



SUNSHINE COAST REGIONAL JOBS COMMITTEE

SUNSHINE COAST
EDUCATION
SKILLS FORUM
RESULTS

5 February 2026, 7:30am to 9:30am

Cartwrights Restaurant, TAFE Mooloolaba, Mountain Creek

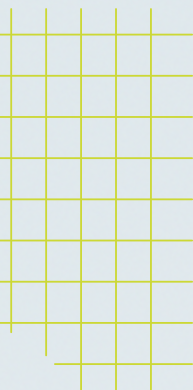




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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Knowledge Skills Forum brought together participants representing schools, VET, tertiary institutions, government and employment support organisations to explore workforce challenges across the education and training sector. Discussions centered around identifying barriers to workforce participation, emerging skills gaps and ideas to strengthen the workforce pipeline.

A consistent theme across the discussions was that workforce challenges in the education and training sector are driven less by a lack of technical capability and more by systemic issues related to working conditions, workload and industry perception. Participants highlighted that conditions and pay remain the most significant barriers to attracting and retaining educators. High workloads, compliance requirements and administrative pressures are contributing to burnout, while a lack of professional support and recognition is driving experienced educators to leave the sector.

Participants also identified a number of structural barriers affecting workforce entry and progression. At the entry level, limited placement opportunities, unpaid placements and long training pathways are discouraging potential new entrants. For mid-career professionals, a lack of clear career progression, leadership development and mentoring opportunities is contributing to workforce attrition. At the executive level, system rigidity, limited succession planning and unrealistic performance expectations are creating challenges for leaders attempting to drive meaningful change within the sector.

In terms of skills, industry representatives emphasised that many of the most critical gaps relate to human-centred capabilities rather than technical knowledge. Key areas identified included communication and conflict resolution, resilience and confidence, cultural awareness and social intelligence, behavioural management and trauma-informed practice. Participants also noted the increasing importance of digital capability and the ability to use emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence effectively and ethically.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The forum also highlighted several capabilities that are often undervalued but essential for success in education and training. These include empathy, industry currency, critical thinking, innovation and real-world experience. Participants emphasised that these qualities are fundamental to engaging learners and supporting diverse student cohorts.

Participants identified several opportunities to strengthen the workforce pipeline and improve workforce sustainability. These included advocating for paid placements and greater incentives for employers to support training placements, expanding traineeships and alternative work–study pathways, improving recognition of overseas qualifications and migrant talent, and reducing compliance and administrative burdens placed on educators. There was also strong support for promoting career opportunities within education more effectively and increasing collaboration between industry, training providers and government.

Overall, the forum highlighted that workforce challenges within the education and training sector are systemic rather than purely skills-based. Addressing issues related to working conditions, placement models, career pathways and professional support will be critical to attracting, developing and retaining a sustainable education workforce for the future.



