



**QUEENSLAND**

**ACTIVE INDUSTRY**

**WORKFORCE PLAN**

**2024 - 2034**

Right People, Right Skills, Right Time



**Active Queenslanders  
Industry Alliance**

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF FIRST NATIONS PEOPLES

Active Queensland Industry Alliance respectfully acknowledges the First Nations peoples in the state of Queensland and acknowledges the cultural and spiritual connection that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have with the land and sea.

We respectfully acknowledge Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people as two unique and diverse peoples, with their own rich and distinct cultures, resilience and strengths.

We specifically acknowledge the unique history and cultural heritage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Peoples of Australia. We pay our respects to Elders past and present.

We are dedicated to the inclusion of cultural knowledge and values as critical factors in the development, implementation and evaluation of strategies and actions to support First Nations peoples.

**Disclaimer** – While every care has been taken in preparing this publication, the Active Queenslanders Industry Alliance and State of Queensland accepts no responsibility for decisions or actions taken as a result of any data, information, statement or advice, expressed or implied, contained within. To the best of our knowledge, the content was correct at the time of publishing. Copies of this publication are available on our website at [aqia.org.au](http://aqia.org.au).

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## THE QUEENSLAND ACTIVE INDUSTRY NEEDS 10 WORKERS PER DAY, EVERY DAY, FOR THE NEXT 10 YEARS.

### What is the Active Industry?

- The Queensland Active Industry is the combination of the sport and sports tech, outdoor recreation and education, community recreation and aquatics, fitness, exercise and the movement sectors.
- The industry is dominated by micro, small to medium businesses and organisations, many of which are not-for-profit. A large volunteer workforce underpins the industry and delivers a major unpaid economic contribution across the sector.
- The total economic and social benefits of Fitness, Sport and Active Recreation is estimated at \$43.9 billion, equivalent to around 9.8 per cent of Gross State Product (GSP). The sport and active recreation economic contribution is estimated at around \$8.2 billion (per annum), equivalent to nearly 1.8 % of GSP (includes sport related tourism).
- The sport and active recreation sector directly supports the employment of around 48,000 Queenslanders and, directly and indirectly, of over 84,000 Queenslanders, or 3.1% of all employed people.

(Source: Adept Economics, *Economic and Social Benefits of Fitness, Sport and Recreation in Queensland, 2024*).

### What is the reason for this plan?

- The Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games stand as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to create meaningful employment pathways across our state. Now is the time for us to unite, leveraging the momentum of the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games to forge a legacy that transcends just sporting achievements
- An opportunity now exists to work under and alongside the array of other plans and strategies that are underway. These plans include Activate! Queensland 2019-2029, Elevate 2042, National Volunteering Strategy 2023-2033, Queensland Workforce Strategy 2022-2032, Paving the Way – First Nations Training Strategy and many more. Most if not all these plans and strategies have actions aligned with the actions from this

plan. Collaboration, flexibility, pathways and embracing technology are all common themes.

- Recent surveys and research also show that there are solutions and opportunities for the Active Industry workforce. Focusing on the Employee Value Proposition, increasing diversity, looking for local solutions and, creating and communication career and training pathways are repeated time and time again.

### What did the Active Industry say?

Our workforce is overworked, underpaid and there is a worker and skills shortage.

Skilled roles dominate our workforce and the training of these skills is provided by a diversity of organisations, in diverse ways and at diverse levels. Sport relies on training from the Australian Sports Commission and National Sporting Organisations; Fitness and Aquatics are dominated by VET training; while Recreation is a mix of on-the-job training, tertiary and VET. All the sectors start with school-based training to engage our future workforce.

The opportunities for the future are collaboration, embracing technology, flexibility, diversity and career pathways.

The skills the workforce needs for the future are customer service, technology, communication, resilience and adaptability.

There is no quick fix, and it is important that everyone pulls together if we are to have a future workforce that has the RIGHT PEOPLE with the RIGHT SKILLS at the RIGHT TIME.

### What are the key actions?

- Collaboration, Partnerships and Coordination
- Career Pathways
- Workforce Attraction and Retention
- Growing the Workforce through Diversity and Local Labour Pools
- Skills and Training Priorities
- Embracing Technology

## MINISTER'S FOREWORD

The Queensland Government welcomes the Active Industry Workforce Plan and the benefits it will provide for the people of Queensland.

A top priority of the Queensland Government is the health and wellbeing of everyone who calls this state home.

As Minister for Sport, I know the active industry plays an integral role in keeping Queenslanders healthy, which is why the Active Industry Workforce Plan (the Plan) is so important to our future.

The Queensland Government is proud to have contributed \$100,000 towards the Plan's development, through the Active Industry Project Fund.

There is no doubt the Plan aligns with our Activate! Queensland: 2019-2029 strategy, and in particular, our second action plan under the strategy, Accelerate 2022-2025 (Accelerate).

Through Accelerate, the Queensland Government is focused on ensuring the active industry is more resilient and capable of responding to the changing needs of the community.

We are providing targeted investment to maintain and enrich the Queensland way of life through physical activity, driving increased participation and pathway opportunities while setting Queensland up for success in the lead up to the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

I am pleased the Plan has been developed with assistance from the

Active Industry Project Fund, which is designed to support a thriving workforce in Queensland. We know the Active Industry comprises a wide range of roles involved in various aspects of the industry and is critical to providing quality experiences for all Queenslanders.

As Minister for Tourism, I am also pleased the Plan aligns with the Queensland Government's Towards Tourism 2032 framework.

While our beaches, hinterlands, rainforests, the Outback and the Great Barrier Reef are the bedrocks on which our visitor economy has been built, we have seen rapid growth in nature-based tourism and related adventure activities.

The Active Industry Workforce Plan 2024-2034 outlines how the active industry can support growing Queensland's economy via good jobs, better services and a great lifestyle.

I would like to congratulate the Active Queenslanders Industry Alliance and key contributors on developing the Active Industry Workforce Plan 2024-2034, and I look forward to seeing the Plan implemented for the benefit of all Queenslanders.

Michael Healy MP,  
Minister for Tourism and Sport

# AQIA CHAIR

# AND INDUSTRY PEAK BODY

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT



**Active Queenslanders Industry Alliance**

On behalf of the Active Queenslanders Industry Alliance Board, I'm pleased to present the 2024-2034 Active Industry Workforce Plan (the Plan).

The Active Industry is dominated by micro, small to medium businesses and organisations, many of which are not-for-profit. A large volunteer workforce underpins the industry and delivers a major unpaid economic contribution across the sector.

Future key external influences on the industry are expected to include the 2032 Brisbane Olympics and Paralympic Games, digital technology, economic stability (links to discretionary income), labour market issues, and the impact of government policies / incentives on participation levels.

The Plan focuses on preparing the industry workforce to respond to these external influences and also addresses the key themes and issues that emerged from the industry engagement process as part of the Plan's formulation.

The identified actions are focussed on the Active Industry working and collaborating to grow the workforce, attract new employees, retain current staff, deliver appropriate skills and training

options required for people to do their job, and take advantage of technological advances.

We would like to thank all those who contributed and assisted in the development of the Plan, particularly employers and industry who completed the survey and participated in our workshops. We also thank Jobs Queensland and members of the Project Reference Group for their time, dedication, and provision of advice in their areas of expertise.

Finally, we thank the Queensland Government's Department of Tourism and Sport for the opportunity to undertake this research under the Active Industry Project Fund. This funding has enabled AQIA to provide an overarching ten-year strategic direction to support our workers and volunteers who are the backbone of our industry.

*Phil Reeves,*  
**AQIA, Executive Chair**



The sport workforce, both paid and volunteer, is the lifeblood that enables junior sport on a Saturday, Olympic and Paralympic performances every 4 years and everything in between. We are yet to recover from the impacts the COVID pandemic had on our workforce and this Workforce Plan is integral in supporting our current workers and developing and training the new ones. QSport has been a key stakeholder in the development of the Active

Industry Workforce Plan, and we look forward to being a part of the collaborative pieces of work identified in the plan. Industry partnerships are key to driving solutions to workforce issues for both paid workers and volunteers, particularly as we work towards successful 2032 Brisbane Olympic and Paralympic events.

*Tim Klar,*  
**CEO, QSport**



On behalf of the outdoor recreation sector in Queensland, Outdoors Queensland endorses and supports the Active Industry Workforce Plan to address workforce and skills shortages for the sector. In the recent Outdoor Census, we discovered that 59% of our workforce were volunteers. Our workforce also moves around a lot, not just geographically but working in different roles. One week we may be leading a mountain bike group of school kids and next week we are climbing Mt Barney with

a group of seniors. Our workers need access to training and development opportunities that are quick, easy and transferable. Outdoors Queensland has been involved in the development of the Plan and we are looking forward to working in partnership with AQIA to deliver some of the projects and outcomes to ensure a skilled and trained outdoor recreation workforce for the future.

*Dom Courtney,*  
**Executive Officer, Outdoors Queensland**



**AUSactive**

AUSactive is pleased to have been a part in the development of the Queensland Active Industry Workforce Plan. The fitness, exercise and active health industry has experienced many challenges over the last couple of years, including COVID induced workforce shortages. These problems have impacted negatively the ability of our sector to meet growing consumer

demand and implement critical growth plans. We believe addressing these obstacles with a considered strategic direction and industry relevant plan will help the industry both retain and attract new and additional workers to ensure we can service the growing number of Queenslanders who wish to be active and healthy.

*Barrie Elvish,*  
**CEO, AUSactive**

# INTRODUCTION

In the vibrant tapestry of Queensland's lifestyle and culture, the arenas of sport, fitness, and recreation stand as vital threads that bind our communities and define our identity.

As custodians of this legacy, the Queensland Active Industry Workforce Plan provides a compass to navigate the evolving landscape of human capital development within these domains. This holistic blueprint sets the course for fostering excellence, inclusivity, and well-being through strategic workforce planning.

In a society that recognises the significance of holistic health, the symbiosis of sport, fitness, and recreation finds its resonance. This comprehensive plan underscores the industry's commitment to nurturing a skilled, dynamic, and diverse workforce that can cater to the multifaceted needs of Queenslanders. From elite athletes who inspire us, to the dedicated fitness professionals who guide our wellness journeys, and the amazing volunteers across the sport and recreation domains, this plan addresses the full spectrum of roles that contribute to an active Queensland.

Woven with insights drawn from collaboration, research, and stakeholder engagement, the Queensland Active Industry Workforce Plan encapsulates the aspirations of a state that values health, vitality, and community engagement. This plan brings together the efforts of government agencies, industry partners, and passionate individuals who share a common vision of a healthier and more active Queensland.

As we embark on this collective endeavour, we invite all stakeholders—industry leaders, active enthusiasts, policymakers, and educators—to delve into the strategies, recommendations, and narratives contained within this plan. It is our firm belief that by cultivating a skilled and motivated workforce, we can unlock the transformative potential of sport, fitness, and recreation, and forge a path toward a brighter, more active future for all Queenslanders.



## ACTIVE INDUSTRY OVERVIEW

Queensland is renowned for its vibrant sport, fitness, and recreation culture. The state has a strong emphasis on outdoor activities, sports events, and promoting healthy lifestyles. Some key points about the Active Industry in Queensland include:

### Active Participation

Queenslanders have a strong affinity for physical activities, aquatic pursuits, and outdoor sports due to the pleasant climate and natural beauty. Activities like walking, surfing, swimming, all forms of cycling, cricket, and the various football codes are particularly popular.

### Sports Infrastructure

The state has invested in developing world-class sports facilities, stadiums, and training centres. Local communities also have a number of sport and recreation clubs which are the life and heart of these communities. These facilities support both elite athletes and grassroots participation.

### Health and Fitness

Queensland places an emphasis on health and fitness, with gyms, fitness centres, and wellness activities being a significant part of the lifestyle. This aligns with the state's commitment to promoting active living.

### Outdoor Activities

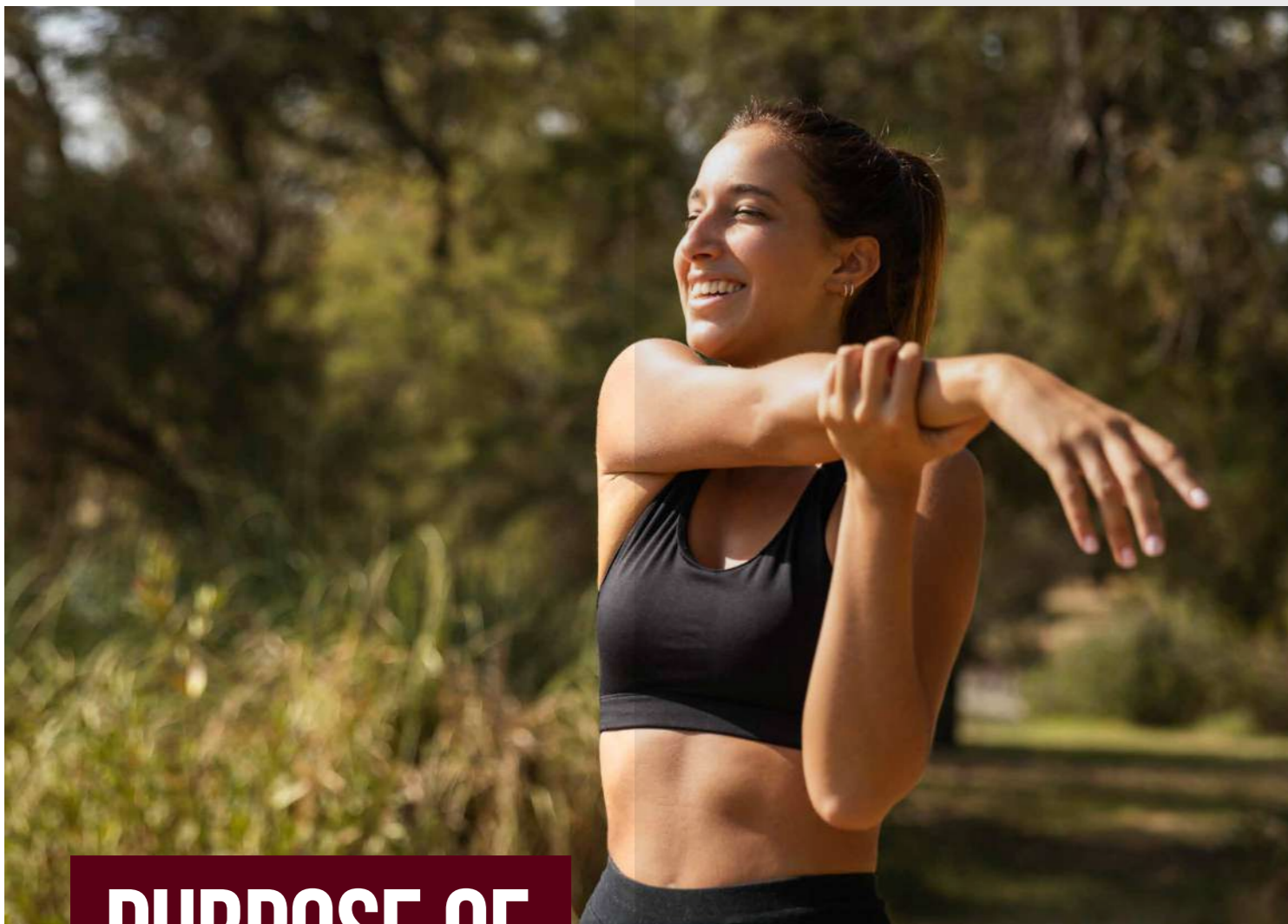
Queensland's natural landscapes, including beaches, rainforests, and national parks, provide ample opportunities for outdoor activities such as hiking, camping, and water sports.

