



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

09 SEP 2020

Our Ref: MO/2020/1015  
Your Ref: A590024

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Mr Neil Laurie  
Clerk of the Parliament  
Parliament House  
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Dear Mr Laurie, *Neil*

Thank you for your letter of 13 August 2020 regarding e-Petition No. 3376-20 received by the Queensland Legislative Assembly on 11 August 2020, regarding the futures of disabled and disadvantaged school-based teenagers employed with Lightmare Studios and their ability to complete their workplace requirements due to COVID-19.

The Palaszczuk Government is committed to ensuring every school-based trainee and apprentice receives quality training and paid employment to further their chosen career aspirations.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, including self-isolation and social distancing, many employers have had to deal with the challenge of supervising and employing trainees. The Department of Employment, Small Business and Training has been working with Lightmare Studios during COVID-19 and approved, at their request, a relaxation of supervision requirements. The intent being that this would allow for Lightmare Studios trainees to work and be supervised remotely.

Lightmare Studios also requested a reduction of the number of days of paid employment from 100 days to 50 days, along with the suspension of the training contract for those undertaking the ICT traineeship.

The broad request for the reduction in the number of days was not approved as the number of paid days of employment is seen as critical in helping trainees to develop their skills and ensure they get the real work exposure expected by industry.

Importantly, the decision to not approve the general relaxation of required working days also took into consideration the employer's request for remote trainee supervision approval due to the nature of their industry, and their stated capacity to appropriately support continued work via remote arrangements.

However, I have referred the matter to the Queensland Training Ombudsman to review each student request to complete their traineeship early.

All trainees have been informed of the option to contact the Queensland Training Ombudsman to assess the possibility of completing the traineeship in lieu of completing the 100 days of paid employment.

I can also advise that since the COVID-19 pandemic commenced, the DESBT has been allowing all school-based trainees and apprentices, across a range of industry sectors, to continue with their off-the-job training through their chosen training provider.

This has enabled students to complete their relevant qualification and gain the necessary Queensland Certificate of Education points in lieu of the completion of the mandatory traineeship paid employment requirements. This includes all trainees engaged by Lightmare Studios.

As you would appreciate, I am committed to ensuring each trainee receives a quality training experience. The referral to the Queensland Training Ombudsman will ensure ICT school-based trainees engaged by Lightmare Studios are offered the opportunity to outline the work they have undertaken to date with Lightmare Studios to facilitate completions where possible.

I would like to thank the petitioners for raising this matter with me, and I trust this information has been of assistance.

Yours sincerely



**SHANNON FENTIMAN MP**  
**Minister for Employment and Small Business**  
**Minister for Training and Skills Development**