

# Building future skills

A tafe infrastructure plan for Far North Queensland



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# Minister's message



A key strength of Queensland's vocational education and training system is its commitment to giving students practical, hands-on skills developed in part, in purpose-built training facilities that mirror real world workplaces.

Investing in the delivery of high-quality training supported by a network of fit-for-purpose training infrastructure is essential to ensure Queenslanders have the skills they need to secure a job and progress their careers in our state's growing industries.

For our students, having access to state-of-the-art training facilities and equipment will ensure they are job ready. For our teachers and trainers, it will provide them with contemporary training spaces to ensure training delivery meets industry needs.

Across Queensland there are currently 77 sites owned or leased by the State Government and the public training providers for the delivery of vocational education and training.

This includes the network of TAFE Queensland and Central Queensland University campuses as well as sites utilised by the state's other public providers of training.

The Queensland Government has released the *"Skills for Queensland – Great training for quality jobs"* plan to secure our future prosperity through a skilled and adaptive workforce. More innovative and flexible training opportunities will give Queenslanders better access to skilling, reskilling and upskilling pathways to remain agile as jobs evolve.

The Government will invest more than \$105 million during 2019-20, in projects across Queensland as part of the long-term plan to revitalise the state's training portfolio. To complement this program, over the next few years we have significant investments planned for the modernisation of Pimlico, Cairns, Mount Gravatt, Toowoomba, Alexandra Hills and the Ashmore and Southport sites at the Gold Coast.

As we deliver on this investment, we also need to plan for the training needs of all Queensland communities to ensure our investment in training facilities is going where it is needed and we are ready to support training delivery into the future.

This has led to the development of 14 regional plans that outline the Queensland Government's proposed investment in training infrastructure as well as strategies to provide access to relevant training spaces to meet local industry and community needs.

For the Far North Queensland region, this plan outlines the future for seven TAFE campuses including four sites currently leased by TAFE Queensland, to deliver in demand training to communities across the region.

Central to this planning, is ensuring our training infrastructure can readily adapt to changing technology and industry advancements and complement a range of delivery options such as online learning and workplace-based training.

This plan outlines how we intend to provide the Far North Queensland region with the training infrastructure it needs to skill its workforce for the future.

## **The Honourable Shannon Fentiman MP**

Minister for Employment and Small Business  
Minister for Training and Skills Development

# Advancing Queensland's training infrastructure

## Our current training footprint

Across the state, training is currently delivered from a range of training spaces including:

- state-owned training infrastructure
- leased, purpose-built training facilities
- workplaces
- trade training centres and other facilities shared with state and non-state secondary schools
- shared facilities with universities (such as QUT Caboolture and the University of the Sunshine Coast)
- shared facilities with industry (such as Queensland Rail's training facility at Acacia Ridge).

TAFE Queensland and Central Queensland University are the primary users of the state's training infrastructure alongside Queensland's other public training providers Aviation Australia and the Aboriginal Centre for the Performing Arts.

Within the 77 training sites owned or leased by the Queensland Government, there are four types of training facilities:

- a full campus: may offer trade and/or nontrade training and provides a full range of services including a customer services centre, library and canteen.
- training centre: may offer trade and/or nontrade training as well some services such as a customer service centre.
- specialised training centre: offers training for a specific industry or skill area (i.e. trades) from a full campus or training centre.
- learning hubs: a small training space generally co-located with other services (i.e. high school) or on leased premises.

## Planning for the future

In 2019-20, the Government is committed to investing over \$105 million in infrastructure projects across Queensland as part of the long-term plan to revitalise the state's training portfolio.

From 2018 to 2021, significant investments will be made to modernise the Pimlico, Cairns, Mount Gravatt and Toowoomba training sites, and training infrastructure within the regions of the Gold Coast and Redlands.

While there have been periods of significant investment in the state's training infrastructure over the years, the majority of the state-owned facilities are decades old and were designed to meet the training needs at the time of construction. For some facilities, their age, location and changes in industry skills needs, have meant that they are no longer fit-for-purpose.

This regional infrastructure planning process is working to prepare the state's training facilities for future training needs, particularly in areas of projected population or employment growth and to respond to changing skills needs of industry. This includes ensuring infrastructure upgrades incorporate projected climate change data and take into account the skills and training needs as a result of global trends such as digital innovation, shifting markets, and the transition to a low carbon economy, which will significantly impact Queensland industries and employment.