### Economic Impact

The sports and recreation industry contributes significantly to Queensland's economy through tourism, job creation, and related businesses. Specifically the total economic and social benefits of Fitness, Sport and Active Recreation is estimated at \$43.9 billion, equivalent to around 9.8 per cent of Gross State Product (GSP). The sport and active recreation economic contribution is estimated at around \$8.2 billion (per annum), equivalent to nearly 1.8 % of GSP (includes sport related tourism). The sport and active recreation sector directly supports the employment of around 48,000 Queenslanders and, directly and indirectly, of over 84,000 Queenslanders, or 3.1% of all employed people. (Source: Adept Economics, Economic and Social Benefits of Fitness, Sport and Recreation in Queensland, 2023.)

### Sports Events and Tourism

Queensland hosts a wide range of sports events, from local and regional competitions to international events. These events generate economic benefits to other industries through hotels and accommodation, hospitality, transport, retail etc.



## PURPOSE OF

## THE PLAN

### **Our people are our greatest asset.**

The Queensland Active Industry recognises that the greatest asset is the people who work and volunteer in the industry. The Active Industry is committed to ensuring that our workforce (paid and volunteer) is equipped with the necessary skills and workforce practices needed to ensure our industry thrives and moves forward in an ever-evolving landscape.

The Active Industry Workforce Plan (the Plan) serves as a roadmap, guiding our efforts to optimise our workforce while fostering a culture of inclusivity, diversity, and continuous development.

The Plan demonstrates industry's intent and commitment to the strategic management of our workforce, ensuring that we remain at the forefront of innovation, excellence, and social responsibility.

Active Queenslanders Industry Alliance (AQIA) has developed the Plan under the Queensland Government's Department of Tourism and Sport Active Industry Project Fund. It has been developed in collaboration with government bodies, industry stakeholders including peak bodies, employers, training providers and regions.

### **Comments from Jo, Fiona and Murray**

As the project team, we have been truly fortunate to engage with many members of the Active Industry from all over the great state of Queensland. The enthusiasm of the industry and the willingness to make "things" happen provides us with great optimism in our ability to address our future workforce needs. The Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games stand as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to create meaningful employment pathways across our state. Now is the time for us to unite, leveraging the momentum of the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games to forge a legacy that transcends just sporting achievements.

Reviewing the numerous and various strategies and plans, that sit alongside this plan, we found that all align in the way forward. Collaboration, Career Pathways, Workforce Attraction and Retention, Growing the Local Workforce through Diversity, Aligning Skills and Training, and embracing Technology are common themes throughout.

There were three key takeaways that resonated with us from our research, conversations and analysis.

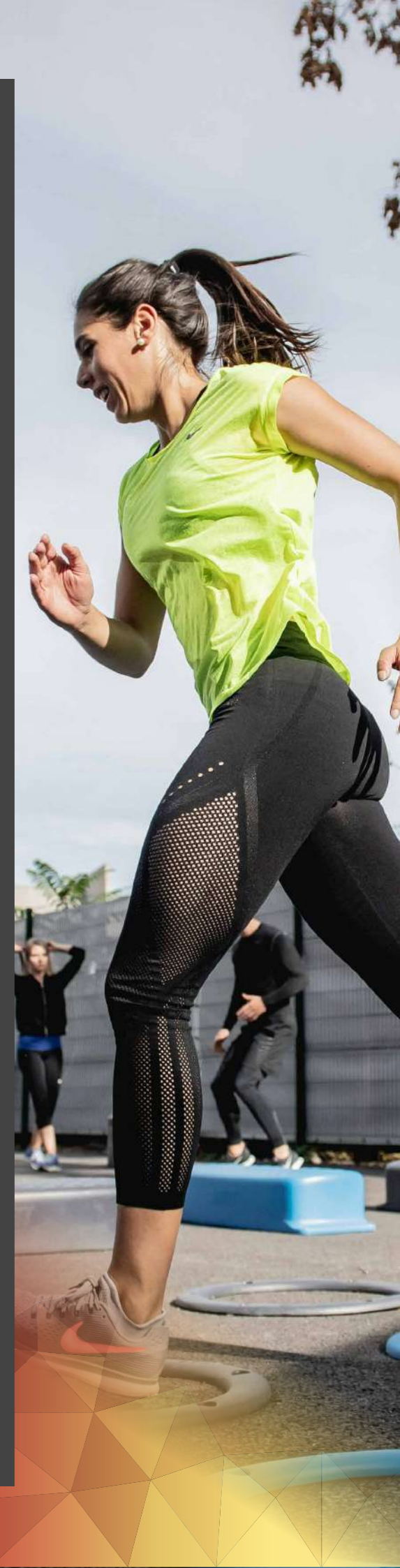
The PWC Not for Profit CEO survey underlines the importance of a compelling employee value proposition (EVP). To attract and retain staff and develop a resilient workforce, organisations and industries need to address the full suite of attributes related to EVP: financial reward, non-financial recognition, purpose, a psychologically safe work environment, a sense of belonging, being able to work in a way that suits them,

learning and development, experience, and career progression. As an industry we need to focus more on the EVP than just the job description.

The second takeaway is identified in the Queensland Skills Strategy 2024 – 2028 and is the Skills Pathway. The "Career Ready", "Career Start", and "Career Boost" elements of our training needs to be considered as part of the EVP. Our workers will engage with our industry at the "Ready" level, work in our industry at the "Start" level and continue along their career pathway at the "Boost" level.

The final takeaway comes in the soon to be released Adept Economics report. The estimated growth in the indirect Active Industry Workforce, over the next 10 years, is 1,300 people per year. The Australian Industry Group rates the Arts and Recreation Industry in the High Turnover group with an annual turnover rate of 11.4%. If we assume that only 25% of these workers leave the industry that equals another 2,400 workers. The total is therefore 3,700 workers per annum or more than 10 workers a day, every day for the next 10 years in Queensland.

We have no time to waste! Workforce development needs to be on the agenda at a State Government level, Local Council level, State Sport and Recreation Organisation level, business and association level and at the grassroots. Together, let's harness the spirit of collaboration, innovation, and determination to pave the way for the RIGHT PEOPLE, with the RIGHT SKILLS, at the RIGHT TIME.



Right People,  
Right Skills,  
Right Time

# WHY WE NEED A PLAN

Over the next few years there are several factors that will influence and impact the Active Industry workforce:

## Major skills, employment, and occupational shortages

The industry continues to experience workforce issues in the recovery from the COVID pandemic. Simply, many workers left the industry and have not returned. Critical occupational shortages are experienced in Outdoor Recreation Guides and Leaders (particularly for the outdoor education sector), Swim Teachers, Sport Coaches, Gymnastics Coaches and Fitness Professionals. There is also a lack of young people entering the workforce and attraction and recruitment issues are being reported across all sectors with employers unable to fill vacancies. The face of the state is also changing with 27% of Queenslanders born overseas and a large Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) community that is active differently. Activity leaders that can speak other languages and understand cultures are needed.

## 2032 Brisbane Olympics and Paralympics

Strategies are needed to attract new workers to the industry and ensure those already working in the industry are adequately trained and skilled in the lead up to, and post Olympic and Paralympic events. This will ensure one of the legacies of 2032 is a well qualified and suitably skilled workforce that will support the other major legacy of increased community participation in future sport and recreation programs well beyond 2032. By investing and developing strategies now, there is an opportunity to use the lead time to 2032 to ensure our industry's workforce is ready. There is time to attract and recruit new entrants/students,

have them trained and with industry work expertise to support 2032. The focus should be on training and employing Queenslanders to deliver this major international event – including volunteers. Paris 2024 will see new sports introduced that will see a demand for leaders in rock climbing, skating and surfing. With the integration of the Paralympics and equal participation of women for the first time, there will be a rise in demand for activities and coaches that reflect people participating in these categories. Adapting education to include people living with disabilities, and specific training for women is needed. The demand for these changes will be immediate as the Paris Olympics begin and will continue to grow as the Los Angeles then Brisbane Olympics take place.

The Active Industry Workforce Plan will provide opportunities to contribute to the Elevate 2042 legacy foundations, notably around *Advancing accessibility and empowering people with disability*, and the Sport, Health and Inclusion transformation theme.

## Projected National Active Industry Growth

For Arts and Recreation Services, projected 5 year growth for five years to November 2026 is 10.1%, higher than the All Industries growth rate of 9.1% (Jobs & Skills Australia).

The 5 year growth rate of 9.8% for both Fitness Instructors and Sport Coaches, Instructors and Officials is higher than the All Occupations growth rate of 9.1% (Jobs & Skills Australia).

## Future and emerging trends

**Technology and digital transformations** – there is no doubt that technology is advancing and changing the way the Active Industry delivers its products and services. This is important as we monitor what this means for the workforce, whether it's about making jobs and tasks easier and more efficient or goes further to possibly replace human resources.

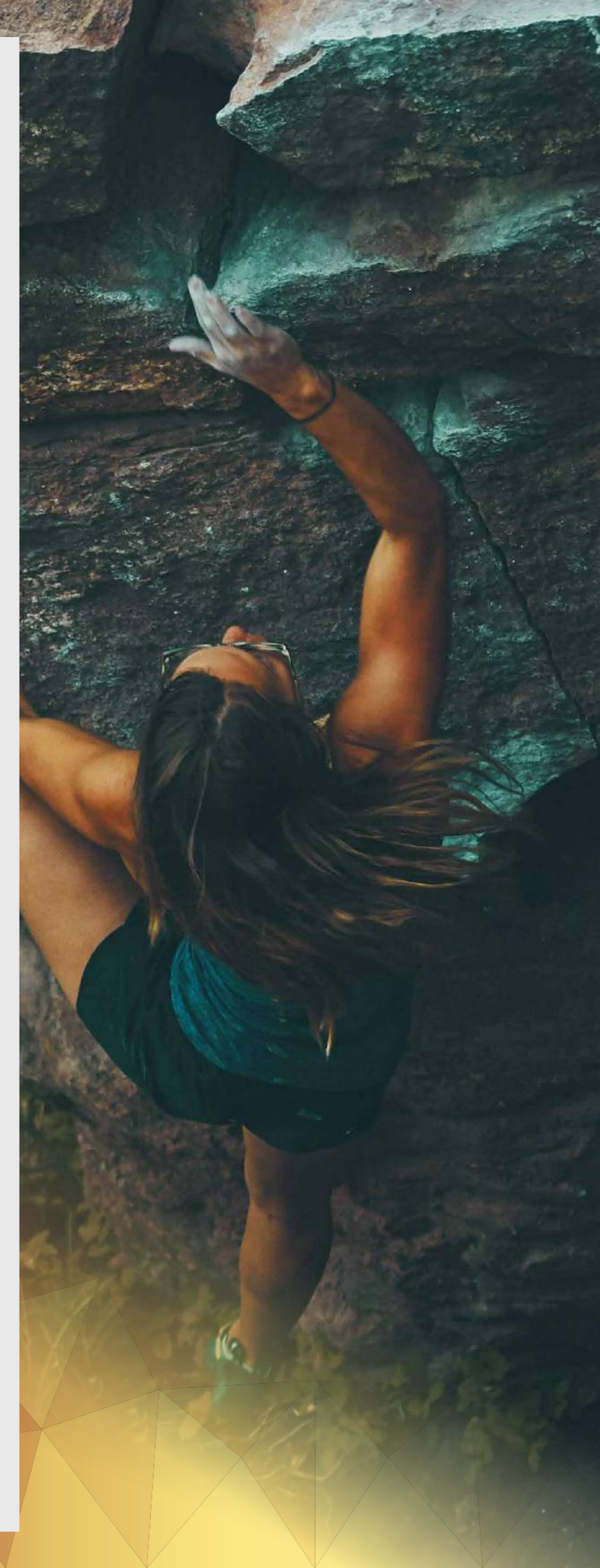
**Sport Technology in Queensland** is a growing industry – in particular the Queensland Government states that “The Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games presents tremendous opportunities to grow Queensland's SportsTech economy, and revolutionise the way we approach sports by leveraging the power of innovation and technology.” To date the Queensland's Sportstech economy has seen the development and commercialisation of new concepts and expects an accelerated progress of innovation in the lead up to the Olympic and Paralympic events.

