*"
- providing new workers with "*a language and an understanding of the human body*"
- providing the organisations with "*reassurance of experience and knowledge of the legal side of care*"
- enabling "*better service to clients, better safety for clients and staff, better understanding of disability and staff development/personal development*"
- the value of training incentives received for trainees (which one provider uses to pay the student fees and a completion incentive to trainees)
- building loyalty to the organisation by putting staff through training.

However, amongst service providers that had the Certificate III in Individual Support as an employment requirement, there was often an accompanying view that this did not actually prepare them for work in the sector.

"It doesn't count for much" (Disability Service Provider)

There were many reports of providers having to retrain workers once they were employed to fill skill gaps or address a lack of competency, using in-house and non-accredited training.

Those service providers who supported staff in some way to gain a qualification once they were employed (including through traineeships), or who worked closely with an RTO to find suitable workers, seemed to be much more positive about the quality of training. This suggests that a direct relationship between RTOs and service providers is an important component in creating valuable training outcomes for new and potential workers.

The need for 'the right fit'

Although there are mixed views as to whether accredited qualifications are important for new and potential workers, there is complete consensus across the sector that having "*the right values*" is absolutely essential for workers.

"We do prefer staff to have a qualification, but more importantly the support worker has to be the right match." (Disability Service Provider)

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"Workers need to have the right values and then you can train for everything else." (Disability Service Provider)

"We are looking for values and attitudes first and foremost" "Formal training doesn't necessarily equip you to meet a person's individual support needs" (Disability Service Provider)

Throughout the consultations there was an emphasis on the importance of workers being the right fit for disability work, which includes attributes such as:

- an attitude towards a person with disability "*as a human being*" and treating them with respect
- seeing what a person can do – their abilities and possibilities – rather than what they can't do
- a genuine sense of care for another person's safety, well-being and goals.

Without these attributes, potential workers are unlikely to be considered suitable for working in the sector. And now with the introduction of the NDIS and the principles of choice and control, potential support workers need to not only be "the right fit" for the sector, but also for the particular people who they are going to support.

The risk for job seekers to undertake training and then be considered 'unsuitable' is very real, which can result in wasted government training funds and potential loss of further entitlements to funded training for job seekers.

"Before committing to skilling potential disability sector workers, first screen for the attitudes, behaviours and values that are 'the right fit' for success as a disability sector worker. High-quality skill training alone is not enough." (Disability Service Provider)

"Ensure the participants of training are the right fit for the industry. A lot of resources can be wasted when we have training for the sake of training." (Disability Service Provider)

This places considerable responsibility on RTOs and those referring people to training (e.g. Job Active and Disability Employment Service providers) to ensure that they have a good understanding of the disability sector and what comprises a good fit.

The RTOs consulted all spoke about activities such as inviting industry speakers to meet with students, using videos of "a day in the life of…" and sending students out on an initial placement early in the course, as ways of ensuring students understand what disability work is like. Some also spoke of "*educating*" Job Active and Disability Employment Service providers to improve referrals to training courses.

"I spend a lot of time training JA and DES people in values-based and behavioural recruitment" (RTO)

However, there may be more that can be done to improve the understanding of what the right fit looks like amongst the whole of the VET and employment services sectors and to encourage RTOs and Job Active providers to actively screen for values and attributes.

Interest in the potential of skill sets

Throughout the consultations there was significant interest expressed in the potential of skill sets for:

- Induction training

- Upskilling in disability support for people who have experience in other community services and health sectors, including for organisations seeking to cross-skill staff to work across multiple parts of their organisation
- Upskilling in the NDIS for people with old qualifications
- Training in specialised areas, such as behaviour support or specific clinical supports.

Induction training

Funded induction training was of particular interest. However, there was very little awareness that the Induction to Disability skill set was already on the Priority Skills List.

The Induction to Disability skill set (CHCSS00081) contains the following units of competency:

- CHCCCS015 - Provide individualised support
- CHCCOM005 - Communicate and work in health or community services
- CHCDIS007 - Facilitate the empowerment of people with disability
- HLTWHS002 - Follow safe work practices for direct client care

It appears that this skill set would meet most of the induction requirements spoken of by service providers. Although, some would also like additional specialised units to be able to be added to the four core units, such as:

- Assist clients with medication
- Facilitate responsible behaviour
- Work with diverse people or Promote Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cultural safety.
- Meet personal support needs.