Attendee Feedback

Identification

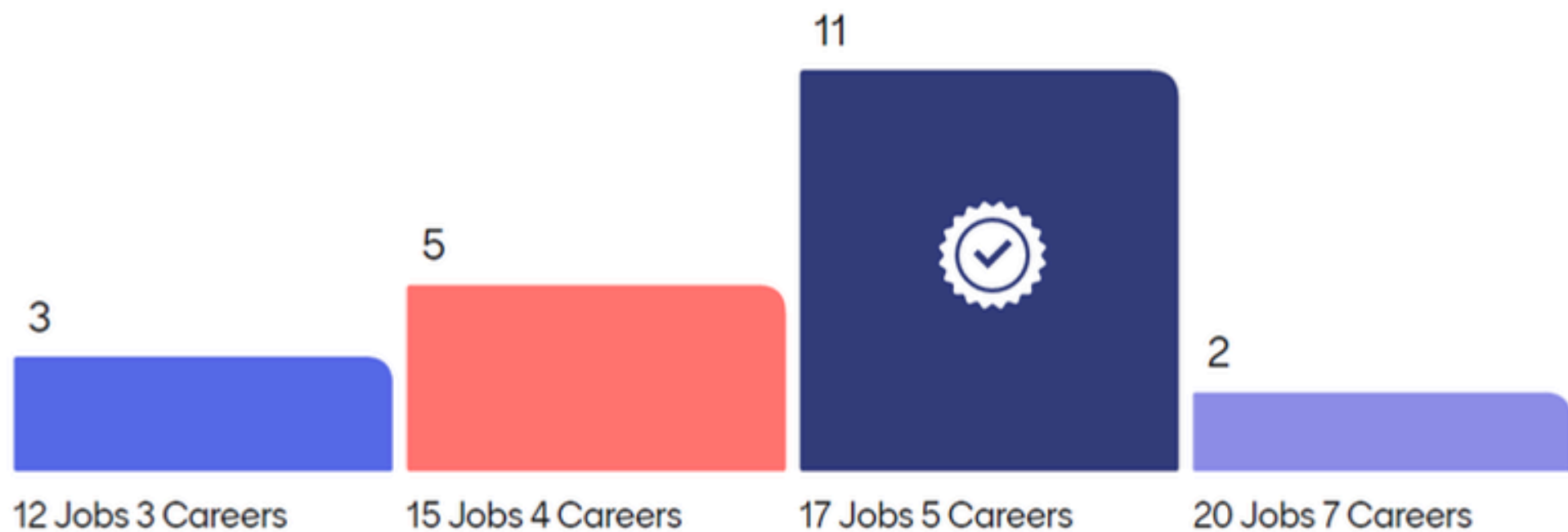
How would you identify yourself?



- 4 School Educator
- 9 VET Industry
- 1 Tertiary Industry
- 0 Childcare Worker
- 0 Industry Advocate
- 4 Government
- 3 Employment Support
- 0 Other

Jobs & Careers

Guess how many jobs and careers the average worker will now have over their worklife?



34
Registrations

What is the most undervalued skill in the Education & Training industry?



SKILLS THAT TRANSFER WELL INTO EDUCATION

TRANSFERRABLE SKILLS	SUITABLE SOURCE / SECTOR / WORKFORCE
Communication	Counselling / Psych / Social
Empathy - Human-Centric Approach	Community Services
Organisation / Time Management	Trades
Adaptability	Support Workers
Conflict Resolution	Parents
Cultural Awareness	Hospitality
Social Intelligence	Customer Service
Digital Skills	Community / Health Workers
Long-Term Planning	
Linear Learner Supports	

EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS & TRAINING

PATHWAYS & TRAINING THAT IS EFFECTIVE	PATHWAYS & TRAINING ISSUES
Permission to teach arrangements - where students can teach whilst completing their degree	Extra skills and jobs teachers are doing ie student administration
Funding to early childhood courses	Lack of placements / unpaid placements
Career expos	High compicance and low funding
Trade tasters	New child safeguarding laws
VR headsets and immersive experiences	Lack of support for educators
Skillsroad.com.au	Workloads not streamlined / Lack of systems and processes
	No right to disconnect
	Lack of traineeships
	Employers communicating what careers are available (future fit)
	Generation gap

What is the single biggest reason educators and trainers are leaving the industry?





Barriers to Workforce Participation

What is the single biggest barrier you see in attracting workers to the Education & Training industry?



BARRIERS TO WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION

ENTRY-LEVEL ROLES	MID MANAGEMENT ROLES	EXECUTIVE LEVEL ROLES
Lack of placements / employers	Lack of career advancement opportunities	Lack of succession planning
Maintaining engagement while training	No formal coaching	Burnout
Capacity to learn (LLN, digital literacy)	Recognition of prior learning (RPL)	Recognition of prior learning (RPL)
Unpaid placements	Burnout	Wages v workload
Unrealistic expectations	Workload pressures	Lack of choice of employers
Lack of support & peer-to-peer mentoring	Lack of support	Unrealistic KPIs
Lack of community respect	Emotional intelligence when promoted (no toolbox)	Movement of Principals into temp roles and culture disruption
Long term study		Systems trouble, Principals can't create change
Recognition of prior learning (RPL)		
Funding for independent individuals		



Skills Gaps

What skill is in demand in the Education & Training industry but you rarely find in staff/candidates?