**Cross industry relationships** – working closely with the Health and Tourism industries is critical. There is much that can be gained from partnerships with the allied health sector, particularly in relation to preventative health and rehabilitation. Tourism is also driven by many major sport events as well as local and regional competitions at the non-elite and junior levels. Eco and adventure tourism are also major drivers of the tourism industry placing a greater demand on Active Industry workforce to deliver these products.

**Sport Megatrends** – Prepared by the Australian Sports Commission (ASC) and national science agency CSIRO, The Future of Australia report highlights the significant shifts expected to play out in Australian sport over the next ten years and beyond.

The six megatrends identified will influence the Australian sport sector into the future, include:

1. Escalate the exercise, modernising sport to create new pathways for all Australians
2. New horizons, adopting new and emerging technologies to help change the game
3. The next arena, the rise of entertainment sports including augmented reality, virtual reality and e-sports
4. Mind the gap, bringing Australia together across the generational and societal divides
5. Our best sporting side, encouraging diversity, inclusivity, fair play and sustainability
6. The perfect pivot, adapting sports for a more uncertain world.



# BEST PRACTICE – CASE STUDY

## Sports Data Science and AI Next Generation Graduates Program (NGGP)

The QUT Centre for Data Science (CDS), the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) and Queensland Academy of Sport (QAS) are leading a consortium of government and industry organisations in sport, sports and biomedical technology, CSIRO and 4 universities to develop pioneering sports data science capability in the 'green & gold' lead-up to the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

The NGGP grants are aimed at building a competitive and capable workforce that will drive the growth of the Australian tech sector. With our program, the NGGP grants will fund a first cohort of 25 higher degree research (HDR) student placements (Honours, Masters, PhDs) and create a community of students who will learn together as they tackle these research challenges.



**Mackenzie Parker**  
PhD Candidate

# PROJECT METHODOLOGY

AQIA is committed to developing an Active Industry Workforce Plan that is industry owned and led.

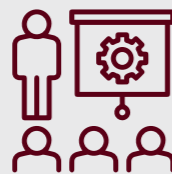
As such the Plan is underpinned by an extensive industry engagement process. The Plan was also developed with oversight by an Industry Project Reference Group consisting of Peak Bodies, Government agencies, Jobs Queensland, an RTO, Tertiary education provider and other industry representatives.

AQIA has consulted with a range of industry, community, government and educational stakeholders and reviewed relevant data and literature to determine the workforce priorities, actions and recommendations contained in this Plan.



### Online Survey

The Active Industry Workforce Plan Online Survey was open for a period of 10 weeks and yielded more than 251 responses from individuals, employers, representative groups, Registered Training Organisations (RTOs), clubs and associations, and government.



### Workshops

A number of online workshops to identify industry workforce issues and responses were conducted between December 2023 and February 2024. These included regional specific and sector specific workshops. A total of over 274 industry representatives from a range of industry organisations participated and provided valuable insights and advice on workforce issues, skill and training needs and future solutions. Representation was strong from each of the sectors: fitness/movement, sport, outdoor recreation, community recreation and aquatics.



### Targeted meetings

Views of stakeholders were also captured through targeted meetings and participation in existing industry forums and networks. 30 interviews were conducted across Outdoor Education, schools, gym owners, personal trainers, NDIS providers, universities, elite sports, SSO's industry leaders.

Appendix 1 provides a comprehensive list of organisations that provided input into the report.

# CURRENT WORKFORCE

# DATA AND GAPS

## WHO IS THE ACTIVE INDUSTRY WORKFORCE?

The Active Industry comprises organisations, businesses and not for profit clubs who deliver programs and activities to keep people physically active.

For the purposes of this workforce plan, it includes anyone working or volunteering in the fitness, exercise, movement, sport, outdoor recreation, community recreation and aquatics industries.



## Queensland Workforce Numbers

(Data source - Jobs Queensland Data Portal 2023-24)

It should be noted that this data is used by policy makers to make decisions on workforce needs. We acknowledge that there is a discrepancy in the workforce numbers in this plan and encourage readers to consider all the data sources. When these figures were presented to interviewees all disagreed with the projections. For example, the Gold Coast region is forecast to see a decline in Sport and Recreation Activity employment of -3.2% or more than -200 jobs from 2021-22 to 2025-26.



# 24,664

At the industry subdivision level, Sport and Recreation Activities employ 24,644 people



# 18,933

At the industry group level, Sport and Physical Recreation Activities employ 18,933 people.



# 3.1%

Projected change from 2021-22 to 2025-26, at the industry group level, is a 3.1% growth which is equivalent to 601 new jobs. This is less than the overall Queensland change for all industries at 7.6%.

(Note: The JQ Data Portal model incorporates a variety of inputs, including labour market statistics, education data, macroeconomic and demographic data, and the most recent Queensland Treasury employment forecasts (at the time of modelling).)



# BEST PRACTICE – CASE STUDY

## Brisbane Broncos Sports Business Institute & TAFE Queensland

In an exciting new partnership with TAFE Queensland, the newly created Brisbane Broncos Sports Business Institute is the exclusive integrated home for a double Diploma of Sport and Diploma of Leadership & Management in the state's first accredited education pathway that embeds hands-on learning across an entire sporting organisation. The year-long course provides students with unparalleled insights into the operations of an NRL club and Australia's most prominent sporting brand, with two students per intake guaranteed graduate roles at the club on completion of the course.



## CURRENT WORKFORCE ISSUES, CHALLENGES AND GAPS

### Worker and skills shortages

Industry has been reporting for some time that there are critical shortages in some key occupation areas. These include fitness professionals, aqua exercise instructors, sport coaches (in particular swimming, tennis and gymnastics coaches), outdoor recreation leaders, learn to swim teachers and pool lifeguards.

These shortages were highlighted and further exacerbated by the COVID pandemic where many workers across all sectors left the industry and did not return. In particular, the outdoor recreation and aquatics sectors, which have a seasonal and highly casualised workforce, were not eligible for JobKeeper and were forced to find employment elsewhere, many in other industries.

Many workers also left the fitness industry, with many facilities shut down. With lock downs and restrictions in place there were perceptions that the industry was unclean and prone to easy infection transmission. The return to the workforce has been slow. During this time training numbers were also down.

The current labour market has also seen challenging recruitment issues. In a job seeker market, with higher wages and better conditions offered elsewhere, the ability to attract new workers to the industry has been challenging. Responses to job vacancies has been low and the industry has had to look to innovative ways to attract a new generation of workers.

Shortages are also evident with an increase in demand for services. That is, with increased participation in physical activities and an increase in community awareness of the benefit of physical activity to mental

health and other chronic health conditions, there is an increase in the demand for workers who deliver physical activity services.

### Poor retention

Retention of current workers is clearly an issue with industry trying to understand why people have not returned to the industry post COVID and why the general staff turnover rate is high.

AQIA qualitative data suggests the following reasons contribute to poor retention:

- Lack of ongoing training
- Lack of career paths and progression
- Lack of recognition
- Low wages
- Long hours often unpaid – e.g. outdoor leaders on overnight and weekend camps, fitness professionals early starts and late finishes

### Ageing workforce

The issue of an ageing workforce is particularly evident in the volunteer workforce. Sport and recreation clubs are looking to ways to attract young people to volunteer roles.

And again during COVID many volunteers left and the return has been slow.

### Lack of upskilling for existing workers

Higher level skills in management and leadership, and specialist skills for niche markets were identified as key traits to assist people progress and stay in their current employment.

Other opportunities for upskilling include skills that enable people to work across different sectors within the industry, as well as non-accredited training, microcredentials and skill sets.

### Lack of career pathways and career development

Industry was consistent in expressing the perception there is a lack of clear career pathways. Working in the fitness, sport and recreation industry is not often viewed as a "career for life", but rather a short term, casual option as a stepping stone to something more permanent, either within the industry or moving on to other industries.

Career pathways are not well understood from outside the industry (including schools) as well as within the industry. While there are ways to progress from being a volunteer all the way to management positions, options need to be mapped, documented and promoted.

There is a considerable amount of vocational education and training in fitness, sport and recreation that occurs in schools. However, this does not translate into further study or jobs in the industry post school.

### Employment and wage condition

Many in the industry have cited the need for a specific Modern Award that covers all paid workers in the Active Industry. This issue is outside the scope of the Active Industry Workforce Plan, but is an area highlighted for further research and consideration in the medium to long term.

### Lack of data

Current labour market data available is based on the Australian Bureau of Statistics use of ANZSIC (industry) and ANZSCO (occupations) classifications and codes. These data collections do not often capture true industry numbers as up to 50 per cent of the fitness, sport and recreation occupations are included in other industry classifications e.g. education, tourism, personal services. The ANZSCO occupation descriptions for job roles are also out of date and often capture a number of roles in a single code that crosses multiple industries.

This leads to sectors undertaking their own research and data collections to gain more of an understanding of organisation and workforce issues. E.g. AQIA skills and training surveys and reports, Outdoors Queensland census, Volunteering Queensland reports, Royal Life Saving Society workforce report. Even then, the data collected for these reports is dependent on a high response rate across the sector to truly reflect the breadth and depth of what's going on.





# INDUSTRY WORKFORCE (SECTOR) PROFILES

## Fitness, exercise and movement

The fitness workforce in Queensland includes a range of professionals dedicated to promoting health and wellness through physical activity, exercise and movement. This workforce includes, for example, personal trainers, group fitness instructors, gym managers, pilates and yoga instructors.

The sector is recovering slowly from COVID with demand due to increasing awareness of physical activity for overall physical and mental health and well-being. There is a greater demand for qualified fitness professionals across various settings, including gyms, health and wellbeing centres, corporate wellness programs, and sports organisations.

In addition to traditional fitness roles, there is also a growing trend towards specialisation within the industry, with professionals offering niche services such as specific cohorts (e.g. young people, seniors, NDIS), online coaching, functional training, injury rehabilitation, and sports-specific conditioning.

Overall, the fitness, exercise and movement workforce in Queensland plays a crucial role in helping individuals of all ages and fitness levels achieve their health and fitness goals, contributing to the broader public health agenda of reducing rates of obesity, chronic disease, and sedentary lifestyles.

### Workforce size:

#### Fitness Instructor (ANZSCO 4521)

- Under the ANZSCO ABS classifications, in 2023 Fitness Instructor employment in Queensland was 6,058.
- Queensland has a 19.8 percent share of the national employment of Fitness Instructors (30,600 persons nationally).
- Very strong growth over 5 years to November 2026 at 9.8% (higher than the All Occupations project growth of 9.1%).

*Industry would suggest this is a misrepresentation of actual numbers, with more than half counted by other sectors.*

### Key workforce challenges for the sector include:

- Occupational shortages of fitness instructors due to many workers who left the industry during COVID and did not return.
- Decline in training numbers over the last two years.
- Growing demand in the industry for more highly educated leaders that have specialist skills for the growing demand for special needs in mental health, obesity, heart, chronic disease and physical disability.

### Opportunities:

- Clearly define career pathways, including cross sector pathways with other Active Industry sectors
- Support and retain current workers
- Make stronger links with the allied health sector

# Sport

The sport workforce in Queensland is comprised of a wide range of professionals involved in various aspects of the sports industry, including administration, coaching, development, officiating, management, and facilities and grounds management.

In Queensland, various organisations and government agencies support the development and regulation of the sport workforce, including QSport, Queensland Department of Tourism and Sport, and national bodies like the Australian Sports Commission. These entities provide funding, resources, and strategic initiatives to enhance the professionalism, diversity, and inclusivity of the sport industry in Queensland.

Overall, the sport workforce in Queensland plays a vital role in promoting active lifestyles, fostering talent development, and contributing to the social, cultural, and economic fabric of the state.

## Workforce size:

### Sport Administrators (ANZSCO 139915)

- Nationally, there are 2,400 Sports Administrators employed in 2023.
- Queensland has a 17.7 percent share of the national employment of Sport Administrators equating to 425 persons employed in Queensland.

### Sport Coaches, Instructors and Officials (ANZSCO 4523)

- Under the ANZSCO ABS classifications, in 2023 there are 8,230 Sport Coaches, Instructors and Officials employed in Queensland.
- Queensland has a 17.4 percent share of the national employment of Sport Coaches, Instructors and Officials (47,300 persons nationally).
- Very strong growth over 5 years to November 2026 at 9.8% (higher than the All Occupations project growth of 9.1%).

### Sport Development Officers (ANZSCO 452321)

- This is a very small occupation. Nationally, there are 1,100 Sport Development Officers employed in 2023.
- Queensland has a 23.5 percent share of the national employment of Sport Development Officers equating to 258 persons employed in Queensland.

### Sports Umpires (ANZSCO 452322)

- This is a very small occupation. Nationally, there are 5,200 Sports Umpires employed in 2023.
- Queensland has a 13.4 percent share of the national employment of Sport Umpires equating to 697 persons employed in Queensland.

### Sportspersons (ANZSCO 4524)

- Under the ANZSCO ABS classifications, in 2023 there are 2,684 Sportspersons employed in Queensland.

- Queensland has an 18.9 percent share of the national employment of Sportspersons (14,200 persons nationally).

This does not include the volunteer workforce.

## Key workforce challenges for the sector include:

- Workforce shortages in sport coaches
- Wage and pay conditions compared to other industries
- Sector reliance on volunteers

## Opportunities:

- Clearly define career pathways, including cross sector pathways with other Active Industry sectors
- Increase diversity representation in the workforce
- Collaboration across sports





## Outdoor recreation

The outdoor recreation workforce encompasses a diverse range of professionals who work in various outdoor settings to facilitate outdoor recreational and educational activities and experiences. This sector includes individuals employed in roles such as outdoor leaders, guides, instructors, educators, adventure tourism operators, adventure therapists among others.

