

Jobs North Queensland

Townsville North Queensland Regional Jobs Committee
Annual Action Plan 2026-27



RJC Townsville North Queensland: Development of the Strategic Priorities for 2026-27

Trends Impacting Workforce

Population diversity

- Economic / workforce integration of high proportion of overseas migrants
- Closing the gap for First Nations, Gender, People with Disabilities
- Understanding generational drivers

Ageing population

- Role of health and support workforce
- Workforce succession planning for a skilled generation

Skilled workforce demand & challenge

- Increased need for VET and University participation, with retention and attainment issues

Competition for skilled workforce

- High elasticity flux in specific industries
- High internal migration further influencing broader drivers of housing, transport and access to services

Strategic Timeline

JTNQ
Committee
Meeting

- Consultation on committee priorities

Consultation:
Ideation
11 Dec 25

Consultation:
Recommendation
12 Dec 25

Skilling and
Workforce Analysis
submitted to DTET

- Identification of needs and challenges

Analysis:
Identification
9 Jan 26

Consultation:
Alignment
15 Jan 26

Action Plan 2026-27
submitted to DTET

- Strategic implementation of initiatives

Execution
Strategic planning:
30 Jan 26

JTNQ Strategic Priorities
- Drafted and remitted to Committee for feedback to anchor initiatives for the Action Plan

JTNQ Committee Meeting
- Feedback and consensus on Strategic Priorities

Short + Medium + Long term
Implementation Schedule
- Strategic initiatives and activities across planning cycle

RJC Townsville North Queensland: Strategic Implementation

Following consultation with the Committee in December, JTNQ undertook a **Skilling and Workforce Analysis** to identify key challenges, needs and opportunities across the North Queensland region.* Themes captured from Committee consultation helped guide the Strategic Priorities identified through the analysis.

Action Plan 2026-27
submitted to DTET

- Strategic implementation of initiatives

Execution Strategic planning:
30 Jan 26

Short + Medium + Long term Implementation Schedule
- Strategic initiatives and activities across planning cycle

Strategic Priority 1 Initiative Understanding regional workforce challenges	Strategic Priority 2 Initiative Increasing positive transition pathway to retained employment	Strategic Priority 3 Initiative Empowering employers for a resilient and responsive workforce	Strategic Priority 4 Initiative Workforce ready education and training	Strategic Priority 5 Initiative Strengthen Jobs NQ portal as a workforce intelligence platform, to enhance RJC’s advisory role
Challenges				
× Competition for skilled labour × Changing population structure influence	× Acquisition of student challenges × Barriers to retainment and qualification	× Workforce participation × Employer capability × Workforce demography	× Skills demand × Access to quality work experience × Diverse learning needs	× Fragmented intelligence to understand workforce opportunities
Opportunities				
Driving workforce demand planning and initiatives relative to unique needs	Developing effective student to workforce acquisition, retention and advocacy	Supporting industry capability building	Improving education to workforce pathways	Improving education to workforce pathways

* North Queensland region is the Local Government Areas of Townsville, Burdekin, Charters Towers, Hinchinbrook, and Palm Island.

RJC Townsville North Queensland: Strategic Initiatives & Solutions



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Strategic Priority 1 Initiative 1: Understanding regional workforce challenges			
RJC Opportunity & Solution	Within North Queensland Local Government Areas, identification of local workforce needs and challenges will drive local solutions and skilling opportunities to improve participation, attraction, retention, and efficiency across industry, employers and education.		
Challenge	× <i>Competition for skilled labour:</i> regional competition is heightened by workforce mobility, seasonality, and project-based employment with a need to identify / prioritise drivers accurately to forecast skills demand to sustain a workforce at capacity. × <i>Changing population structures:</i> society factors are impacting workforce capacity and economic resilience with a need to identify migration trends, equitable vocational education access, industry experience, and locally accessible skills pathways.		
RJC Activities	<i>Harvesting phase</i> ✓ Working group/s to identify local skills needs, training gaps and employment challenges. ✓ Regional workforce analysis framework - localised needs, barriers, challenges, and opportunities.	<i>Consultation and data gathering:</i> ✓ Input gathering / collaborating with employer-industries: Local and State Government, Workforce Australia, Industry Skills and Jobs Advisors, Industry Workforce Advisors, Industry groups, education stakeholders, organisations representing marginalized communities. ✓ High priority industry-specific local case study - needs, barriers, challenges and opportunities. ✓ industry-specific round tables with employers, IWAs, to share insights and discuss broader workforce participation barriers to identify actionable workforce opportunities for activation. ✓ Production of regional workforce analysis.	<i>Activation:</i> ✓ Strengthen Jobs NQ as key workforce solutions advisor ✓ Presentations & Workshops with JTNQ Committee ✓ Forums with stakeholders
Anticipated impact	- Alignment of Government, industry, education, and community stakeholders in understanding North Queensland’s workforce challenges and opportunities. - Workforce strategies designed at a local level to address individual needs and leverage industry-specific, demographic, and geographic opportunities. - System and pathway blockages highlighted to enable a productive and capable workforce, to guide policy, planning and investment focus for targeted, evidence-based approaches to workforce and skilling challenges.		
Anticipated outcomes	1. Collaborative regional LGA analysis to define current and future workforce needs, demands and supply, identify opportunities for localised workforce strategies. 2. In-depth industry case study analysis to identify specific opportunities and enable application of learnings to other industries. 3. Representative regional workforce plan for North Queensland – alleviation of skills shortages with gainfully employed people in the local community. 4. Provide connectivity via Jobs NQ between Government, industry, education institutions, employees. 5. Contribution to regional workforce plan for North Queensland, connecting regional economic strategy specifically with localised workforce development.		