TAFE Queensland currently occupy forty of the forty-seven State-owned sites. A number of these are earmarked to undergo master planning in the next few years to determine investment opportunities.

# Far North Queensland regional overview

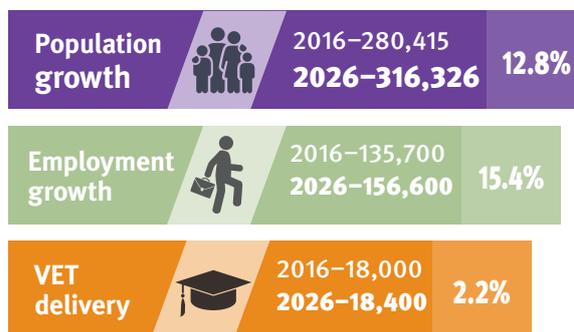
The Far North Queensland region covers approximately twelve per cent of Queensland's total area and includes 19 local government areas<sup>1</sup>. It covers disparate regions with different economies and populations ranging from agriculture in the west, tourism in the east, and mining export industry toward the north. This region takes into account a considerable portion of northern tropical Queensland, and has an international reach.

Between 2016 and 2026, the population in Far North Queensland is forecast to grow steadily<sup>23</sup>. The region has one of the highest Indigenous populations in Australia and there are 19 individual Indigenous communities in the region

Employment in the Far North Queensland region is projected to grow over the ten years to 2026<sup>4</sup>. The Jobs Queensland Anticipating Future Skills<sup>5</sup> project forecasts that the greatest employment changes to occur in the Cairns region by the year 2022 will be in the following industries:

- health care and social assistance
- agriculture, forestry and fishing
- education and training
- professional, scientific and technical services
- transport, postal and warehousing.

The impact of digital technologies and involvement in global value chains are driving changes in workforce composition and skills throughout Queensland, triggering a transition to a knowledge and services based economy. While mining remains one of the biggest economic contributors in the state in terms of output, service industries such as construction, health care and social assistance now contribute almost as much, and the workforce of the future will require higher levels of skills and different skill sets<sup>6</sup>.



Sources: QGSO population projections 2018 edition (medium series); Queensland Treasury employment projections 2016 (medium series) place of work – data sets adjusted to align with this region; State Training Agency Clearinghouse (STAC) Database 2017.

One of Queensland's tourism hubs, employment in the region is focused within the industries of retail trade, education and training and accommodation and food services. The industries of health care and social assistance, public administration and safety, and construction also contribute strongly to the employment profile of the region<sup>7</sup>.

Significant projects likely to affect the region's short to medium-term economic outlook and job opportunities include<sup>8</sup>:

- Atherton Hospital redevelopment – \$70 million
- Cairns Performing Arts Centre – \$66.5 million
- Captain Cook Highway – Smithfield Bypass – \$152 million
- Peninsula Developmental Road upgrades – \$21.9 million
- Torres Shire Water Treatment infrastructure upgrade – \$12 million.

These projects will increase employment opportunities in construction and may trigger changes to training offerings within the region.

1 Reporting within this document for the Far North Queensland region is based on the following Statistical Areas, being the local government areas of: Aurukun, Cairns, Cassowary Coast, Cook, Douglas, Hope Vale, Kowanyama, Lockhart River, Mapoon, Mareeba, Napranum, Northern Peninsular Area, Pormpuraaw, Tablelands, Torres, Torres Strait Island, Weipa, Wujal Wujal, and Yarrabah.

2 QGSO population projections 2018 edition (medium series).

3 Employment projections are based on the 2015 edition; the data set has been adjusted to 2016.

4 Queensland Treasury employment projections 2016 (medium series) place of work – data sets adjusted to align with this region.

5 Jobs Queensland reporting for this project is based on the Cairns SA4 region.

6 Jobs Queensland: The Future of Work in Queensland to 2030 Discussion Paper – 2019.

7 Jobs Queensland: Anticipating Future Skills: Jobs growth and alternative futures for Queensland to 2022.

8 Sourced from Regional Action Plans (Queensland Budget 2018-19) and State Infrastructure Plan (Part B: Program – 2018 update).