The demand for outdoor recreation professionals continues to grow as more people seek opportunities to increase their physical and mental health, as well as connect with nature and engage in outdoor pursuits for leisure, education, and adventure.

There are also large not for profit organisations who deliver outdoor recreation activities, programs and expeditions such as Duke of Edinburgh, Scouts, Girls Guides, Outward Bound to name a few.

### Workforce size:

#### Outdoor Adventure Guide (ANZSCO 4522)

- This is a very small occupation. Under the ANZSCO ABS classifications, in 2023 there are 809 Outdoor Adventure Guides employed in Queensland.
- Queensland has a 23.1 percent share of the national employment of Outdoor Adventure Guides (3,500 persons nationally).
- Growth to 2026 nationally to +1,400 more persons employed.

#### Outdoor Adventure Instructor (ANZSCO 452215)

- In 2023 the number of Outdoor Adventure Instructors nationally is 1,400.
- Queensland has a 20.2 percent share of the national employment of Outdoor Adventure Instructors equating to 283 persons.

### Key workforce challenges for the sector include:

- Workforce shortages in outdoor recreation leaders and educators
- Highly casual and seasonal workforce
- Wage/pay conditions compared to other industries
- Perceived lack of career pathways and opportunities
- Outdoor recreation activities, programs, camps etc often conducted after hours, weekends etc.
- Sector not seen as providing stable, long term professions and careers.

### Opportunities:

- Clearly define career pathways, including cross sector pathways with other Active Industry sectors
- Support and retain current workers

## Community recreation

The PCYC and YMCA organisations are the two well known organisations in the community recreation space. There are also other smaller community based organisations/ centres who offer a range of activities and programs in a community setting that have a focus on youth development, promoting healthy lifestyles, and building stronger communities.

Community recreation organisations offer a wide range of activities and programs, including sports, fitness classes, recreational activities, and youth outreach programs. These programs are designed to cater to the needs and interests of young people and disadvantaged cohorts in the community. Many of these centres also include pre, post and vacation school care programs for school kids.

These organisations rely on a combination of paid staff and volunteers to deliver its programs and services. Staff members may include youth workers, personal trainers, sports coaches, educators, and administrative personnel.

### Workforce size:

#### Recreation Officer (ANZSCO 272612)

- This is a very small occupation. Nationally, there are 1,800 Recreation Officers employed in 2023.
- Queensland has a 19.5 percent share of the national employment of Recreation Officers equating to 351 persons employed in Queensland.

More specifically, the YMCA employs more than 1,200 in the South East. For the PCYC, 480 people are employed at PCYC Queensland.



### Key workforce challenges for the sector include:

- Cost of living pressures on families mean a decrease in membership and decline in program numbers – more so adults than kids programs.
- Similar workforce shortages to other sectors – fitness professionals, gymnastics coaches
- Casual workforce.

### Opportunities:

- As larger organisations, there are opportunities for collaboration and partnerships to address workforce issues.
- Clearly define career pathways, including cross sector pathways with other Active Industry sectors



## Aquatics

The aquatics workforce in Queensland includes a number of job roles - swim teachers and instructors, swim coaches, pool lifeguards, aquatic facility managers, aquatic technical operators, aquatic therapists, recreation officers and program coordinators to name a few.

The aquatics industry workforce plays a vital role in promoting water safety, physical fitness, recreation, and rehabilitation for individuals of all ages and abilities. Training, certification, and ongoing professional development are essential for maintaining high standards of service and safety within the industry.

### Workforce size:

*(Note: the ABS data is under-representative due to the classification structure with many workers in the sector, in some instances up to 50 percent counted under other industry classifications. Therefore the RLSSA is a more accurate reflection of workforce numbers)*

#### Swimming Coaches and Instructors (ANZSCO 452315) (ABS data, May 2023)

- Nationally, there are 12,300 Swimming Coaches and Instructors employed in 2023 according to ABS data. However, Royal Life Saving – Australia, calculates this number to be approximately 25,000 (RLSSA National Aquatic Industry Workforce Profile 2019, RLSSA National Aquatic Industry Workforce Report 2023)
- Queensland has a 20% percent share of the national employment of Swimming Coaches and Instructors equating to 2,460 (or 5000 based on RLSSA data) persons employed in Queensland.

#### Lifeguards (ANZSCO 452414) (ABS data, May 2023)

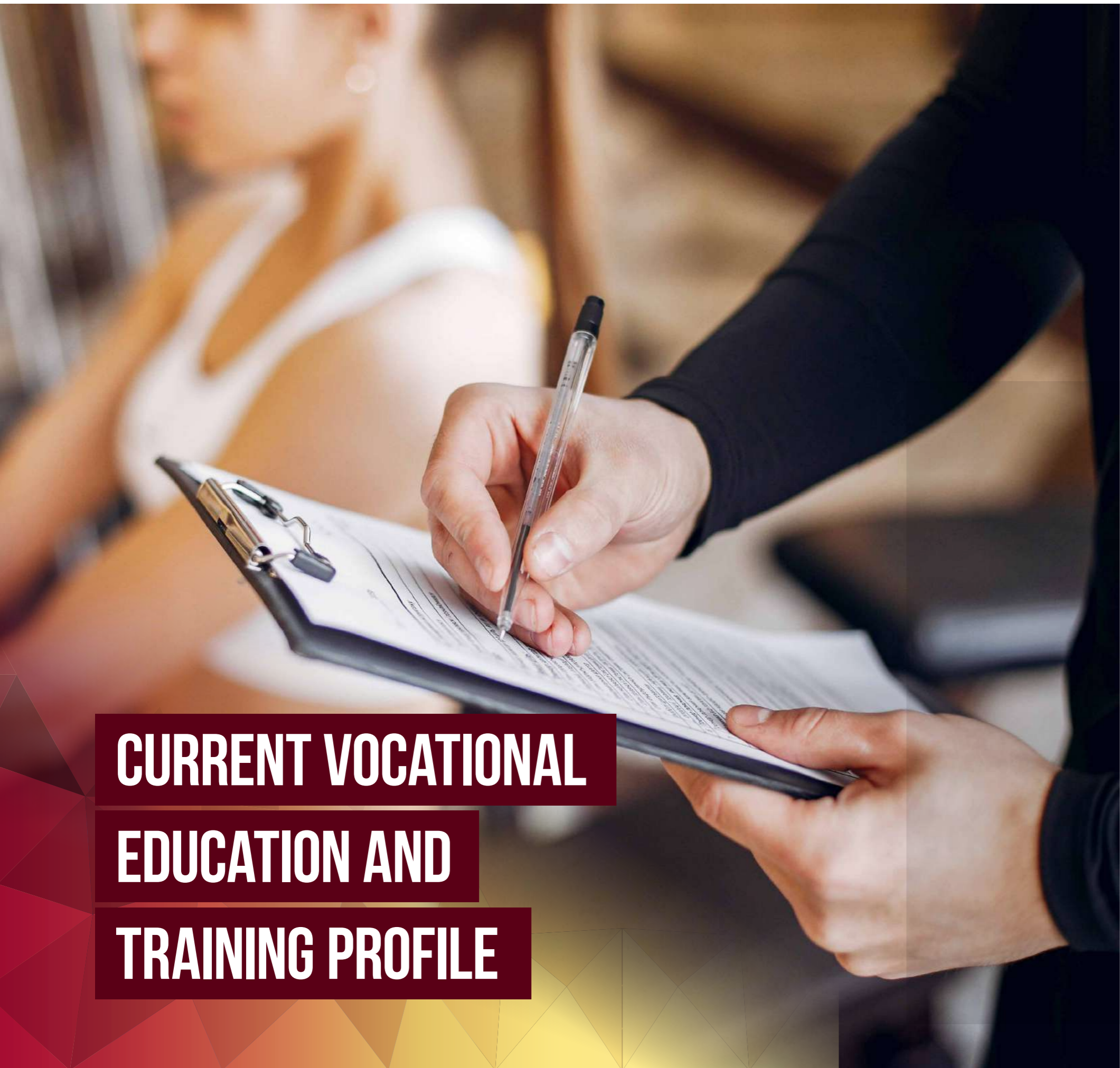
- Nationally, there are 4,400 Lifeguards employed in 2023 according to ABS data. However Royal Life Saving – Australia, calculates this number to be approximately 12,000 (RLSSA National Aquatic Industry Workforce Profile 2019, RLSSA National Aquatic Industry Workforce Report 2023).
- Queensland has a 20% percent share of the national employment of Lifeguards equating to 880 (or 2,400 based on RLSSA data) persons employed in Queensland.

### Key workforce challenges for the sector include:

- Occupational shortages of swim teachers and pool lifeguards (National Skills Priority List identifies swim coaches/instructors as having a national labour shortage)
- Casualised employment
- Lack of clear career pathways within the sector
- Increased demand for swim lessons driven by a catch up post COVID and Qld Government's introduction of vouchers for kids for some sectors of the community to access swim lessons

### Opportunities:

- Increase diversity of the workforce
- Clearly define career pathways, including cross sector pathways with other Active Industry sectors
- Increase gender parity, particularly in senior leadership roles
- Support and retain current staff
- Promotion of aquatics sector as a life long career option



# CURRENT VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROFILE

For 2022-2023 the Queensland Government invested a total of \$6,235,923 in the fitness, sport, recreation and racing industry under the Queensland Government's Vocational Education and Training Annual Investment Plan. This can be broken down to:

Certificate 3 Guarantee (C3G) expenditure equated to \$5,716,930 to assist 4,949 students. There were 21 Skills Assure Suppliers, with the following top five qualifications under this program:

- Certificate II in Sport and Recreation
- Certificate II in Outdoor Recreation
- Certificate III in Fitness
- Certificate II in Sport Coaching
- Certificate IV in Outdoor Leadership

User Choice expenditure was \$518,993 to assist 340 students. There were 12 Skills Assure Suppliers, with the top three qualifications being:

- Certificate III in Sport and Recreation
- Certificate III in Fitness
- Certificate III in Outdoor Leadership

These figures do not include what is also delivered on a commercial basis, sport specific training undertaken by National and State Sporting Organisations, informal training delivered to committees and volunteers of sport and recreation clubs, other training by peak bodies as part of professional registration requirements.

# LOOKING AHEAD

The current Active Industry and wider policies and strategies that impact the Active Industry workforce.

## Activate! Queensland Action Plan 2 – Accelerate 2022-2025

**Activate! Queensland 2019–2029**, is a 10-year strategy by the Queensland Government to enhance sport and active recreation in the state.

Accelerate 2022-2025 includes 5 commitments:

1. Collaborate with the Active Industry to get more Queenslanders moving,
2. Enhance pathways for Queensland’s athletes, coaches and officials,
3. Operate precincts and venues that serve community and industry from grassroots to elite,
4. Champion an industry leading network of infrastructure across Queensland, and
5. Leverage events and opportunities.

While all of these commitments link to the Active Industry workforce, commitment 1 and 2 include initiatives that directly support our workforce:

- **Commitment 1** – Collaboration is a reoccurring theme that came out in most stakeholder engagements. One of the success measures for this commitment is “Improved capability of the industry” and this must be driven by a capable workforce.
- **Commitment 2** – Pathways for officials, coaches and administrators (Pathway Leaders) and athletes are the focus of this commitment. The Queensland Pathways Blueprint is an initiative under this commitment. The key objectives are:
  - Inclusion and lifelong participation
  - System alignment, collaboration and knowledge sharing
  - Building quality talent pathways.

## Play Well – Everyone has a place in sport

Play Well – Australia’s Sport Participation Strategy, aims to create inclusive sporting environments where people of all backgrounds can enjoy the benefits of sport. It emphasises the right of everyone to participate in sport, highlighting its role in personal growth and community building. The strategy seeks to break down barriers and redefine participation beyond competition, focusing on creating safe, inclusive spaces for all. It invites collaboration from across the sector to make Australian sport safer, more welcoming, inclusive, and enjoyable. The first “case for change” clearly articulates the gaps in the Active Industry workforce:

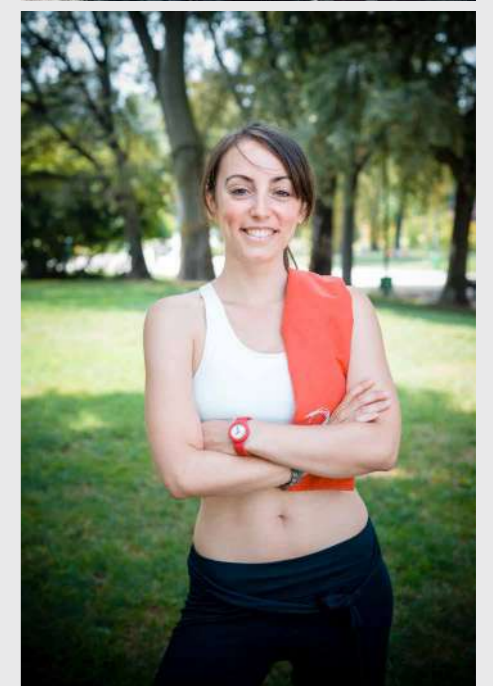
*“Delivering community sport is getting harder with more resources desperately needed. The Australian sport workforce needs to grow its capability, capacity, and diversity to meet the changing expectations and demands of the community. Intertwined within the complex compliance landscape and a lack of organisational alignment, sporting organisations are also duplicating their efforts in supporting community sport and are hindered by rigid operational systems in their efforts to deliver safe and enjoyable sporting experiences.”*

### Play Well identifies six priority areas:

1. Empowering people and organisations – Building the capability of people and organisations to meet the needs for everyone involved in sport.
2. Driving lifelong involvement – Foster a sporting environment that enables positive lifelong involvement in sport.
3. Activating places and spaces – Creating, improving, activating and better managing places and spaces to ensure everyone can have safe and enjoyable sporting experiences.
4. Building connections – Creating a connected and collaborative sport ecosystem that supports all organisations to provide quality sporting experiences.
5. Equitable access – Prioritising equity and choice to ensure all Australians can access sport.
6. Transforming culture – Transforming the culture of sport in Australia to create an environment where everyone can access safe, inclusive, welcoming and fun experiences.