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Strategic Priority 2 Initiative 2: Increasing positive transition pathway to retained employment			
RJC Opportunity & Solution	Collaboration with Skilling Queenslanders for Work (DTET), Gateway to Industry Schools Program (DTET), Townsville Multicultural Support Group (TMSG), groups that represent people from diverse backgrounds, Regional Schools Industry Partnerships, TECH NQ, TAFE Queensland to identify and implement local solutions for school-to-work transitions.		
Challenge	× <i>Acquisition challenges:</i> Low uptake and retention in traineeships and apprenticeships are limiting qualification completion and workforce readiness, widening the gap between supply and industry demand—particularly in high-growth sectors like Construction and Health Care and Social Assistance. × <i>Retention and qualification barriers:</i> Social factors, rising youth unemployment, and disengagement from formal education are driving high churn in traineeships and apprenticeships. For young people resistant to formal study, transitioning into and completing vocational pathways remains a significant challenge.		
RJC Activities	<i>Harvesting phase</i> Working group ‘Pathway optimisation’ to align workforce needs with vocational programs, identify gaps and solutions in support for students.	<i>Consultation and data gathering:</i> ✓ Traineeship and apprenticeship data (NCVER, ABS, QGOS, industry) - identify key issues, monitor commencements, retention, and completions to refine strategies. ✓ Engage specialist agencies to examine findings and understand how cultural preferences, including migrant and First Nations families, influence vocational pathway choices. ✓ Roundtable with DTET, Education Queensland, TAFE Queensland, TECH NQ, IWAs, industry, employers and specialist groups to identify drivers and solutions to low uptake and completion. ✓ Workshop framework with education stakeholders and ISAs to enable early identification of disengagement and coordinated re-engagement into suitable pathways.	<i>Activation:</i> ✓ Strengthen connectivity with IWAs of pathway supports. ✓ Promote employer–training partnerships for placements and mentoring. ✓ Collaborate with IWAs and ISAs on industry-led outreach to schools and communities to promote vocational pathways.
Anticipated impact	The proposed activities are designed to ensure a collaborative, industry and educationally aligned focus, on identifying the barriers to successful completion of education and training for students to bridge capacity of identified workforce needs.		
Anticipated outcomes	1. Heighten awareness of strategic programs with relevant stakeholders based on the identification and analysis of drivers affecting student acquisition and retention in vocational pathways, highlighting points in the training-to-qualification process that can be improved across industries and LGAs, including marginalised cohorts such as migrant community (including English as an Additional Dialect [EAL/D] and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse [CALD], females, people with disability, and mature-age workers. 2. Early identification and support of at-risk students, leading to higher engagement, improved qualification attainment, and a stronger, workforce-ready cohort.		