There is also a need to ensure that the core units for the skill set adequately cover the fundamentals of the NDIS – including frameworks, principles, guidelines and roles.

Specialised skills

Service providers delivering support to clients with complex support needs, particularly those involving medical/nursing supports, spoke of the need for support workers to have additional skills in areas such as:

- PEG feeding
- Aspiration
- Administering of oxygen
- Dealing with colostomy bags
- Bowel therapy management
- Administering medications.

The need for support workers with skills in supporting mental health needs and behavioural support needs were also often raised. In several consultations it was suggested that all support workers need to have skills in identifying and supporting mental health needs of clients as this is an issue affecting most people with disability, not just those with diagnosed mental health conditions.

Some of these skill needs are covered by existing training package skill sets:

- CHCSS00096 - Disability Work - Behaviour Support Skill Set
- CHCSS00070 - Assist Clients with Medication skill set

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- CHCSS00094 - High Support and Complex Care - Disability Skill Set.

However, these skill sets do not cover skills in mental health or most of the medical/nursing supports.

NDIS and cross-sector skills

The other major areas of interest for upskilling are:

- The NDIS
- Disability support (for people coming from other areas of community services).

The Individual Support - Disability Skill Set (CHCSS00098) would provide a suitable vehicle for cross-skilling workers with experience in other areas of community services, but it is not currently on the Priority Skills List.

There are not currently any accredited training options for upskilling workers (or trainers) in the NDIS (an issue that is also discussed in the *NTSSS RTO Quality and Benchmarks Report*).

A lack of understanding of the NDIS has also been identified as an issue for new workers to the sector, even when they have a recent qualification.

> *"We used to ask interviewees what they knew about the NDIS, but they looked at you blankly. So we've taken that off our list of questions."*
> *(Disability Service Provider)*

Lack of awareness of funding support for training

Very few of the people involved in group discussions and interviews knew that the Queensland Government funded certain skill sets – even some of the people who were representing RTOs. Similarly, amongst survey respondents, less than half (46%) were aware of funding for skill sets.

By contrast, two-thirds of respondents were aware of the Skilling Queenslanders for Work program and of financial supports for employing adult trainees, and three-quarters were aware of Australian Government subsidies for employing eligible job seekers.

In disability network meetings, many service providers expressed surprise upon hearing of the range of funded training options that were available and the potential for RTOs to package up training that could meet their specific needs. At many of these meetings, the discussions about training and workforce development issues resulted in service providers connecting with RTO representatives who were present at the meeting to discuss potential tailored training and workforce development solutions.

This suggests that further work needs to be done in building awareness of available options and helping service providers to connect with RTOs.

Several of the recommended strategies in the 2018 WorkAbility Queensland report - *Building the NDIS workforce through traineeships*, are particularly relevant to raising awareness of the availability and value of different training pathways:

1. Develop and implement a behaviour-focused plan (e.g. based upon models of behaviour change processes) for the promotion of nationally accredited training pathways within the disability sector, which takes into account:
   a. 'readiness' of different groups of providers (e.g. stage of implementation of the NDIS in their region, attitudes towards nationally recognised training, familiarity with the VET system)

b. relevance of different messages about the value of training (e.g. characteristics of the organisation in relation to suitability for traineeships or other pathways)

c. effectiveness of communication sources (e.g. using 'trusted' sources of information and advice)

2. Bring together materials for service providers that clearly outline the different training pathways available to the sector, the funding and incentives associated with each and the relative cost/benefit of each. Present these in a format that is easily accessed and understood by service providers, make these accessible through sources identified in Strategy 1 above and ensure information is kept up to date.

3. Combine information for potential workers about relevant training pathways with information about career opportunities in the sector, ensuring that it is appropriately tailored for different potential worker cohorts.
Ensure the message of 'the right fit' is part of this information.
Make the information available in an online format so that it can be downloaded and printed as needed and can be easily kept up to date. [2]

Training for existing staff and for leaders and managers

Various issues regarding training of existing staff, leaders and managers have arisen from the conversations conducted to date.

Of primary concern to service providers was the issue discussed earlier in this report of a lack of resources (time and money) to conduct ongoing training and upskilling of existing workers. In addition, the NDIS represents a massive change to the way in which work is done in the sector, which requires new ways of thinking, new skills and understandings, new administrative procedures and practices and new business models, management and leadership practices.