### Under priority 1 (Empowering people and organisations) the narrative is:

*“To deliver on our participation ambitions, we need to empower our workforce (paid and unpaid) and sporting organisations. We need a capable workforce that fosters inclusivity, embraces diversity and helps bring out the best in people in safe and positive environments. This environment will encourage personal growth and development, supported by leaders who understand the need for sport to keep pace with societal changes. Secondly, we require sporting organisations with the capability to deliver safe and welcoming environments while balancing financial and environmental sustainability.”*





## Sport Volunteer Coalition Action Plan – 2022-2026

The Sport Volunteer Coalition, formed in early 2022, aims to recognise and raise awareness of the invaluable contributions of Australia’s 2.9 million sport volunteers. Volunteers are essential to local sporting clubs, benefiting participants, families, and communities. The Coalition’s Action Plan seeks to celebrate volunteers, attract more volunteers, and better support existing ones. Their vision is to enable diverse participation in volunteering, create inclusive opportunities, and ensure a positive and safe experience. Volunteering in sport fosters belonging, community connection, and improves physical and mental health. Given the challenges faced by community sport due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the focus on volunteering is crucial. The plan requires involvement from the entire sport sector, including national and state sporting organisations, government, and the broader industry. The goal is to reimagine the future of volunteering in sport, prioritising the role of volunteers in community sports.

The vision for the plan is *“People from all walks of life see and realise opportunities to contribute to individual, club and community goals in a way that suits them”*.

### Under this vision sits 4 focus areas:

1. **CELEBRATE** - Communicate the broad value of sport volunteering through powerful storytelling.
2. **EMPOWER** - Support and connect volunteers in sport.
3. **REIMAGINE** - Support the sector to re-design the sport volunteering experience.
4. **INNOVATE** - Drive and stimulate innovation in sport volunteering.



## ELEVATE 2042 - Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games Legacy Strategy

This Legacy Strategy emphasises inclusivity, collaboration, and alignment to drive change and ensure everyone is valued. The strategy, titled ‘Elevate 2042’, aims to create an inclusive, connected, and sustainable future by fostering engagement and equitable opportunities. It will be implemented iteratively through various plans over time. The document sets the vision, strategic framework, transformation themes, and desired outcomes for stakeholders’ contributions before, during, and after the Games. The strategy has 4 transformation themes:

1. Sport, health and inclusion.
2. Connecting people and places.
3. A better future for our environment.
4. Economy of the Future.

A key community priority identified under the first theme is:

“Leveraging the Games to enhance physical activity, sports participation, health, wellbeing and social inclusion was a fundamental legacy theme captured through the candidature and reinforced through community engagement. Enabling lifelong participation in sport, encouraging active lifestyles (including promoting active transport) and strengthening volunteer networks also emerged as priorities for the community.”





## National Strategy for Volunteering – 2023-2033

The National Strategy for Volunteering (2023–2033) is a ten-year blueprint for a reimagined future for volunteering in Australia. It is the first National Strategy for Volunteering in a decade, providing a strategic framework for enabling safe, supported, and sustainable volunteering. The purpose of the National Strategy for Volunteering is to guide the actions needed to achieve a better future for volunteering. It sets out the desired outcomes for volunteering in Australia over the next ten years. It provides a clear and compelling case, underpinned by robust data and evidence, for targeted and sufficient investment in volunteering and celebration of the role it plays in creating thriving communities. The National Strategy for Volunteering identifies an ambitious yet achievable future state for volunteering where individual and collective potential is harnessed for the common good.

The National Strategy for Volunteering includes the following:

1. A vision for volunteering to be achieved over the National Strategy for Volunteering’s ten-year timeframe.
2. Three focus areas, which include the aims of the National Strategy for Volunteering.
3. Eleven strategic objectives, which detail the work required to achieve the vision and aims.
4. A timeline for phased implementation

## Volunteering Queensland – State of Volunteering in Queensland 2024

This comprehensive report offers a timely overview of the State of Volunteering in Queensland in 2024. It serves as an invaluable resource for policy and decision makers, community leaders, volunteer managers, volunteer involving organisations and engaged citizens and groups with an interest in volunteering alike. Ultimately, this report aims to be a catalyst for informed policy and decision-making and action.



## HumanAbility Workforce Plan (In progress)

The development of a national workforce plan is the strategic centrepiece of HumanAbility’s remit. The key objectives of a Workforce Plan are to understand current, emerging and future key workforce challenges and opportunities, including skills gaps and shortages. It will inform the work we do to map career pathways across education sectors, the development of vocational education and training (VET) products, the support of collaboration between industry and training providers to improve training and assessment practice, and act as a source of intelligence on key issues affecting our industries.



## Queensland Workforce Strategy 2022-2032 – Good People Good Jobs

Queensland’s robust economy has led to more job openings than there are people to fill them. To address this, the Queensland Workforce Strategy 2022-2032 aims to connect, educate, and attract the necessary talent to meet this unprecedented demand.

Three pillars direct the Strategy to:

1. Connect industry, community and government to more Queenslanders.
2. Educate the workforce through upskilling and reskilling.
3. Attract and retain a skilled workforce.

The Strategy is underpinned by five focus areas and the first of three multi-year action plans:

1. Workforce Participation
2. Local Solutions
3. School-to-Work Transitions
4. Workforce Attraction and Retention
5. Skilling Queenslanders Now and Into the Future

## Queensland Skills Strategy 2024-2028 – Good Jobs, Great Training

The Queensland Skills Strategy is Queensland’s five-year plan to further strengthen the state’s training system to deliver skills needed to power our economy and provide access to good jobs with better pay for Queenslanders. The strategy is also Queensland’s roadmap to deliver on the National Skills Agreement, unlocking billions of dollars in areas of national priority, and is a key action under the Good People. Good jobs: Queensland Workforce Strategy 2022–2032.

The actions of the strategy are focused on 5 key actions:

1. Get more Queenslanders into highly skilled jobs quicker.
2. Support Queenslanders to access the lifelong benefits of training for good, highly skilled jobs.
3. Deliver training across Queensland and skills for local economies by putting TAFE at the heart of the training system.
4. Build on the strengths of our world-class training system by working with partners, promoting opportunities offered by training and standing up for Queenslanders.
5. Focus on economic priorities, local needs and student outcomes so our training system delivers for Queensland.

Key to these actions is the “skills pathway for Queenslanders” which transitions through:

- Career Ready – Skills and support to choose a career and get your first job.
- Career Start – Skills and support to start your career.
- Career Boost – Skills to take your next career to the next level.

The consultation and actions of this strategy align with the feedback and needs of the Active Industry. One of the key elements of this strategy for the Active Industry is the publication of an annual Training Priorities Plan outlining how the Queensland Government is supporting skills across the state. It is vital that a similar annual action plan/review of the Active Industry Workforce Plan occurs.

# BEST PRACTICE – CASE STUDY

## **Institute for Urban Indigenous Health and Keiriana Dargin-Clark (Certificate II in Sport Coaching) – Equity Student of the Year Queensland Training Awards**

The IUIH Pathways Our Way Academy, known as POWA, supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to complete training or Traineeships in a variety of roles and qualifications. These include:

- In 2022-2023, we have had 42 school-based trainees, 27 non-school-based trainees and seven other community members undertake traineeships and work-readiness programs with IUIH.
- POWA works with schools to ensure Aboriginal and/Torres Strait Islander learners in years 10-12 are aware, and opt to apply for a training pathway in allied health, with the opportunity to join our team in a vast range of roles with IUIH across the allied health sector.
- IUIH continues to work with RTOs and Apprenticeship Centres, providing real time on-the-job workplace, practical hands-on experience, whilst studying and supporting the trainee with entry-level qualifications and further employment opportunities.

IUIH is supported through partnerships with universities, Registered Training Organisations, and The Department of Employment, Small Business and Training (DESBT).

Keiriana Dargin-Clark excelled in her studies thanks to the support of her family, school and the team at the IUIH. With a busy schedule as a student, school leader and extracurricular activities, including representative sportsperson, she has worked hard to succeed. Working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including Elders, in her school-based traineeship has built up her understanding, community network and future career options.



## **Paving the Way - the First Nations Training Strategy**

This strategy highlights the invaluable contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to Queensland's communities, emphasising their unique skills, knowledge, and culture.

“Paving the Way” is introduced as a plan to support Indigenous skills development and respond to local employment needs. It includes initiatives such as Indigenous-led training, tailored skills pathways, and cultural competency training. The focus areas for action are:

1. Indigenous-led training and workforce solutions.
2. Skills and training pathway opportunities and support that meet local workforce needs.
3. Cultural awareness skills and competency.

## **Diversity Council Australia – The case for inclusion @ work**

Diversity Council Australia (DCA) is the independent not-for-profit peak body leading diversity and inclusion in the workplace. They provide unique research, events and programs, curated resources and expert advice across all diversity dimensions to a community of member organisations.

DCA developed the first Inclusion@Work Index survey in 2017 to map the state of inclusion in the Australian workforce. Since then, they have repeated the survey biennially to track workplace inclusion over time. The case for inclusion @ work 2023-2024 demonstrates inclusion is much more than a “feel good” exercise – it creates a better work environment that boosts employee wellbeing, fuels performance and minimises risk. At this point in time there are no overarching Diversity Strategies for the Active Industry.

## **Pride in Sport**

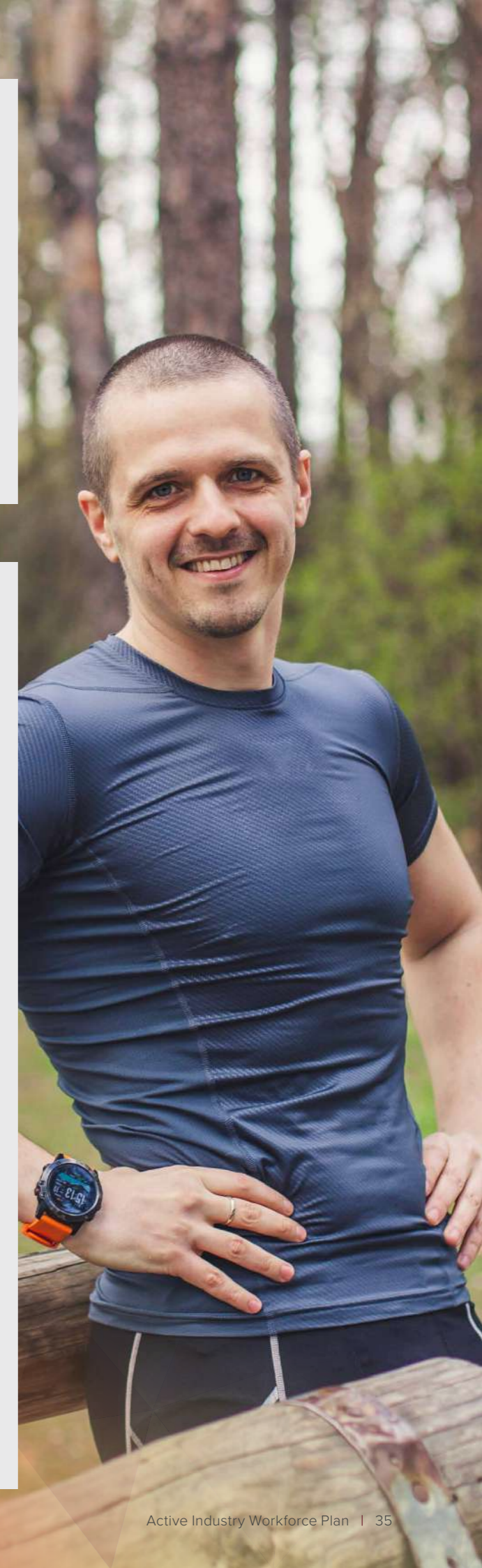
Pride in Sport is a national not-for-profit sporting inclusion program specifically designed to assist sporting organisations of all levels with the inclusion of employees, athletes, coaches, volunteers and spectators with diverse sexualities and genders. The world-first Pride in Sport Index (PSI) benchmarks and assesses the inclusion of LGBTQ people across all sporting contexts. Membership offers access to the PSI Playbook and other how to guides. The ‘PSI National Survey’ is facilitated by Pride in Sport and provides sport organisations/clubs the opportunity to collect valuable anonymous insights on LGBTQ inclusion.

## **National Aquatic Industry Workforce Report 2023**

This report provides a comparison to the 2019 workforce profile, as well as data on the direct effects of the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns on individual workers and the workforce generally. The findings demonstrate that many of the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns are still having ripple effects today, particularly the loss of skilled staff and ongoing staff shortages.

### **Key recommendations include:**

1. Encourage career pathways and support for workers to develop into higher roles in industry, particularly women.
2. Recognise that workers in the aquatic industry want not just a job, but a lifestyle, connection and meaningful engagement.
3. Develop incentives and strategies that attract and retain quality staff.
4. Foster a workforce that is representative of the local community by actively seeking workers from diverse and underrepresented backgrounds.
5. Investigate, review and develop a nationally consistent workforce framework which captures and standardises approaches to professional development, reaccreditation and career development pathways.

