



SUBMISSION TO THE NATIONAL PRIORITY INDUSTRY LINKAGES FUND CONSULTATION

October 2020

The University of Southern Queensland (USQ) welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the *National Priority Industry Linkages Fund (NPILF)* consultation.

USQ welcomes the Government's commitment to support enhanced engagement with universities and industry in order to support job-ready graduates.

As a foundation member of the Regional Universities Network (RUN), supports the feedback provided by RUN. Additionally, there are a number of points with USQ wishes to emphasise as outlined below.

Tiered Indicators, Metrics and Reporting

The notion of reducing the need for each indicator to be exhaustive is sound, however, the proposed number and types of indicators seems overly complex. Use of narrative or a case study would be better suited for addressing innovators and a reduction in the number of indicators to cover the metrics and demonstrators, would be appropriate.

While the stated intention is for the framework to comprise indicators with both quantitative and qualitative components, the proposed metrics favour measuring quantity not quality. There is also scope for greater clarity regarding the linkage between input and output indicators.

The University advocates for metrics which align with existing data collections and reporting rather than the creation of a new system of data collection, thus minimising the reporting burden on institutions.

In terms of reporting, the University has some concerns about the proposed 12 month cycle as it is too short, particularly with respect to reporting on innovators and the development of meaningful relationships with business. In addition, some of the listed indicators would not be reportable for a period of time, that is, initial data collection and associated set up activities would need to be established to enable an appropriate dataset for evaluation.

Work Integrated Learning

USQ welcomes the Government's commitment to fund work integrated learning and related activities as outlined in the NPILF paper. The importance of the definition of WIL in the context of NPILF being sufficiently broad, is supported, although in its current form, there are concerns with how the proposed definition interacts with the suggested indicators. The development of a consistent framework to measure the quality of WIL activities across the sector, would be welcome.

USQ's student cohort is notably diverse and, in the majority, are mature-aged, undertaking part-time or full-time work whilst studying. When undertaking mandatory placements such as pre-service educator and clinical placements, particularly placements which may necessitate students travelling to rural or remote areas in response to the

growing demand for educational and health professionals to service these areas, the provision of scholarships to support the costs of accommodation and/or lost work opportunity costs, would be worthy of consideration for funding support.

Allocation Methodology

The University considers that the proposed mechanism for allocation will incentivise behaviours and recommends consideration of an extended trial period with reviews conducted annually during the transition to ensure the continued development of a robust framework.

Distribution Options

The University strongly advocates for the distribution method of *per-EFTSL rate + base + loading* as being necessary to account for smaller institutions and regional factors.

General

While the framework endeavours to address, to some extent, the lifetime of learning challenge facing the workforce, for a framework to do so in an impactful way, a national strategy and alignment of training programs, is required.