# Training infrastructure in Far North Queensland

Within the Far North Queensland region, there are three state government owned TAFE Queensland campuses in Cairns, Thursday Island and the Great Barrier Reef International Marine College, and four leased TAFE Queensland sites at Bamaga, Mareeba, Atherton and Innisfail. Student training enrolments are projected to increase over the 10 years to 2027.

Public training provider Aviation Australia, which specialises in air services training, operates from a leased site in Cairns. The Queensland Agricultural Training Colleges (QATC) deliver specialist agricultural training from the Walkamin training hub at Mareeba.

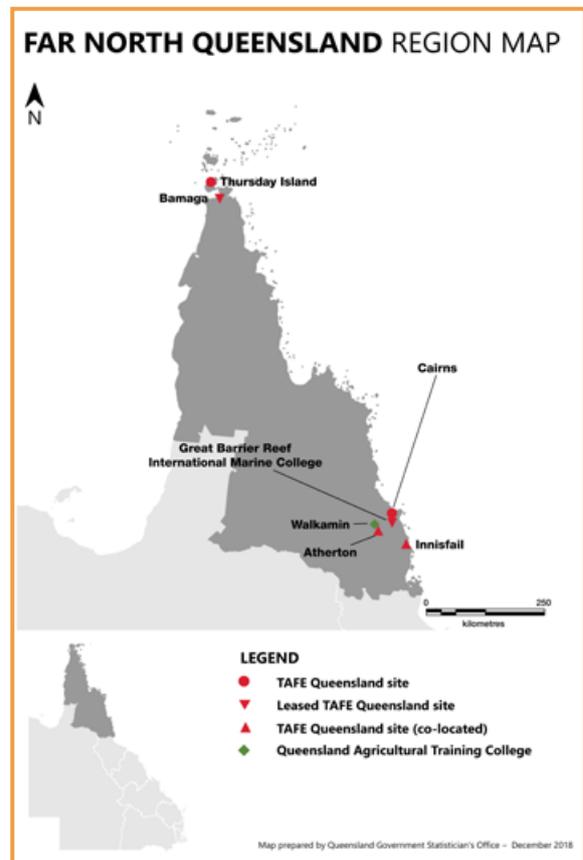
**Cairns TAFE** is a full campus which offers a wide range of study areas including accounting, aged care, automotive, beauty and hairdressing, building and construction, business, child care, civil construction, community services, cookery, electrotechnology, engineering, English language studies, health, horticulture, information technology, music, nursing, sport and fitness, tourism and hospitality, training and assessment, and visual arts.

**Great Barrier Reef International Marine College** is a specialised training centre that offers Australian Maritime Safety Authority approved training in world-class maritime facilities.

**Thursday Island TAFE** is a training centre that offers a range of study areas to the local community including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander primary health care, accounting, early childhood education and training and assessment.

**Bamaga TAFE** is a leased facility that offers courses including Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander primary health care, early childhood education and care, first aid and CPR.

**Atherton TAFE** is a leased facility that offers a range of study areas including in automotive, early childhood education and care, first aid and CPR.



*This map is intended for general reference use only*

**Innisfail TAFE** is a leased facility that offers courses that include early childhood education and care, English language studies, first aid and CPR.

**Mareeba TAFE** is a leased facility that specialises in construction and engineering.

The region's training delivery demand has seen general education and training remain high over the period from 2015-16 to 2017-18 with significant growth in engineering, hospitality, and utilities and transport and distribution trades over the same period.

## Cairns

The Cairns TAFE campus is a full campus that delivers the majority of TAFE training in the region. Industry areas that have experienced significant increases in enrolments in the last three years include general education and training, hospitality, and utilities, with all other areas remaining relatively steady. This is in line with regional growth and employment patterns, considering Cairns is the key regional centre for Far North Queensland.



### Future outlook

While the campus is a well-located regional hub that will remain a key part of the training portfolio, the site is oversized and purpose-built buildings are misaligned with projected training demand in the region.

In order to support growth in Far North Queensland, \$15 million has been allocated for significant revitalisation works for this campus.

Master planning to identify options for how this funding should be invested at the site over the next two years has concluded, and provides a focus on training precinct planning, and modernisation of learning areas for both trades and non-trades training.

In the last two years, over \$1.5 million was invested in a range of maintenance programs at this site, while \$825,000 was spent on upgrades to building systems. Approximately

\$4.6 million is budgeted over the next two financial years for general maintenance, new furniture, fit out and equipment, and capital projects to compliment the planned revitalisation works.