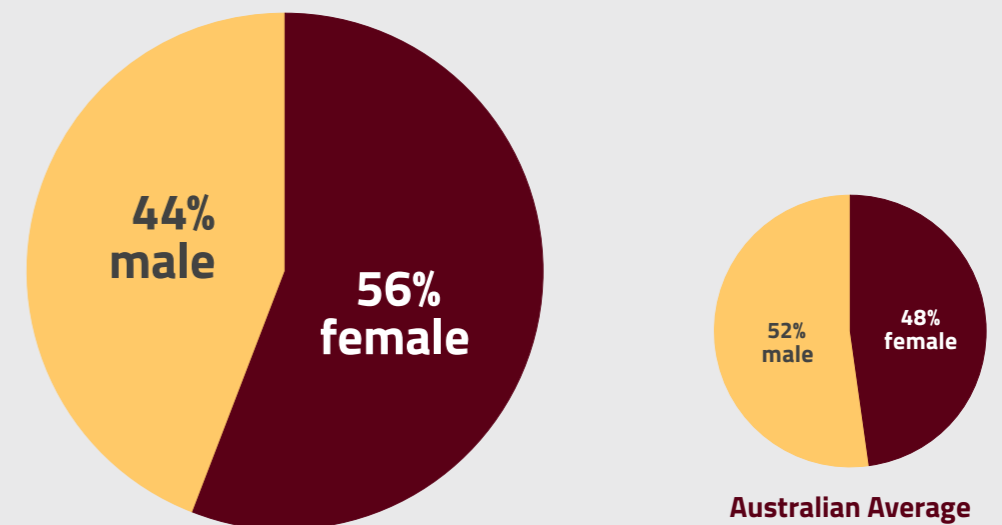


# KEY FINDINGS OF INDUSTRY SURVEYS AND WORKSHOPS

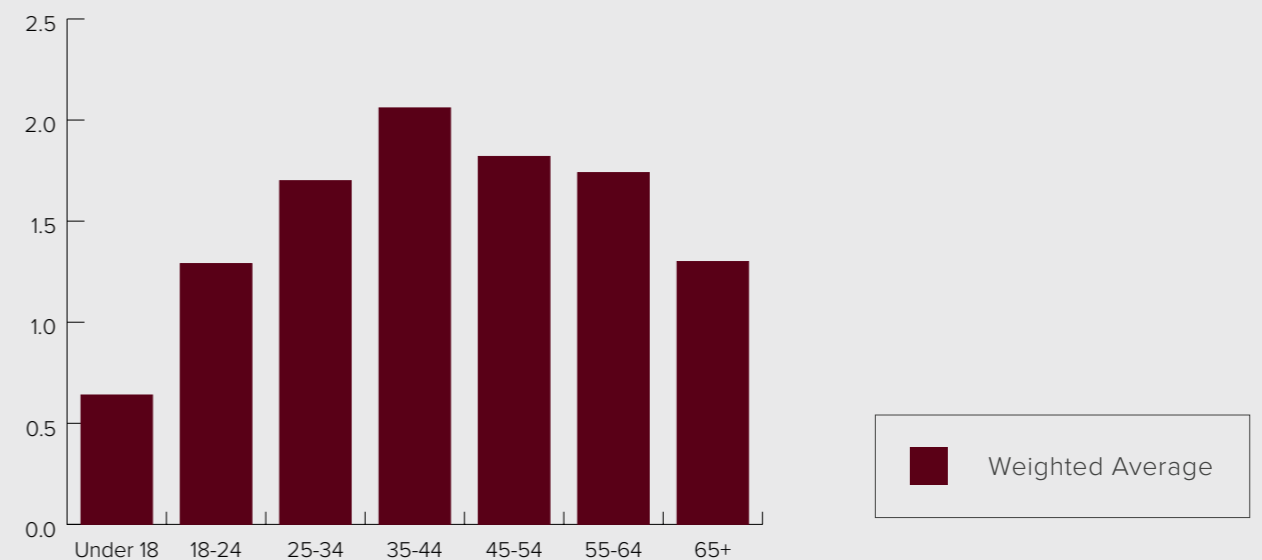


## ABOUT THE ACTIVE INDUSTRY

For your organisation, what is the diversity breakdown of your current workers? (As a %)

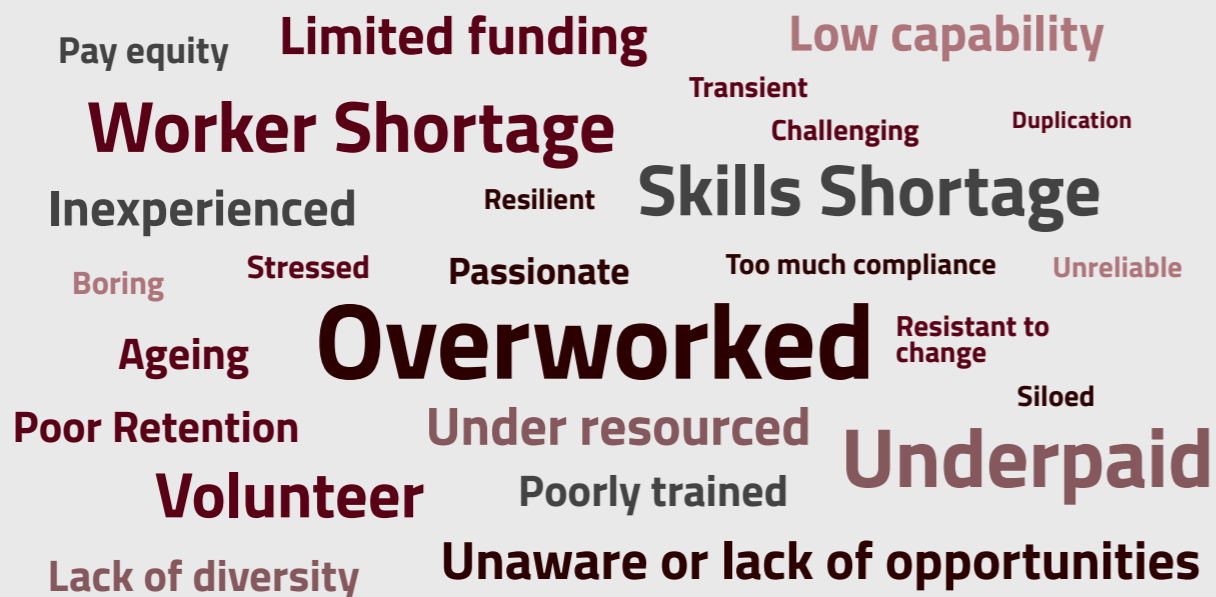


For your organisation, what is the age breakdown of your current workers? (As a %)



# ABOUT THE WORKFORCE

## What words represent the issues for your current Active Industry workforce?



## What words represent opportunities for your future Active Industry workforce?



## For your organisation, what is the current breakdown of workers in the below roles? (As a %)

Note: a skilled worker has specialised skills, training, knowledge, and acquired ability to perform the duties of their employment.

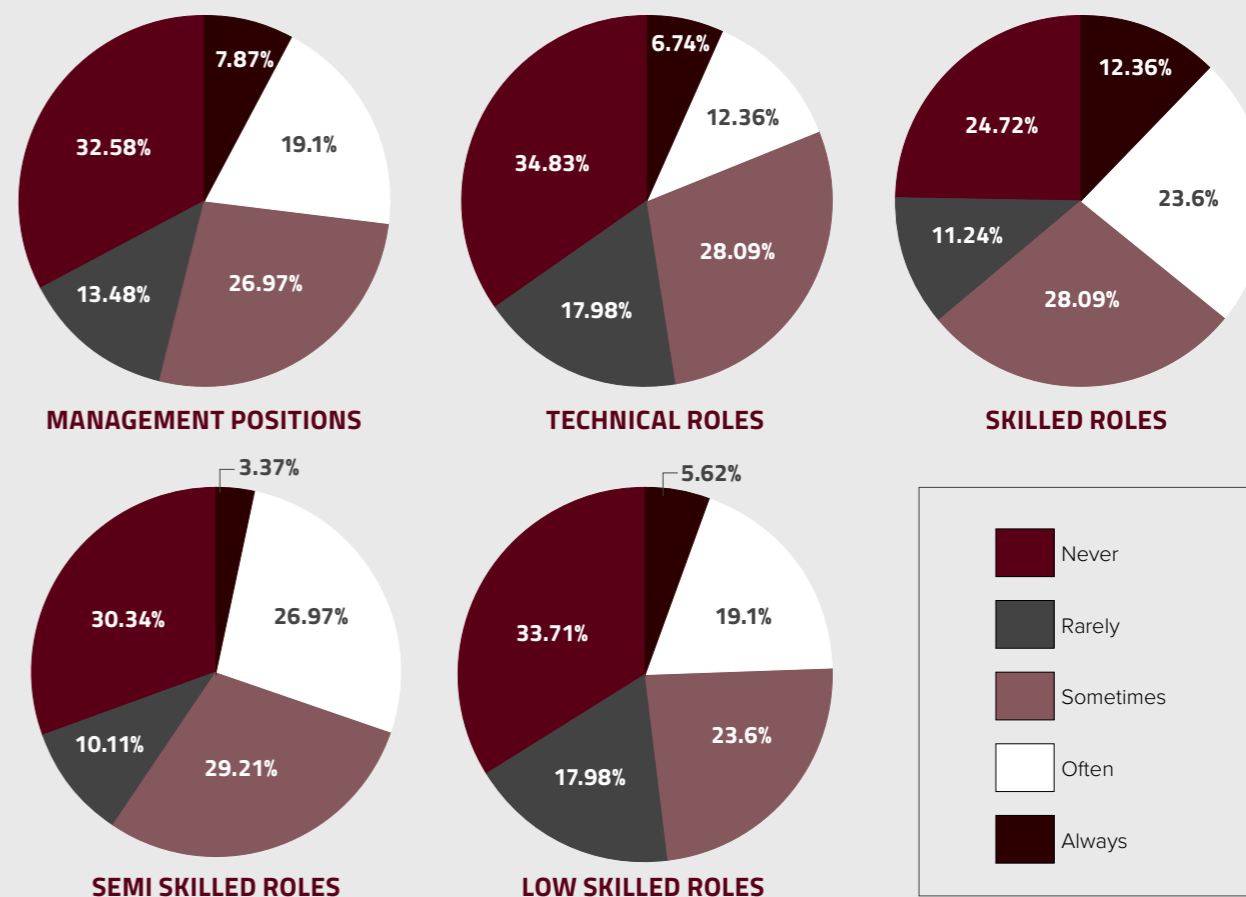


**<50%** Skilled Workers + Skilled Volunteers

**75%** Organisations had ZERO low skilled workers (other than low skilled volunteers)

## Considering each of the following labour roles, to what extent has your organisation experienced shortages over the last 12 months?

Note: Match the level of training required for the role ie: coaches would be skilled roles as they require accreditation.

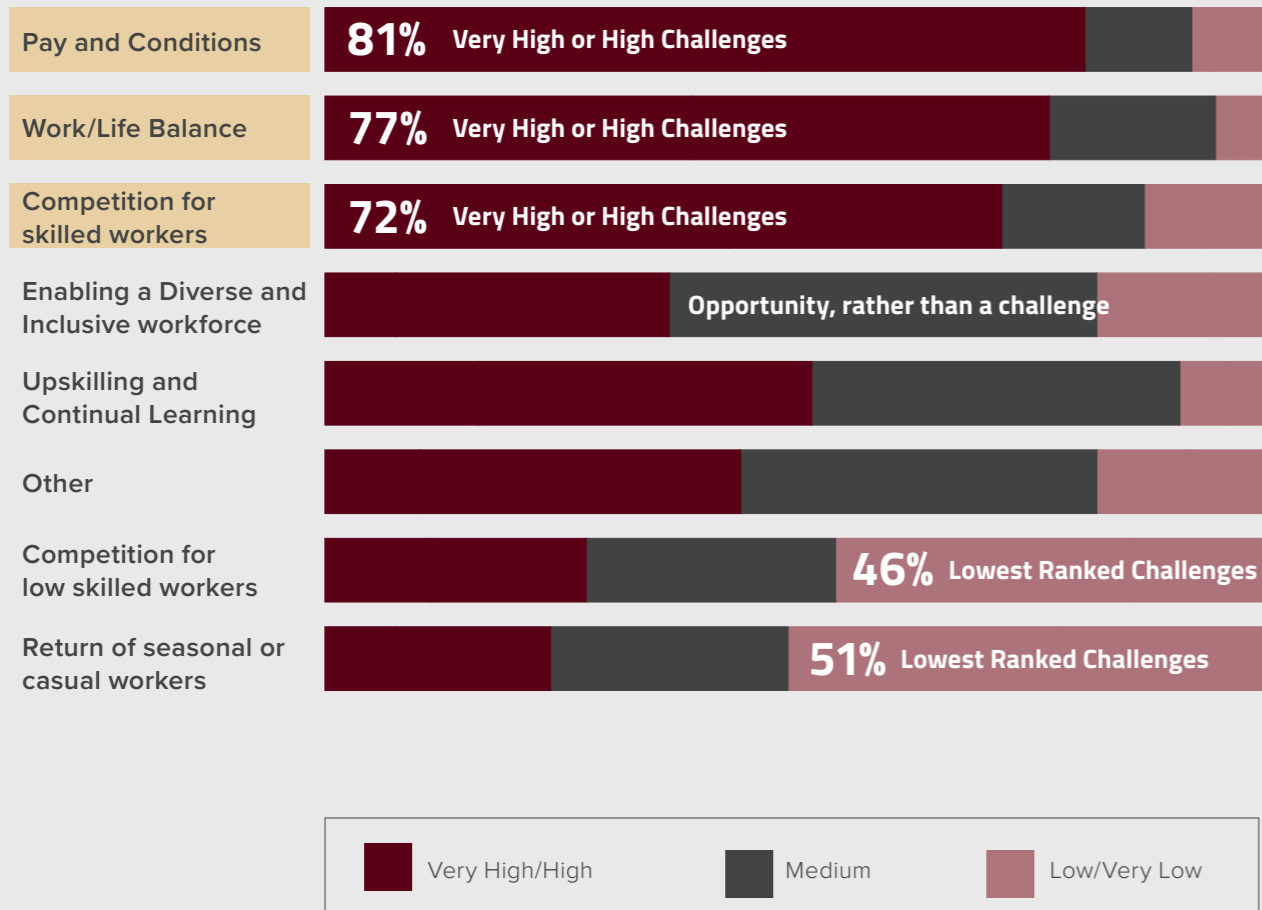


On a scale of 1 to 5 stars, how clear and understood are career pathways, in the Active Industry, for students or job seekers?