For existing workers, new skills and knowledge are needed in areas such as:

- Understanding the NDIS
- Record keeping
- Communication and reporting against participant goals
- Use of IT-based systems (particularly the NDIS portal) and assistive technology
- Use of IT programs such as excel for reporting and planning.

In addition, many organisations that provide services across multiple sectors (including disability, aged care and home and community care) are using support staff across service areas as a way of managing workloads. This is increasing the need for cross-skilling of existing workers.

For leaders and managers there is a need for new skills in areas such as:

- Mentoring, coaching and professional supervision
- Supporting workforce and business innovation
- Change management
- Workforce planning

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[2] WorkAbility for Jobs Queensland (2018) Building the NDIS workforce through traineeships, p31

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- Budgeting
- Inclusive leadership and embedding of inclusive practices, including ensuring policies, practices, induction information etc are inclusive of people with disability and people from CALD and ATSI communities
- Recruitment skills – particularly in how to recruit people to effectively support choice and control
- HR practices that support an effective and mentally healthy workforce.

A lack of skills in supervising and mentoring amongst managers and leaders was identified as a barrier to workforce development for the sector and to the provision of high quality work placement experiences.

> *"Workplace supervisors don't have good mentoring skills to be able to pass on their knowledge and experience" (RTO)*

There were also reports of managers lacking the technical skills and knowledge needed to supervise workers and oversee specific aspects of support work, such as assisting with medication.

> *"Workers are often more highly qualified than the managers" (Disability Service Provider and RTO)*

The use of accredited skill sets may be a valuable way of addressing some of these additional skill needs.

Existing qualifications and funding arrangements

Consultations conducted to date have confirmed that the Certificate III in Individual Support is the most commonly used or sought-after qualification in the disability sector. However, there are several other qualifications and skill sets used across the sector. These are listed in Table 1 below, along with details of current funding arrangements and additional comments around usage.

Table 1. Qualifications and skill sets relevant to the disability sector

Qualification or Skill Set	Nationally recognised training ID	Funding Options[3]	Usage
Certificate III in Individual Support	CHC33015	User choice (traineeship) Certificate 3 Guarantee Skilling Queenslanders for Work	Most commonly used/sought after qualification across the sector
Certificate IV in Disability	CHC43115	Higher Level Skills (for existing workers in health and community services and parents and carers)	Frequently used within the sector

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[3] Note that each of these funding programs have eligibility requirements attached to them.

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Qualification or Skill Set	Nationally recognised training ID	Funding Options[3]	Usage
Induction to Disability Skill Set	CHCSS00081	Higher Level Skills (for new workers in the disability sector and parents/carers of NDIS participants)	Increasing use within the sector – but little awareness of its existence
Disability Work – Behaviour Support skill set	CHCSS00096	Higher Level Skills (for existing workers in the disability sector and parents/carers of NDIS participants)	Some use and interest in this skill set
Assist Clients with Medication skill set	CHCSS00070	Higher Level Skills (for existing workers in health and community services, including parents and carers)	Some use within the sector
Individual Support - Disability Skill Set	CHCSS00098	Higher Level Skills (for new & existing workers in health or community services)	Some interest in this skill set
Certificate II in Community Services	CHC22015	Skilling Queenslanders for Work VET in Schools Free TAFE	Some use of this as a pathway qualification
Certificate III in Community Services	CHC32015	User choice (traineeship) Certificate 3 Guarantee / Higher Level Skills Skilling Queenslanders for Work	Commonly used, but mostly in group facilities and other community services
Certificate IV in Community Services	CHC42015	Higher Level Skills (for existing workers in health and community services, including parents and carers)	Mostly used in group facilities and other community services
Certificate III in Allied Health Assistance	HLT33015	Certificate 3 Guarantee	Currently used more in health and aged care settings
Certificate IV in Allied Health Assistance	HLT43015	Higher Level Skills	Currently used more in health and aged care settings
Certificate IV in Mental Health	CHC43315	Higher Level Skills (for existing workers in health and community services)	Some use of and interest in this qualification

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Qualification or Skill Set	Nationally recognised training ID	Funding Options[3]	Usage
Certificate IV in Mental Health Peer Work	CHC43515	Higher Level Skills	Some use of and interest in this qualification

Recommendations

The research and consultations have highlighted a number of areas in which the current training system is not meeting the demand for skills from the disability sector. These include the need for:

- training in the NDIS for new workers, existing workers and trainers
- training in mental health support for new and existing workers
- specialist skills for working with specific client groups (e.g. participants with particular medical or behavioural support needs)
- greater awareness of the training and funding options available to the sector
- upskilling of leaders, managers and supervisors of new workers and students on placement.