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Strategic Priority 3 Initiative 3: Empowering employers for a resilient and responsive workforce		
RJC Opportunity & Solution	Development of workforce attraction and retention opportunities to influence higher rates of workforce participation.	
Challenge	Challenges identified as opportunities to work with employers and empower strategies to build a resilient and responsive workforce:	× gender imbalance × reduced interest in completing physically demanding trades × mature workforce × expectation for flexible and hybrid working conditions × increasing influence of overseas migration shaping the region’s population
RJC Activities	<i>Harvesting phase</i> Working group ‘workforce attraction and retention’ to align to align developed training and strategies, policy and financial incentives relative to trades and traineeships.	<i>Consultation and activation:</i> Working with employers and industry to aid ... ✓ Addressing gender imbalances through targeted attraction and retention strategies. ✓ Building intergenerational teams via flexible roles, mentoring, and age-inclusive practices. ✓ Leveraging migration growth through inclusive recruitment, onboarding, and skills recognition. ✓ Convening industry roundtables to explore job redesign, technology adoption, and clearer pathways to sustain participation in physically demanding trades. ✓ Partnering with industry to support flexible and hybrid work models that meet evolving expectations while maintaining productivity. ✓ Enhancing the Jobs NQ portal experience by users to strengthen RJC’s role as a workforce solutions advisor.
Anticipated impact	Employers embrace diversity to cultivate thriving, inclusive, and sustainable local businesses. By embracing diversity, this will alleviate skills shortages, and community members feel supported and productively employed, remain engaged, and contribute to a thriving, connected community.	
Anticipated outcomes	1. A stronger, more resilient local workforce, reduced unemployment, and a more connected, engaged community where individuals feel valued and contribute meaningfully.	

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Strategic Priority 4 Initiative 4: Workforce ready education and training	
RJC Opportunity & Solution	Creating more resilient pathway acquisition and retention, and ultimately a capable and at-capacity fit for purpose workforce by creating collaborative solutions with Department of Education (Queensland), Gateway to Industry Program (GISP), RISP, Townsville Catholic Education Office (including VET team), TAFE Queensland, James Cook University, Central Queensland University, Tech NQ, Secondary schools, Industry providers, Employers, Industry Skills Advisors (ISA's), Industry Workforce Advisors (IWA's).
Challenge	Skills demand: Next five years 75% of jobs will require tertiary qualifications - critical assessment of enrolment and attainment needed to identify training gaps and alignment of education with evolving 21st-century skills. ✓ Access to quality work experience: Limited access to meaningful industry placements during and beyond secondary school reduces career uptake and contributes to churn in traineeships and apprenticeships. Diverse learning needs: The identification of key differences in population characteristics, learning needs, access to internet and digital learning devices, and geographic spread requires strategies which drive educational access equity.
RJC Activities	Harvesting phase Working group 'Workforce Ready' to collaboratively define and develop actions toward reducing barriers which influence pathway acquisition and retention. Consultation and activation: ✓ Work with local industries to identify emerging jobs and related skills. ✓ Industry forums (ISAs, specific industry bodies) with participation by education stakeholders (e.g. Education Queensland, RISP, TCEO, JCU, CQU, Tech NQ, secondary schools), to identify needs and challenges of 'fit for purpose' education and training alignment. ✓ Develop understanding of skilling pathways and what skills are required – emerging jobs and latent opportunities – by engaging with educational stakeholders, peak agencies, Federal organisations (e.g. Powering Skills; Jobs and Skills Australia), IWA's and ISA's. ✓ Collaborative discussion with IWA's, ISA's and peak bodies to develop solutions to identified local barriers, to ensure existing and future local workforce can train and upskill in local career pathways.
Anticipated impact	By ensuring a collaborative approach to solving educational pathways for fit for purpose skills and workforce alignment, employers have confidence in local employment market and ability to recruit for job vacancies in emerging industries.
Anticipated outcomes	1. Local industry sectors who are generators of current and future jobs are better connected to the future workforce. 2. Improved skills and employment outcomes for school leavers. 3. Creation of a skilled labour market for the future of a sustainable Queensland workforce. 4. Increased awareness of industries, job and career pathways.