**2.56**  
Weighted Average

What will be the challenges, with reference to the Active Industry workforce, over the next 5 years?



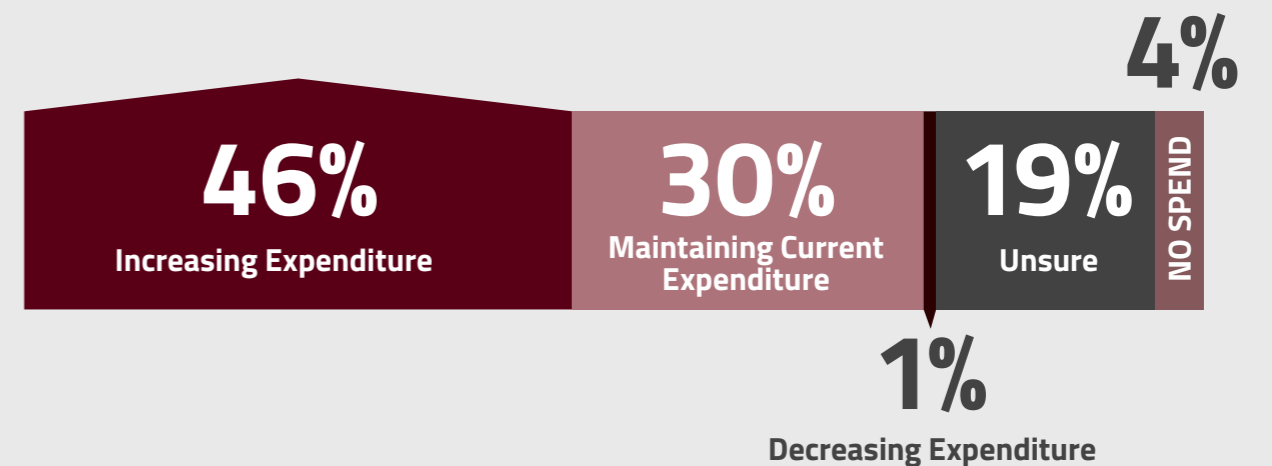
# ABOUT THE

# TRAINING NEEDS

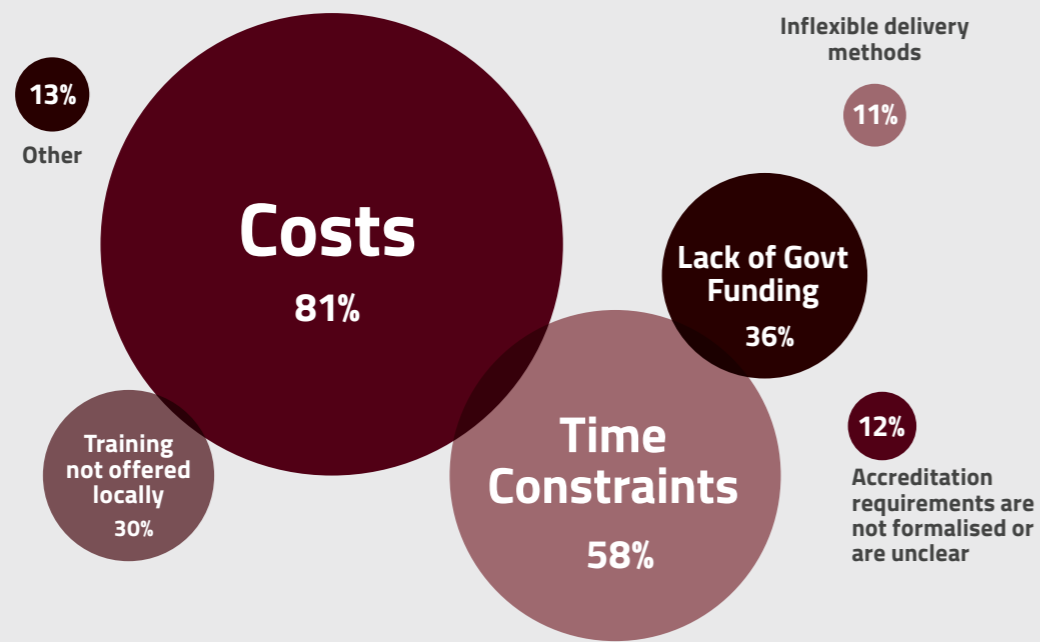
What skills will be needed by your future workforce?



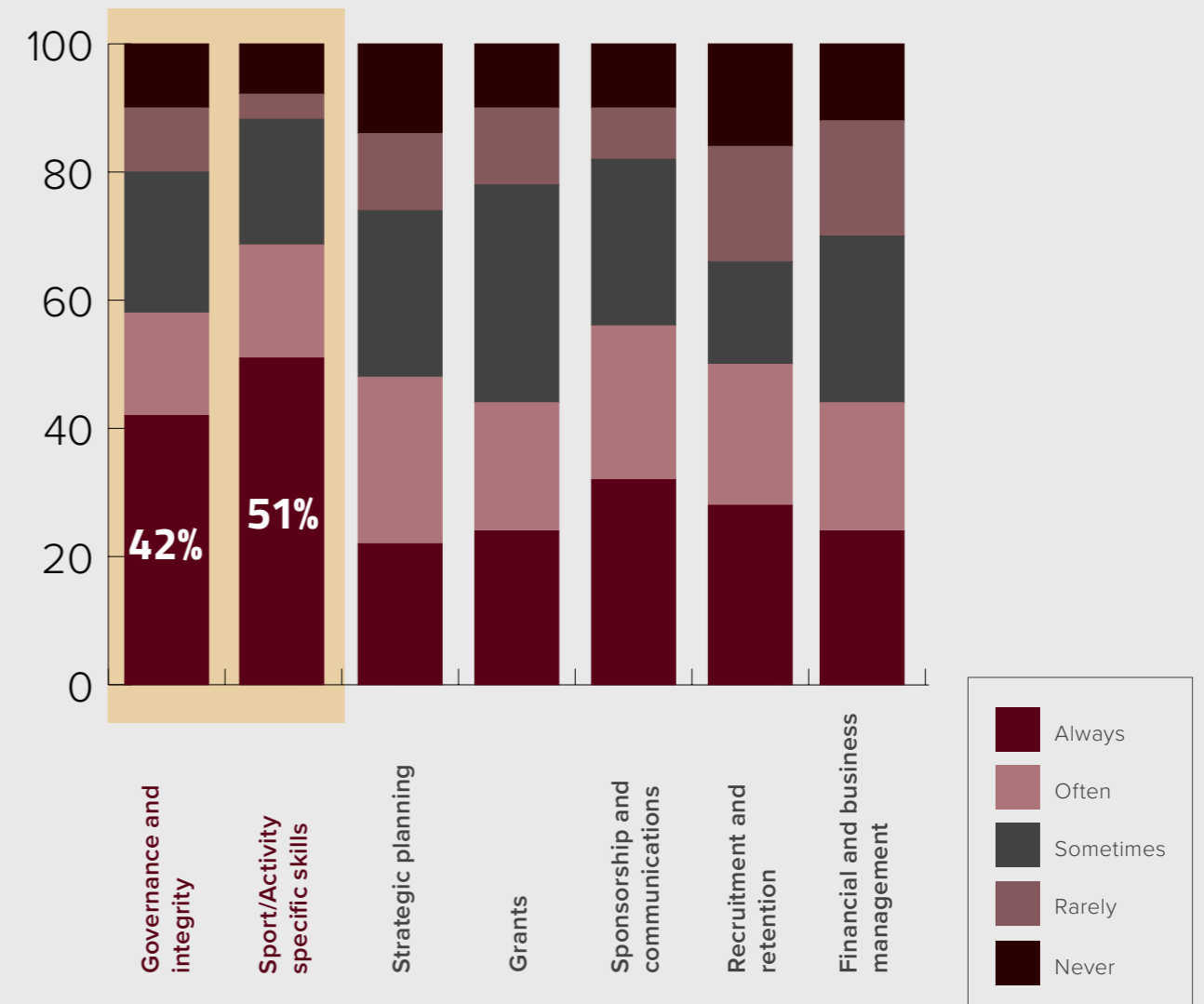
What are your current intentions for expenditure on education and training over the next 2 years?



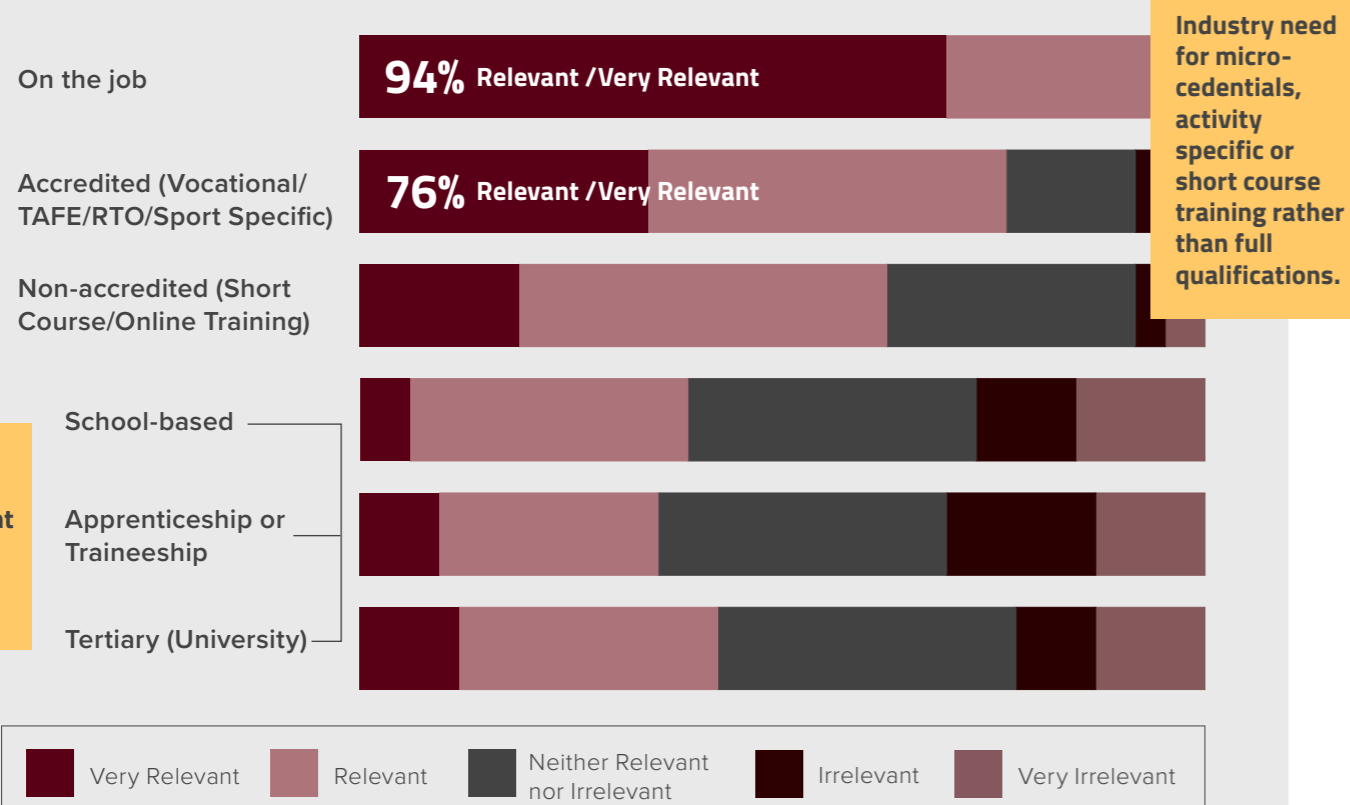
## What are the barriers to your organisation accessing training for your workers? (Tick all that apply)



## In what areas do your volunteers need training?



## Thinking about your organisation, to what extent are the following types of education and training relevant for addressing workforce training and skills development?



# KEY FINDINGS OF INDUSTRY CONSULTATIONS AND ACTIONS

## 1. Collaboration, partnerships and coordination

Working together was a very strong theme that emerged from the engagement sessions. This included working together and collaborating within sectors (e.g. sports working with other sports), across sectors (e.g. fitness working with sport and recreation clubs) and across industries (e.g. Active Industry working better with health, tourism, education etc.)

Collaboration starts at the highest level and filters down, all the way to grassroots. The Queensland Government - Department of Tourism and Sport has already started this with the Accelerate 2022-2025 strategy where the number 1 commitment is to “Collaborate with the active industry to get more Queenslanders moving”. The Active KIT grants program, in partnership with Health and Wellbeing Queensland, is one example of intergovernmental collaboration. There is a real opportunity to grow this partnership from just a grant program to a true Active Industry hub where Knowledge, Innovation and Technology is shared and supported. The Queensland AI Hub is just one example of innovative structure that is supporting collaboration between industry, government, and research.

If there could be more interdepartmental collaboration and coordination, then there could be the opportunity for the Active Industry to be included in, or leverage off, partner industry workforce programs, such as Tourism. Many workers work across the two industries, from outdoor guides to event organisation to lifeguards and surfing instructors, Tourism and the Active Industry work hand in hand. It is vital that the departmental strategies, programs, and staff do the same, especially in the workforce development space. The component parts of DTS and DESBT need to work more closely and consider how the Active Industry is best supported with workforce development programs that encompass both Tourism and the Active Industry and for the Active Industry to ensure data is captured to best guide what is required.

At an industry level, there was also a key theme that in order to assist collaborations and partnerships, there needs to be a coordination point – whether that be a person, organisation, or group of industry stakeholders, there was a very strong need for a coordination role to bring industry together.

