

Select Committee into Jobs for the Future in Regional Areas  
Department of the Senate  
POBox 6100  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

28 August 2019

### **Re: Jobs for the Future in Regional Areas**

The Queensland Tourism Industry Council (QTIC) welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Select Committee into Jobs for the Future in Regional Areas.

QTIC is the state's peak body for tourism in Queensland and represents the interests of the tourism industry. QTIC is an independent membership-based organisation with over 3,000 members, operating in all sectors of the tourism industry, including business operators, Regional Tourism Organisations (RTOs), sector associations and education providers. One of QTIC's core operations relates to workforce development. This involves operating as the Queensland State Government's Vocational Education and Training Industry Advisory Organisation (VETIAO) for tourism, providing insight, reporting and piloting programs to address workforce challenges faced by the industry.

The tourism industry in Queensland contributed \$27.3 billion to Queensland's Gross State Product (GSP), representing 7.8% of total GSP<sup>1</sup> and generated \$7.5 billion in exports in the year ending June 2018<sup>2</sup>, making it one of the state's largest export industries accounting for 10.1% of total Queensland exports. The tourism industry consists of over 55,000 businesses across Queensland providing employment to 1 in 10 Queenslanders (236,000 people).

The Committee for Economic Development for Australia<sup>3</sup> states, *"more than five million jobs, almost 40% of Australian jobs that exist today, have a moderate to high likelihood of disappearing in the next 10 to 15 years due to technological advancements"*. As we prepare for the jobs of the future in regional areas, there needs to be flexibility and agility in the approach to ensure that the needs of the future are met.

<sup>1</sup> Tourism Research Australia, *State Tourism Satellite Accounts 2017-2018*

<sup>2</sup> Tourism Research Australia - *State Tourism Satellite Accounts 2015-16*, Queensland Government Office of Economic and Statistical Research - Overseas exports of goods by industry.

<sup>3</sup> Committee for Economic Development for Australia. 2015. <https://www.ceda.com.au/News-and-analysis/Media-releases/More-than-five-million-Aussie-jobs-gone-in-10-to-15-years>

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Tourism continues to be an important industry for regional Queensland and its growth potential. With tourism growth anticipated to be at 3-4% over the next few years<sup>4</sup>, there is on-going opportunity for regional employment given the right conditions. Short-term forecasts indicate over 100,000 jobs will require filling within the tourism industry across Australia by 2023<sup>5</sup>.

Current regional employment opportunities created by the tourism industry are outlined in the table below:

Tourism Region	Direct Contribution to GRP	Direct Tourism Jobs
Southern Great Barrier Reef	\$667.1 million	8,900
Mackay	\$212.9 million	2,600
Whitsundays	\$410.2 million	4,500
Townsville	\$491.7 million	5,800
Tropical North Queensland	\$1.7 billion	18,600
Outback	\$209.1 million	2,800

Source: Tourism Research Australia. Regional Tourism Satellite Accounts. 2016-17.

In planning strategically for Jobs for the Future in Regional Areas, the following must be considered:

### Technology

QTIC's recently release *Disruptive Technologies Workforce Plan*, developed with funding support from the Queensland Government's Department of Employment, Small Business and Training highlights opportunities and challenges in workforces of the future. Findings from industry consultation indicate significant skills and knowledge deficits regarding understanding, implementing and maintaining digital technologies in the workforce. As technology becomes a greater part of our workforce, there is a significant role for vocational education and higher education providers to embed technological skills as part of future learning to prepare effectively for jobs of the future.

As technology continues to evolve, successful adoption and implementation of new technologies is a fundamental part of our experience delivery. The future of jobs and employment lies in the ability to deliver these skills. Training delivery needs to evolve in order to support the jobs of the future and the requirements of industry. Existing workers also need to be aware of the training and support that is available, as the economy transitions – opportunities to upskill need to be adequately communicated. Failure to address this need will limit the capacity of the workforce to adapt to changes and consequently may weaken Australia's competitive standing.