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Strategic Priority 5 Initiative 5: Strengthen Jobs NQ as a workforce intelligence platform, to enhance RJC’s advisory role		
RJC Opportunity & Solution	The RJC is in a unique position to build user experience and facilitate Jobs NQ portal as a key education and strategy advisor to reach regional stakeholders. To facilitate an enhanced experience, this will entail collaboration with Department of Education (Queensland), Townsville Catholic Education Office, TAFE Queensland, James Cook University, Central Queensland University, Tech NQ, Secondary schools, Industry providers, Employers, Industry Skills Advisors (ISA’s) (e.g. Energy Skills Queensland), Industry Workforce Advisors (IWA’s).	
Challenge	The information landscape for information on expos and events for career pathways and workforce transition presently has minimal overall coordination for the region. Families and student have multiple avenues to gather intelligence and understand workforce skills and planning, but with limited support to prioritise the sessions best for them. Industry, employers and education providers operate within a fragmented approach for careers expos and transition information, that reaches target stakeholders inconsistently.	
RJC Activities	<i>Harvesting phase</i> Working group ‘Corporate relations and engagement’ to drive positive engagement with the platform.	<i>Consultation and activation:</i> ✓ Strengthen connectivity by enhancing the Jobs North Queensland portal with micro-analysis outputs and webinars. ✓ Utilise as a central hub for funding, transition, pathway resources, career and workforce events. ✓ Deliver as upskilling, reskilling and mentoring platform, promoting training opportunities. ✓ Build awareness of the RJC initiatives and strategic partnerships.
Anticipated impact	- Micro-analysis outputs & webinars... Development of micro-analysis outputs and webinars will improve access to timely, localised workforce intelligence, enabling industry, education providers and government to make more informed decisions, align training provision with regional skills demand, and strengthen collaboration through a shared evidence base. - Expanded user experience... Expansion as a central access point for government funding, transition and pathway resources, policy supports, shared events calendar will reduce fragmentation, improve coordination across stakeholders, increase visibility of workforce opportunities, and support students, families and employers to navigate education and career pathways more effectively. - Upskilling, reskilling and mentoring platform... In partnership with organisations such as DTET and TAFE Queensland will increase participation in targeted training and micro-credentials, strengthen education–industry linkages, support workforce adaptability, and improve retention and qualification outcomes across the region.	
Anticipated outcomes	1. Strengthens the RJC and Jobs North Queensland portal as a trusted, central skilling and workforce intelligence and coordination platform, improving regional alignment, participation and outcomes across education, industry and government.	

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Challenge	Challenge	Challenge	Challenge	Challenge
× Competition for skilled labour × Changing population structure influence	× Acquisition of student challenges × Barriers to retainment and qualification	× Workforce participation × Employer capability × Workforce demography	× Skills demand × Access to quality work experience × Diverse learning needs	× Fragmented intelligence to understand workforce opportunities
RJC Opportunity & Solution	RJC Opportunity & Solution	RJC Opportunity & Solution	RJC Opportunity & Solution	RJC Opportunity & Solution
Within North Queensland LGAs Identification of local workforce needs and challenges to drive local solutions and skilling opportunities	Identification and exploration of acquisition, retention and qualification challenges in traineeships and apprenticeships to bridge capacity of identified workforce needs	Development of workforce attraction and retention opportunities to influence higher rates of workforce participation, workforce diversity, and workforce resilience	Identification and exploration of fit for purpose workforce skills and quality work experience which considers a diverse population, to build a capable and at-capacity workforce.	Collaborative development of a central skilling and workforce intelligence and coordination platform to improve regional alignment, participation and outcomes.
RJC Activities	RJC Activities	RJC Activities	RJC Activities	RJC Activities
✓ Industry and regional working group ✓ Regional workforce analysis ✓ Consultation and collaboration with employer-industry engagement: Local and State Government, Workforce Australia, Industry Skills and Jobs Advisors, Industry Workforce Advisors, Industry groups, education and training stakeholders, organisations representing marginalized communities	✓ Pathway optimisation working group ✓ Vocational traineeships and apprenticeship analysis ✓ Consultation and collaboration with specialist agencies relative to cultural preferences, education and training stakeholders (Education Queensland, Townsville Catholic Education Office, Independent Schools, TECH NQ, CQU), Department of Training and Education, Industry Workforce Advisors, Employers.	✓ Workforce attraction and retention working group ✓ Workforce transformation opportunity analysis ✓ Consultation and collaboration with Industry Workforce Advisors, Industry Skills and Jobs Advisors, Industry groups, Employers	✓ Workforce ready working group ✓ Emerging jobs and skills opportunity analysis ✓ Consultation and collaboration with Industry Skills and Jobs Advisors, education and training stakeholders (Education Queensland, Townsville Catholic Education Office, Independent Schools, TECH NQ, CQU, JCU), Department of Training and Education, Industry groups, Federal organisations (e.g. Powering Skills), Industry Workforce Advisor, peak agencies, Employers	✓ Corporate relations and engagement working group ✓ Driving stewardship of connectivity through assets ✓ Innovation of platform as centralised intelligence tool ✓ Development of platform as facilitation for upskilling, reskilling and mentoring opportunities

Jobs North Queensland



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TOWNSVILLE AND NORTH WEST QLD

The Townsville Regional Jobs Committee is proudly supported and funded by the Queensland Government.

RDA Townsville and North West Queensland is an initiative of the Australian Federal Government.