This could also include bringing information together to a central point or hub, where small businesses and employers can access information about business support, grants, subsidies programs etc. There is a plethora of information available to

small businesses and employers from numerous sources. It can be daunting to an organisation to know where to start and understand the role of all the government bodies and other players when navigating various aspects of running a small business or not for profit grassroots club.

**Collaboration ideas were identified at many levels within the industry with the following as examples:**

- Grassroots sport and recreation clubs collaborating to share resources for functions that are not “game day” related – e.g. bookkeeping, committee meetings, policy and procedures, blue card requirements etc.
- Collaboration between sports (particularly at the regional level) for the delivery of coaching, officiating, governance, and committee training and programs.
- Industry internship programs between the tertiary institutions and employers and businesses.
- Coordination role that links school VET participants/graduates with employers and businesses – through traineeships, school-based traineeships, VET in School and work experience arrangements.

## Actions

- 1.1 Develop and/or enhance whole of industry projects to increase traineeships and other employment based pathways e.g. internships, connecting students, schools and training providers (VET and Higher Education). This includes:
  - Utilising existing programs such as DESBT School to Work Transitions, TAFE Academy of Sport etc.
  - Connecting up current successful programs and graduates to organisations looking to recruit.
- 1.2 Collaborate across sport sectors to develop a resource shared service pilot for a cluster of local/regional clubs.
- 1.3 Build connections between government, industry employers, training providers, VET stakeholders, other not for profit sectors such as indigenous and multicultural organisations to identify, develop and promote workforce opportunities within the Active Industry.

## 2. Career Pathways

Career pathways provide a structured framework for employees to advance in their careers, develop new skills and achieve their professional goals.

A consistent theme in the engagement workshops and interviews was the need for clear career pathways for jobs and careers in the Active Industry. This would provide clarity and direction for individuals on how to progress from entry level positions to high level roles and management and executive roles. It would demonstrate that there are long-term, life-long learning opportunities in the industry. Clear career pathways would also benefit employers and organisations in their workforce and succession planning that could include future skills requirements, succession pipelines and talent gaps. This is particularly important in an industry, such as the Active Industry, that includes large numbers of volunteers and casual employees which will be included in the career pathways map.

Industries that offer clear career progression opportunities enhance their reputation as industries of choice, thereby increasing their competitiveness and attraction to new entrants to want to work in the industry.

There are currently high levels of school delivery in fitness, sport and recreation skill sets and qualifications and it would be of great benefit to retain them in the workforce. HumanAbility, the national Jobs and Skills Council (JSC) for sport and recreation, also highlights that there are opportunities for industry employers to work with schools and VETiS providers to deliver training that complements local industry shortages in the sport and recreation sector. Graduates from these programs could fill vacancies in sport coaching for junior levels, lifeguards and swim teachers, group fitness providers and outdoor leaders. Pathways to health and tourism may also be relevant and should be explored to support labour shortages experienced in these sectors, particularly allied health (Workforce Report, HumanAbility, 2023).

Active Queenslanders Industry Alliance attends many Career Expos throughout the year to promote the careers and jobs in the industry. Most recently, AQIA has also launched the Active Careers online hub that provides a central point of information about careers for students, parents and school VET coordinators.



### Actions

- 2.1 Collaborate with the Active Industry and education providers to clarify and define career pathways in the Active Industry, including a job mapping process. This includes clearly identifying pathways for volunteers to move into higher level volunteer roles – such as management or coordination roles or to paid positions.
- 2.2 Active Industry to participate in ways and opportunities to promote the Active Industry as the career choice to school leavers – e.g. Career Expos etc.
- 2.3 Investigate a potential DESBT “Gateway Schools” project for the Active Industry.

## 3. Workforce attraction and retention

The Active Industry workforce is dominated by small businesses – i.e. less than 5 employees, with the industry requiring largely permanent skilled workers followed by skilled volunteers.

The majority of organisations who participated in the workforce survey indicated they intended to increase their workforce over the next 5-10 years.

Currently the Active Industry workforce is experiencing a number of issues across the sectors:

- **Attraction and retention issues** – industry reports challenges in attracting and retaining workers to the industry. Responses to job vacancies are low and often not appropriately qualified. Solutions to addressing vacancies is to utilise management and other staff to deliver programs which is not ideal.
- **Workforce shortages** – specific occupational shortages are reported for fitness professionals, sport coaches, gymnastics coaches, swim teachers and instructors, outdoor recreation leaders.
- **Wages and employment conditions compared to other industries** – wages are relatively low compared to other industries and conditions include working after hours, weekends, and 24/7 when leading camps etc.
- **Casual and seasonal nature of the work**
- **Impacts of COVID** – many workers left the industry and have not returned.
- **Loss of volunteers** – also left during COVID and have been slow to return.
- **Cost of living impacts** – fitness, sport and recreation activities often comes from discretionary spending in household budgets and will be cut when budgets are tightened.

Another idea that has been raised is for our organisations to strengthen their employee value proposition (not just higher wages), outsource non-core activities to external providers and pay a premium to attract professionals with necessary skills.



### Actions

- 3.1 Work with industry to:
  - Develop a narrative for promotion about the Active Industry, benefits to the economy and regions, volunteer and employment opportunities.
  - Develop career and employment pathways for existing workers
  - Develop meaningful pathways for volunteers particularly in the lead up to 2032 Brisbane Olympic and Paralympic event
  - Develop projects under the Queensland Government Workforce Connect Fund
- 3.2 Advocate to the Queensland Government for a dedicated Active Industry Workforce Advisor instead of the current shared arrangement with the Australian Computer Society.
- 3.3 Assist small businesses and organisations with workforce planning through connection with a Queensland Government Industry Workforce Advisor.
- 3.4 Work with the ASC Sport Volunteer Coalition and Volunteering Queensland on recruitment and attraction strategies for volunteers





## 4. Growing the workforce through diversity and local labour pools

The Active Industry is a people business. We deliver programs and services face to face to people and families in local communities which provides them a sense of community connection and belonging.

Industry consultations reveal that improving the diversity profile is one way of attracting new workers to the industry. We need to foster a diverse and inclusive workforce that reflects the communities we work in. Diverse perspectives drive innovation and creativity, thereby benefitting businesses and organisations.

Growing the workforce through diversity involves intentionally cultivating a more varied and inclusive workplace in terms of demographics, backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences.

The aim is to create a workforce that reflects the community. This includes looking at the demographics of a community and implementing recruitment strategies that are appropriate to attract a diverse workforce.

It is also felt that more could be done to grow the workforce locally by providing local, flexible training and skilling options, rather than trying to attract new workers to a local area. Cost and flexibility are notably the biggest barriers to accessing training in regional, rural and remote areas.

### Actions

- 4.1 Work with regions to develop projects that assist them to grow and train their own Active Industry workforces. This includes partnering with regional stakeholders (including local councils) to deliver local skills and training initiatives linked to workforce opportunities in the local Active Industry.
- 4.2 Aim to increase diversity in the workforce by developing innovative and inclusive training pathways to support the entry of under-represented groups such as migrant and First Nations communities
- 4.3 Monitor national and state skilled migration policies and advocate to create opportunities for Active Industry occupations

## 5. Skills and Training Priorities

Over half of Active Industry organisations intend to increase expenditure on education and training over the next two years. This includes training in Sport or Activity specific accredited training by a National or State Sport Organisation. Other priorities are seminars and conferences followed by accredited training in skills sets or units of competency. The need for full qualification was not a high priority. Industry also valued non-accredited short courses and micro credentials.

### Industry consultations indicated the following training priorities:

- Leadership and management
- Soft skills – communication, interpersonal skills, customer service, conflict resolution
- Governance
- Financial management
- Business management
- Diversity awareness
- Cultural competency
- IT skills

There is also a reported decline in training numbers post COVID.

Industry also places a high value on transferable skills of volunteers – to either higher positions, or paid employment opportunities.

### Actions

- 5.1 Work with the Active Industry to identify projects that meet conditions and eligibility of the Qld Government Microcredentials program to provide training for non-accredited training to meet skills gaps.
- 5.2 Continue to advocate for funding for qualifications, higher level skills, traineeships etc to meet the industry's skilling requirements through the Qld Governments VET Investment Plan (as part of the Industry Skills Advisor role).
- 5.3 Encourage employers, businesses and training providers to collaborate to identify and improve access to skilling priorities that meets industry needs as part of the training package review process facilitated by HumanAbility.
- 5.4 Work with the ASC Sport Volunteer Coalition regarding training resources available to volunteers.
- 5.5 Work with Volunteering Queensland, Active Industry Stakeholders and Government stakeholders on viability of volunteering passport and intersection with a National Skills Passport.



## 6. Embracing Technology

As with most industries, technology continues to impact and influence on the delivery of programs and services. **Some recent examples of technology influences include:**

- Fitness tracking devices
- Smart phone apps offering a plethora of information on workout programs, goal tracking etc
- Virtual reality offering immersive experiences
- Online coaching and training platforms creating virtual communities for athletes to train and compete with each other e.g. Strava
- Data analytics and Sport Science for athlete optimisation



Overall, the impact of technology on the workforce in the Active Industry is multifaceted, ranging from efficiency improvements to challenges such as potential loss of human interaction and concerns about information retention. There is industry agreement that technology will continue to play a significant role in shaping how the Active Industry delivers its programs and services.

The tremendous growth of E-sports in Australia can be attributed to a combination of factors, including increased mainstream acceptance, investment in infrastructure, support from government and educational institutions, and active community engagement.

The E-sport landscape should be recognised and monitored for ways where it can benefit not only the sport sector but also the Active Industry more broadly.

Quote from Emily Rosemond QUT E-Sports – highlights the:

*“importance of leaning in and learning as technology continues to evolve. With a focus on innovation through education, particularly the transferability of STEM related fields in sports-tech, as well as health and wellbeing, equity and access, virtual sports emerged as a way to develop concentrated and adaptable efforts globally.*

*As we look forward to the events of 2032, the commitment and investment of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in virtual and esports highlights the evolving requirements of the traditional Olympic and Paralympic sports ecosystem. The adoption of multiple platforms, hardware and programs necessitates a universal uplift in digital literacy beyond the participants and across all stakeholders in the smaller sports ecosystem. From organisers, to coaches, referees & fans, the transformation needed is critical to staying relevant and competing with the rise and change of generational interests. It sparks opportunities for collaborative global exchanges and shared knowledge in an attempt to bolster health, education, and inclusivity in sport.”*

### Actions

- 6.1 Work with the Tertiary sector to develop strategies on how to engage sport and recreation organisations into the e-sport conversation and explore potential projects.
- 6.2 Connect with Sport Technology leaders such as ASTN to leverage opportunities to work with the Queensland Active Industry on utilising future technology to enhance the way we work and perform our jobs.

# APPENDIX 1

## Active Workforce Plan Engagement Summary

Survey Monkey - 167 responses

### Webinar/Mentimeter workshop attendees – 134 participants

**Sports House** – 3 participants

**North Coast** and South Coast – 22 participants

**South West** – 10 participants

**Central and Northern** - 20 participants

**Far North** – 1 participant

**Sport** – 34 participants

**Fitness, exercise and movement** – 15 participants

**Aquatics** – 16 participants

**RTO** – 13 participants

### Informative Conversations

Jane Seawright – TAFE and Queensland Racing

Ana Croger – Diving Australia and Australian Sports Commission

Lee Bretzel – Vice Chair, AusCycle

Juantita Maiden – Mullens Lawyers

Georgie Parks – Georgie Parks Swim Schools

Shantel Netzler – Squash QLD

Anica Bussell – Water polo

Chris Wagland – QLD Gov, Dept of Sport & Recreation - Gold Coast

Sports and Recreation Regional – Officers

### Interviews - 31 participants

1. Steven Harrigan – Online PT
2. Marcello Valente Ramos – Outdoors Education Manager and Teacher
3. Emily Rosemount – QUT
4. Luke Niverson-Smith – Movement Centre Owner, NDIS knowledge
5. Tim Klar – Qsport
6. Phil Reeves – School Sport Australia
7. Dr Lisa Gowthorp – Bond University, UniSport, Winter Sport, Paddle Australia
8. Meghan Jarvis – Active and Healthy Alliance
9. Ayden Shaw – Disability Sport Australia
10. Gary O'Donnell – Volleyball Queensland
11. Graham Pringle – Youth Outdoor Flourish
12. Rafe Griffin – ACHPER
13. Ben Manion – CEO, Gold Coast Events
14. Aaron Allsop – Solomon Islands Institute of Sport
15. Jon Sheppard – Playbk Sports
16. Chris Higgins – OpenTrax
17. Rob Veale – V- Insurance
18. Victoria Turns – Stadiums Queensland
19. Micheal Sorrenson – Bowls Australia
20. Murray Button – Gold Coast City Council
21. Dom Courtney – Outdoors Queensland
22. Maia Tua Davidson – Welcome Clubs
23. Anthony Miles – AUSActive
24. Mark Squires – Outdoors Queensland
25. Shane Coppin – PMSA, Schools/Lake Moggerah
26. Joel Savage – Adventurethon (Townsville, Charters Towers)
27. Lisa Rolls – Lifesaving (Nth Queensland)
28. Tatiana Reuillier – Arcadia Women Adventures
29. Nathan Luu Nguyen – Futurist
30. Jason Sugars, Jesse O'Hara, Nathan Gill – TAFE Sports Academy
31. Kirsty Jarrett – Broncos Sport Business

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(<https://www.ibisworld.com/arts-entertainment-recreation-sector/>)

### IHRSA - Economic Health & Societal Wellbeing: Quantifying the Impact of the Global Health & Fitness Sector – Australia June, 2022

(<https://www.healthandfitness.org/publications/economic-health-societal-well-being-quantifying-the-impact-of-the-global-health-fitness-sector/>)

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