There is no doubt that significant upskilling will be required across many industries to ensure that workplaces are able to introduce and manage technology and meet the needs of future

<sup>4</sup> United Nations World Tourism Organisation. 2019. International Tourist Arrivals Reach 1.4 billion Two Years Ahead of Forecasts. [www.unwto.org](http://www.unwto.org)

<sup>5</sup> Australian Government. Labour Market Information. Occupation projections – five years to May 2023.



jobs. Opportunities for industry specific training, workshops to support implementation of specific technologies and similar strategies need to be implemented. The broader engagement, regarding the scoping and digital planning should also be considered to facilitate knowledge sharing and industry development.

Government must support and accelerate the uptake of technology across businesses, especially in regional Australia. Consumer demands, teamed with the need to create efficiencies, is driving demand for seamless technological integration across workforces. Government needs to support an environment that embraces technology and supports integration across workforce, training and industry. Infrastructure to support greater adoption of technology in regional Australia should also be considered. With blackspots still evident across many regional areas the competitive standing of destinations is negatively impacted.

### **Demographic and social changes**

A fundamental change from a traditional and linear working life to alternative patterns is already well underway. Workers are already adapting in many ways. The gig economy has emerged out of demand, employees are taking on multiple roles, sometimes out of necessity but other times out of choice.

Looking to the legal and legislative frameworks that create a sense of security for those who have embarked on this career path is important. This should include looking at taxation structures, identifying opportunities to ensure that those taking this approach are not disadvantaged.

### **Legal, institutional and policy influence**

New working models are prevalent across the tourism and hospitality industry. The flexible nature of work makes it appealing to people across several life-stages including those studying and those approaching retirement. It is also idea for regional Australia where there is a dominance of SMEs that may not be able to offer full time contracts to staff.

Implications of new business models are significant for the economy. Government needs to demonstrate pro-active leadership in response to changing models and create a legislative framework that supports workers and new as well as existing businesses and creates equity across traditional and new models of employment and operation. This needs to be a priority as new models will facilitate the growth of employment across regional areas.

### **Training and skills**

Substantial consultation has already been undertaken surrounding training and skills needs of the future to ensure that jobs of the future can be effectively delivered. The recent future of work reports commissioned by Jobs Queensland highlight industry needs and training opportunities to support a transitioning workforce. Continued engagement with peak bodies and industry associations will provide on-going advice where required.

Whilst we do not know in detail what skills and knowledge the workforce of the future will need, by embedding *power (soft) skills* across school and further education we will be

positioning the future workforce to be more successful. Skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, intergenerational communication, creative thinking and entrepreneurship will be essential and provide a strong basis for further skill development.

Reshaping the education and training systems to facilitate agile and flexible learning, short skill development courses and with a framework that evolves with industry will combat the lack skills which will be required. Utilisation of micro-credentialing, Massive Online Open Courses (MOOCs) and module training offer opportunities for flexible learning within a short timeframe. They create additional options that meet industry needs and can be delivered with a focus on workforce requirement. Through flexible, online options issues around accessibility in regional areas are also countered.

### **Renewable and Clean Energy**

There is significant opportunity for a shift towards renewable resources across regional Australia. Through the *Building a resilient tourism industry: Queensland tourism climate change response plan* tourism operators identify the need for a transition towards climate neutrality. Ambitious targets see industry seeking to transition prior to 2050 (the State Government Goal). Programs such as the decarbonisation of the Great Barrier Reef Islands, see businesses across Northern Australia shifting towards clean energy sources. By effectively transitioning within Australia there is the opportunity to position as a leader in clean energy. The Federal Government must be seen as leading a path towards clean energy use in Australia as a step towards this opportunity. Failure to act within Australia will limit global opportunity.

For all enquiries regarding the points raised in this letter, please contact me or the QTIC Team on (07) 3236 1445 or email

Kind regards

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