Whilst many of these issues may be addressed by changes to training products in the longer term, there is a need for solutions to fill some of these gaps in the short term.

Support greater use of skill sets

The diversity of support needs across the disability sector means that a single qualification is only ever going to be part of a workforce development strategy. Skill sets provide an ideal way in which to develop the more specific skill combinations needed to meet the support needs of diverse NDIS participants.

In terms of recruiting new workers, skill sets also provide an ideal means of skilling workers in the fundamentals needed to work in the sector, trialling their suitability for working in the sector without funding whole qualifications that may be 'wasted' and providing a platform for ongoing skill development – including completing a full qualification.

For leaders and managers, skill sets provide an avenue through which to gain some of the skills urgently needed by organisations struggling to remain sustainable in the new NDIS environment.

Several skill sets are already funded under the Priority Skills List. However, the availability of these skills sets needs to be promoted more widely, additional skill sets need to be added to the Priority Skills List and the possibility of funding for additional skill clusters (as distinct from nationally recognised skill sets identified in training packages) needs to be explored.

> **Recommendation 1.**
>
> DESBT to add the CHCSS00098 Individual Support – Disability Skill Set to the Priority Skills List to enable upskilling and cross-skilling of workers with existing community services and health qualifications

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> **Recommendation 2.**
>
> DESBT to add the CHCSSS00082 Lead and Mentor Skill Set and CHCSS00084 Lead and support colleagues Skill Set to the Priority Skills List to enable upskilling of leaders and managers in the disability sector.
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> **Recommendation 3.**
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> DESBT to add the CHCSS00065 - Workforce Planning Skill Set to the Priority Skills List to enable upskilling of managers in workforce planning.
>
> **Recommendation 4.**
>
> DESBT to add the CHCSS00094 - High Support and Complex Care - Disability Skill Set to the Priority Skills List to enable the upskilling of existing workers in the disability sector in specialised support needs.
>
> **Recommendation 5.**
>
> Explore the potential inclusion of additional accredited skill sets to meet the demand for skills in:
>
> - mental health support
> - specific medical supports.

Identify, develop and deliver non-accredited training

To address some of the gaps in current training options in the short term there is also a need for the development and delivery of non-accredited training in:

- NDIS frameworks, principles, guidelines and roles
- Choice and control safeguarding of NDIS participants
- Mental health and resilience for workers.

There may be existing e-learning options that could help to meet some of these needs, such as:

- The e-learning modules provided by the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission (which are likely to become a requirement for all employers of registered providers in Queensland once the NDIS Commission commences operations in the state in July 2019)
- The Disability Induction eLearning Program developed by National Disability Services.

However, other face-to-face training options may be needed, particularly in terms of training in workforce mental health and resilience.

> **Recommendation 6.**
>
> Identify non-accredited training options in relation to the NDIS structure, principles, guidelines and quality and safeguards framework, choice and control safeguarding and workforce mental health and resilience to address skills gaps in the short term.

Support greater uptake of accredited training

Although the value placed upon accredited training varies significantly across the sector there is more that could be done to increase uptake of available training options.

Promotion of training pathways

The 2018 WorkAbility Queensland report - *Building the NDIS workforce through traineeships[4],* identified a number of strategies to support better uptake of accredited training, and more specifically, of traineeships by the disability sector. The consultations conducted to date for the NTSSS advice project have provided further guidance on where efforts may best be focused.

Firstly, the consultations did not identify significant interest or support for school-based traineeships. Whilst this was not a particular focus of the consultations, some of the feedback is relevant to this topic:

- Service providers who spoke about wanting to attract more young people as support workers specifically spoke about the age group of 20-29
- Some service providers felt that people younger than this did not have sufficient life experience and emotional maturity to be effective support workers
- Some service providers who had previously hosted school-based trainees undertaking the Certificate III in Individual Support reported that they didn't make it through to completion.

This suggests that greater attention be placed on:

- adult traineeships for the Certificate III in Individual Support
- lower level qualifications for school students (such as the Certificate II in Community Services) as a pathway into a Certificate III post school
- activities focused on attracting young people into the sector and into training once they finish Year 12.