SKILLS GAPS IN EDUCATION

CURRENT SKILLS GAPS		FUTURE SKILLS GAPS	
Using AI effectively & ethically	Attitude	Communication skills	Attitude
Less 'skill gaps' & more barriers to education	Behaviour management	Confidence	Behaviour management
Social intelligence	Trauma-informed care	Initiative	Trauma-informed care
Communication	Workload management	No work ethic	Workload management
Lack of understanding of cultural diversity	Conflict resolution management with peers & parents	Resilience	Conflict resolution management with peers & parents
Resilience	Computer / digital / AI skills	Social Intelligence	Computer / digital / AI skills
Confidence	Drivers licence	Cultural understanding	Drivers licence



Solutions

If you could wave a magic wand right now and fix one skill or workforce issue for the industry, what would it be?



SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Storytelling around what careers exist in education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops with training providers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate for more funding and paid placements - incentives for employers to hire 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different modes of delivery
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate businesses on current incentives to hire staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote use of traineeships
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate Government to recognise migrant qualifications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removal of red tape / compliance issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow businesses to do paid placements (hybrid model to speed up qualifications) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our education system was designed for a community that no longer exists, so the system is not fit for purpose
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educating businesses around migrant employability options 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change the education system
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate creative ways for industries to create a pathway 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate for support and better working conditions for educators

Education Workforce Transformation Map

Foundations Year 1

- Advocate for paid placements and employer incentives
- Map and increase placement capacity across region
- Launch education career awareness campaign (storytelling)
- Pilot traineeships and hybrid work–study models
- Establish industry–education working group

Build & Pilot Year 2

- Scale paid placement programs
- Expand Permission to Teach and traineeship pathways
- Introduce structured mentoring & coaching frameworks
- Deliver targeted training in priority skills:
 - Communication, resilience, behaviour management
 - Cultural awareness and trauma-informed practice
 - Digital and AI capability