There are opportunities to develop partnerships with external groups to support the expected growth in the region and campus, such as local university providers and other public training providers.

### Infrastructure plan:

#### Cairns

- The site will remain a key part of the training portfolio and will receive a significant investment of up to \$15 million for revitalisation works.
- Approximately \$4.6 million is budgeted over the next two years for general maintenance, new furniture, fit out and equipment, and capital projects to compliment the planned revitalisation works.



## Great Barrier Reef International Marine College

The Great Barrier Reef International Marine College in Cairns is part of the TAFE Queensland network and is a specialised training facility offering hands-on training in maritime operations.

The facility had the second largest enrolment population for the region with over 800 students in 2017–18. This is noteworthy considering the facility is a specialised campus for the study of maritime operations.

In the last two years, almost \$190,000 was invested at the site toward an upgrade of maritime simulation hardware and software and related maintenance.



### Future outlook

The campus is in an appropriate location to meet regional demand for maritime and associated training delivery, providing specialist courses that fulfil the current and projected demand in the region.

The site may be suitable for the partnership with external groups such as local university education providers and other public training providers.

### Infrastructure plan: Great Barrier Reef International Marine College

- The site is considered to be fit for purpose and will maintain the emphasis on specialised maritime operations studies.
- The site is leased by TAFE Queensland and continued investment will be required to ensure equipment remains at industry standard.



## Thursday Island

The Thursday Island TAFE training centre offers a range of study areas to the local community including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander primary health care, accounting, early childhood education and training and assessment.

Thursday Island TAFE has experienced enrolment growth over the last three years, with the area of transport and distribution experiencing the largest growth and total enrolments. Likely growth areas are health and community services, engineering, and transport and distribution industries.

The centre takes advantage of opportunities to build on existing partnerships with external and government groups and agencies. An example of this is RATEP partnership, a community-based teacher education program that enables Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people to become registered teachers or qualified teacher aides. The program is a partnership between TAFE Queensland, James Cook University and the Department of Education and is equal to first year of the James Cook University Bachelor of Education and is offered to successful applicants who complete an assessment.



## Future outlook

TAFE Queensland is committed to maintaining a presence on Thursday Island to continue to offer training to residents. The heavy proportion of campus-based classroom training underscores the importance of face-to-face training facilities on Thursday Island. While the facilities are generally well located, there is excess spatial and land capacity that could be used by third parties.

The site requires an investment of approximately \$100,000 annually for general maintenance. Over the next two years, more than \$1.1 million is budgeted for capital works for the refurbishment of the site to modernise existing facilities to provide flexible and collaborative learning hubs to address a wide variety of industry sectors including hospitality, early childhood, conservation and land management, construction, maritime and indigenous health. This investment will enable training in accordance with the desired outcomes of the Northern Australia<sup>9</sup> whitepaper developed by the federal government.

### Infrastructure plan: Thursday Island

- Over \$1.3 million is proposed for capital and maintenance works over the next two years for the refurbishment of the site to modernise existing facilities to provide flexible and collaborative learning hubs.

<sup>9</sup> Our North, Our Future: White Paper on Developing Northern Australia, Australian Government, June 2015.

## Bamaga

As the largest of the five northern peninsula area communities, the Bamaga TAFE campus is an important part of the training portfolio, and is considered very well placed to continue to serve the northern peninsular area. It plays an important role in the delivery of regional and remote training to Queenslanders.

Enrolments at the Bamaga TAFE campus increased significantly in the last three years. During this time, training increased for all offered study areas, except for construction and tourism, which remained steady or decreased slightly. Likely growth areas are to be in the health, general education and training, and engineering, reflecting the industry and employment demand specific to the northern peninsular area.



## Future outlook

Leased by TAFE Queensland, the campus has capacity to manage expected growth and is fit-for-purpose to continue to deliver training specific to the community's needs.

The Bamaga TAFE facility may be suitable for partnerships with external industry groups and local schools.

### Infrastructure plan:

#### Bamaga

- The site is leased by TAFE Queensland and continued investment will be required to ensure equipment remains at industry standard.



## Atherton

TAFE Queensland's Atherton campus is focused on training that is responsive to local demand. Co-located with the Atherton State High School, it is well placed to continue training delivery in the Tablelands area.