However, consultations also suggested that the level of student fees for traineeships (combined with the amount of paperwork required to administer a traineeship) makes this training pathway unappealing by comparison to the Certificate 3 Guarantee (C3G) funded pathway. This issue requires further investigation.

Eligibility

There were many reports across the consultations of the significant value of C3G Boost funding for those people who were ineligible for C3G funding.

C3G funding is available to any Queensland resident aged 15 years or over who is no longer at school (with the exception of VET in Schools students) and is an Australian or New Zealand citizen or Australian permanent resident (including humanitarian entrants), or a temporary resident with the necessary visa and work permits on the pathway to permanent residency. However, to be eligible, prospective students must not have or be enrolled in a certificate III level or higher qualification, not including qualifications completed at school and foundations skills training.[5]

C3G Boost funding is available to people who:

- Live in Queensland
- Participate in training aligned to local employment opportunities and
- are not be eligible for subsidised training under the Certificate 3 Guarantee
- meet one of the following criteria:

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[4] WorkAbility for Jobs Queensland (2018) Building the NDIS workforce through traineeships
[5] Student Fact Sheet available online at https://desbt.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0018/8145/c3g-factsheet-student.pdf

- ○ are unemployed and need new skills to obtain a job or
- ○ are at risk of losing their job and require reskilling to move to alternative employment opportunities or
- ○ are working but looking to increase hours of work or shift from part-time to full-time employment.[6]

Consultations indicated that there is still a group of potential workers who would be ideally suited to work in the disability sector (mostly career changers or parents returning to the workforce) who are ineligible for subsidised training through C3G or C3G Boost because they have an existing qualification and are not unemployed.

Removing eligibility restrictions for C3G funding of the Certificate III in Individual Support (Disability) based on previous qualifications may assist in attracting and training more suitable workers for the sector. However, this should be restricted to individuals who have obtained employment in the sector.

> **Recommendation 7.**
>
> DESBT to consider the removal of eligibility restrictions for C3G funding of the Certificate III in Individual Support (Disability) for individuals who have gained employment in the sector.
>
> **Recommendation 8.**
>
> Review the funding for traineeships in the Certificate III in Individual Support (Disability) in relation to those for C3G pathways.

Screen for suitability before investing in training

In order to maximise the investment made in training by the Queensland Government, additional attention needs to be given to ensuring that potential workers are 'the right fit' for the sector before undertaking training. This includes:

- Educating Job Active providers in what the disability industry looks like and what they look for in potential workers and how to identify suitable candidates using values and behaviour-based recruitment practices
- Educating RTOs in what the disability industry looks for in potential workers and how to identify suitable students
- Development of screening tools
- Use of information about what the disability sector looks for in potential workers in all promotional activities.

> **Recommendation 9.**
>
> Implement strategies for screening of suitability of potential workers and students (including education of Job Active providers and RTOs) as part of the NTSSS.

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[6] https://backtowork.initiatives.qld.gov.au/for-jobseekers/c3g-boost/

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Implement additional measures to support attraction and training

WorkAbility Queensland has already implemented many measures to assist in attracting new workers to the disability sector including roadshow events and careers in disability expos and social media campaigns.

There are further activities that might be undertaken to support attraction of new workers to the sector and the uptake of training. These might include:

- industry awareness forums ("join our industry forums") - where potential workers/students participate in an informal event (e.g. a meet and greet morning tea) where they can engage with people with disability to determine whether they actually want to work in the disability industry. This could be combined with information and training and employment options.
- Video resources – materials that provide insights into 'a day in the life of' for the disability sector
- 'try before you buy' or 'try a trade' type models in which potential learners have an opportunity to 'taste' what working and learning in the disability sector involves.

> ### Recommendation 10.
>
> Implement strategies to 1. support the attraction of new workers into the industry and 2. promotion of training options, pathways and funding.

Support ongoing industry research and advice

The use of regional disability networks and the NTSSS employer and RTO reference groups are proving to be very effective mechanisms for gathering advice, validating recommended actions, disseminating information to the disability sector and linking service providers with training providers.

The continued use of these network and reference groups as part of ongoing research and monitoring of industry needs would be extremely valuable to ongoing work in meeting the workforce development needs of the sector.

> ### Recommendation 11.
>
> Continue consultation, ongoing research and monitoring of industry needs, including via the use of regional networks and reference groups, as part of the NTSSS.

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