Scale & Integrate Year 3

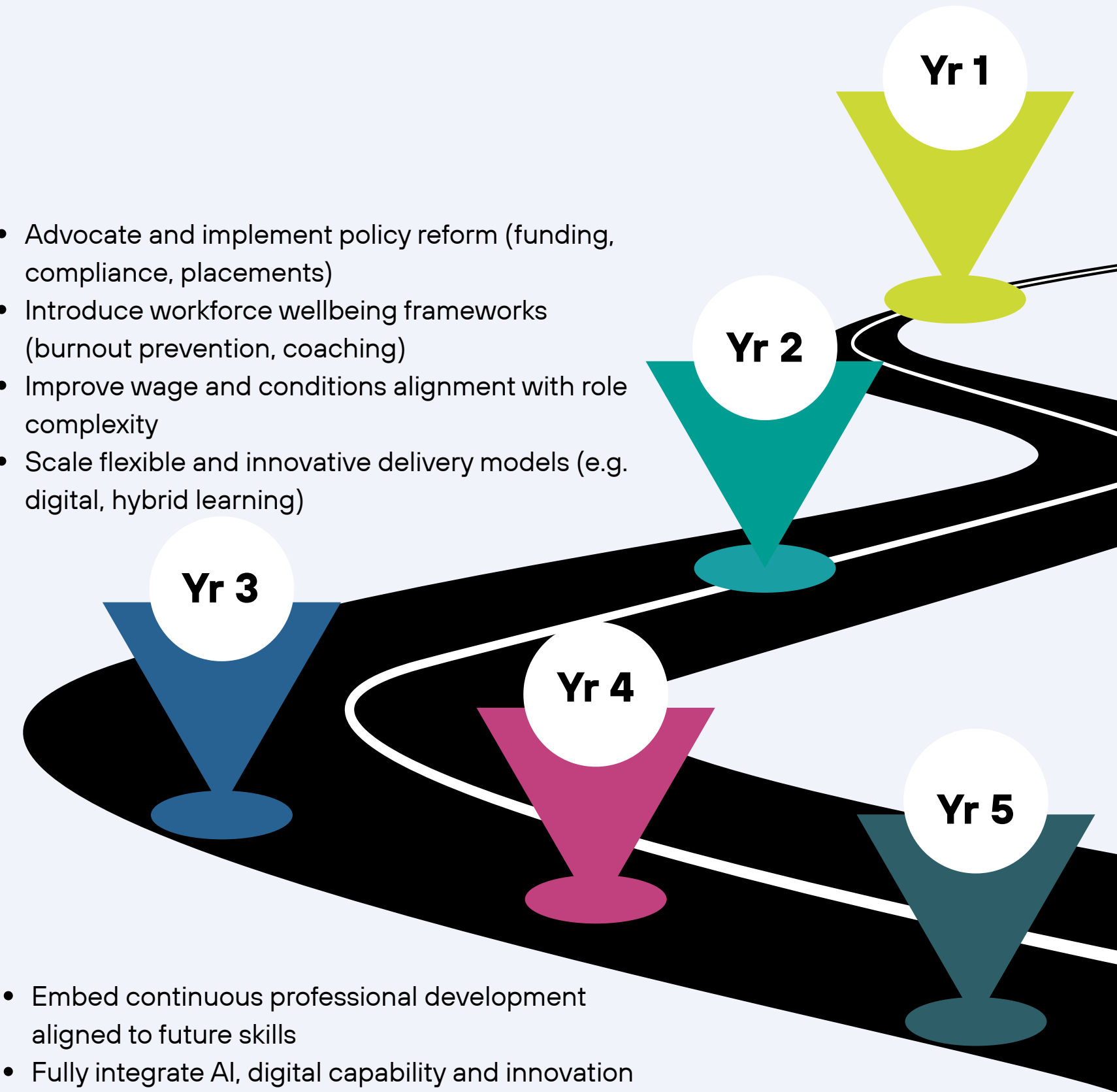
- Embed career progression pathways and leadership pipelines
- Standardise recognition of prior learning (RPL) and migrant qualifications
- Expand industry partnerships (health, community, trades) for transferable skills
- Implement workload and administrative reduction initiatives

Optimise & Reform Year 4

- Advocate and implement policy reform (funding, compliance, placements)
- Introduce workforce wellbeing frameworks (burnout prevention, coaching)
- Improve wage and conditions alignment with role complexity
- Scale flexible and innovative delivery models (e.g. digital, hybrid learning)

Future Readiness Year 5

- Embed continuous professional development aligned to future skills
- Fully integrate AI, digital capability and innovation into workforce standards
- Establish long-term workforce planning and data tracking capability
- Position education as a high-value, respected career pathway



01

Sunshine Coast RJC Action Plan

Using the results of all Skills Forums to develop a State Govt approved Action Plan of the year's activities that aligns with industry needs



NEXT STEPS



02

Industry Discovery Sessions

Work with Education Queensland to assess current programs & identify gaps or areas of support, then create repository of resources



03

Education Advisory Group

Sense-checking all activities with local leaders to show value add of actions undertaken and ensure measurement of outcomes possible

THANK YOU FROM SCRJC

projects@scrjc.com.au

www.scrjc.com.au

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Andy Eves-Brown

CHAIR



Tracey Coobula

PROJECT MANAGER



Shannara Goddard

CONSULTANT