## Future outlook

This campus plays an important role in the delivery of regional and remote training to Queenslanders. It will continue to provide training to the community, with an emphasis on health and engineering courses.

Currently the site is in partnership with the local state high school and it is expected that this relationship will be further developed with the introduction of the 'Free tafe for year 12 graduates' program.

### Infrastructure plan: Atherton

- The site is leased by TAFE Queensland and continued investment will be required to ensure equipment remains at industry standard.



## Innisfail

Located on the Bruce highway between Cairns and Townsville, Innisfail TAFE is the major township of the Cassowary Coast region and the TAFE Queensland site is well placed to deliver training to this area. All school and TAFE Queensland students share the facilities at the integrated Innisfail State College.

The site provides specialist courses that fulfil the current and projected demand in the region. Enrolment data suggests training growth areas are in engineering, and transport and distribution industry areas.



## Future outlook

The Innisfail TAFE site is in partnership with the Innisfail State College and it is expected that this relationship will be further developed with the introduction of the 'Free tafe for year 12 graduates' program.

### Infrastructure plan: Innisfail

- The site is leased by TAFE Queensland and continued investment will be required to ensure equipment remains at industry standard.



## Mareeba

The Mareeba TAFE campus is a key regional site for training delivery in regional Far North Queensland. Leased by TAFE Queensland, the campus predominantly delivers trade training.

Mareeba's key industry areas for training are engineering and construction, with engineering increasing by 320 students over the last three years with overall enrolments increasing significantly in recent years.



## Future outlook

The site has the flexibility to adapt to future skills and meet the needs of the local community and is considered fit-for-purpose.

The Mareeba TAFE site may be suitable for the partnership with external groups such as Australian Industry Trade College.

### Infrastructure plan: Mareeba

- The site is leased by TAFE Queensland and continued investment will be required to ensure equipment remains at industry standard.



# Far North Queensland training infrastructure plan

While the current regional infrastructure footprint is well placed to service demand in the Far North Queensland, there are significant opportunities to better meet regional training needs and modernise existing training facilities. Generally, all campuses could benefit from updating and modernisation works to better meet contemporary training delivery needs.

The Queensland Government will invest almost \$21 million in the region over the next two years on maintaining and modernising training facilities. This amount includes a significant investment of up to \$15 million for the revitalisation of the key trade and non-trade training facilities at the Cairns TAFE campus.

Potential for private partnerships and inclusion of whole-of-government initiatives will be investigated for all sites, such as other public training providers/partners, state high schools and colleges, and industry partners, or for redevelopment of the site.

The leased sites are currently well located to service their immediate region and are suitably located for the continued delivery of training. Rural and remote communities will continue to be serviced by the Thursday Island, Bamaga, Mareeba, Atherton and Innisfail TAFE sites. All training centres will remain to be important locations for TAFE Queensland.

Potential growth or change to industry training areas should be investigated further to ensure there is varied, quality, and relevant courses being offered to regional and remote students.



## Summary of planned actions

All campuses will be maintained with their current training emphasis across the region.

Training infrastructure in the region is subject to further planning to be undertaken to guide investment, with significant investments for the Cairns TAFE site to commence in 2020.

Aviation Australia will continue to provide specialist air services related training from leased premises in the region. QATC will cease to provide training in 2019.

### Cairns

- \$15 million has been allocated for revitalisation works for this campus, which will likely focus on training precinct planning, and modernisation of learning areas for both trades and non-trades training.
- Approximately \$4.6 million is budgeted over the next two years for general maintenance, new furniture, fit out and equipment, and other planned capital projects.

### Great Barrier Reef International Marine College

- The leased campus is in an appropriate location to meet regional demand for maritime and associated training delivery.

### Thursday Island

- Approximately \$1.1 million is proposed for capital works over 2019-20 and 2020-21 for the refurbishment of the site to modernise existing facilities to provide flexible and collaborative learning hubs.

### Bamaga

- The leased site is fit-for-purpose and will continue to deliver training specific to the community's needs while also having the capacity to manage expected growth.

### Atherton

- The leased site will continue to provide training to the community, with an emphasis on health and engineering courses.

### Innisfail

- The leased site will continue to provide training, with potential growth areas in engineering, and transport and distribution.

### Mareeba

- The leased site is considered fit-for-purpose and has the flexibility to adapt to future skills and the needs of the local community.

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