



Queensland Private Enterprise Centre

2024 ANNUAL REPORT TO MEMBERS

Mission

Contribute to Australia's prosperity by promoting an understanding of the virtues of free-market economy and private enterprise through education, innovative research and engagement with the community.

Vision

QPEC runs an innovative and high-quality education program aimed at providing participants with an understanding of and insight into Australia's free market economy. We partner with trusted institutions to make the program available to communities regardless of location or socio-economic profile.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Allan Pidgeon AM (President)
Franki Ganter (Chair)
Chris Skelton (Secretary)
Emily Blauberg (Treasurer)
Penny Ellenger (Acting Chair from May)
Allan Pidgeon AM
Jamie Forster
Debbie Perrett

Dear Members

The Executive Committee is pleased to present this Annual Report for Queensland Private Enterprise Centre Inc (**QPEC**) for the year ending 31 December 2024.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

During the year the following changes occurred on the Executive Committee:

- Mr Jamie Forster was re-elected to the committee at QPEC's Annual General Meeting held in June 2024
- Ms Penny Ellenger was re-elected to the committee at QPEC's Annual General Meeting held in June 2024.
- Mr Chris Skelton was re-elected as Secretary at QPEC's Annual General Meeting held in June 2024.
- Ms Franki Ganter was elected as Acting President of QPEC at the same Annual General Meeting until a replacement candidate is identified for the position. The Executive Committee is in the process of identifying an appropriate candidate to put forward to members for appointment to the position. Mr Allan Pidgeon subsequently offered to fill this role.

ECOMAN OPERATION REVIEW

During the 2024 year, 17 programs were scheduled for the year, however, four schools chose to withdraw during the year due to staffing issues and inability to obtain student numbers. 13 programs were, therefore, delivered to students from 30 schools). This included delivery of the program to three regional schools – Cairns, Townsville and Bundaberg. Not only is it very rewarding to be able to deliver the ECOMAN program in regional areas but it is very pleasing to see QPEC extend its reach to these regional areas in Queensland. We continue to be very grateful to our Education Coordinator Debbie Perrett and her team of Program Facilitators for their work on the continued excellent delivery of the ECOMAN Program.

It is becoming increasingly difficult for schools to release teachers and students due to the teacher shortage situation and the demands of the ATAR system. We do, however, thank those schools who make it possible for students to be involved in this valuable program.

The relationships that develop between QPEC and schools particularly between our Education Coordinator and facilitators and the school Heads of Department underlies the fact that many schools each year send their Year 10 and 11 students to experience the ECOMAN program year after year. These teachers do this because they see the practical benefits of the ECOMAN program in further explaining commercial and business concepts and realities to students.

Feedback from students and teachers after they have completed the program underline the reason why the program is so successful and valued by the students and teachers.

SPONSORSHIP AND OTHER SUPPORT

The Executive Committee are incredibly appreciative of a further portion of funding from The Sylvia and Charles Viertel Foundation during 2024, following an approach by the Executive Director in request of further support. These funds have been put to very good use, particularly in supporting the delivery of our Program in regional Queensland.

QPEC also wishes to thank Findex (Townsville), Ultons (Bundaberg) and the Business Liaison Association together with BDO and Grant Thornton (Cairns) for sponsoring the regional programs.

Our venue sponsors provide their CBD board rooms and meeting rooms where the programs are delivered. They too deserve our thanks once again. Three venues provided their facilities on more than one occasion: CA ANZ, CPA and Moore Australia, to whom we owe a special thanks. The other venues QPEC wish to thank are: BDO, Ultons (Bundaberg), Findex Townsville and Grant Thornton (Cairns)

These venues play an important part in the ECOMAN experience for the students, where for two or three days the students become directors of a fictional company and make decisions that will impact on the business of their company. They also value the experience of being part of a big city office.

Sponsors are critical to the on-going viability of the Ecoman programs. Currently programs in Brisbane cost a little over \$1,000 per day to run (on average) and overheads are about \$24,000 per year. Many schools find the cost to them of \$1500 per day (two day program) or \$2200 (three day program) unaffordable and adding further on top of that to cover overheads would mean we would have less schools to spread the overhead across. While QPEC has sufficient funds to continue operating in the short term, the Executive Committee has been considering ways of ensuring the sustainability of the program over the medium to longer term. For more on this, see the section below on the 'Future of QPEC'.

PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS 2024

Dates	School/s	Venue
29 February, 1 March	Brigidine College and Ambrose Treacy College	BDO
18 and 19 April	Townsville (3 schools)	Findex
29, 30 April and 1 May	Ferny Grove SHS	CPA
9 and 10 May	Villonova College	Moore Australia
22 and 23 May	Cairns Schools	Grant Thornton
17 – 19 June	Indooroopilly SHS	CAANZ
10, 11, 12 July	Bundaberg Schools	Ultons
15 and 15 July	Mansfield SHS	CPA
17 and 18 July	Grammar Schools – BGS and BGGs	Moore Australia
6, 7 and 9 August	Citipointe Christian College	CPA
9 – 10 September	Rosedale SHS	CPA
11 -13 September	Yeronga SHS	CAANZ
24 and 25 October	Multi-school program (Cavendish Road SHS, St Peters Lutheran College, Loretto College, BGGs	Moore Australia

FUTURE OF QPEC

As part of the strategic planning work undertaken by the Executive Committee to ensure the long term sustainability of QPEC, a search was undertaken for the recruitment of a candidate to fill the part-time role of Executive Director. One of the key areas of focus of that role is to seek to expand QPEC's funding base.

In February 2024 the Executive Committee appointed Stuart Coward as QPEC's part-time Executive Director. The objective for this role was focused on seeking future funding to secure the delivery of our wonderful ECOMAN Program to school students throughout Queensland, given the finalization of funding from the Viertel Foundation in 2024.

Stuart made a number of enquiries with other charitable foundations, as well as approaches to high net worth individuals and funds. He also made advances to the Queensland state government and learnt of potential grant and funding opportunities through community and government programs.

Whilst the efforts of the Executive Director were proactive and created a number of promising connections, it has become evident that future financial contributions to QPEC are likely to come from the beneficiaries of the ECOMAN Program. These beneficiaries include higher educational institutions, which see potential in future student enrolments, and financial and accounting firms that are always searching for new and enthusiastic employees.

The Executive Director role continued until June 2025 when the contract came to an end. The Executive Committee wishes to thank Stuart for his efforts in helping to not only secure the current financial position of QPEC but also lay the groundwork for our future growth.

Throughout 2025 it is anticipated that the Executive Committee will take on the opportunity to drive sponsorship and financial support for QPEC and the ECOMAN Program, with particular effort in this area being made by our Education Coordinator. Her connections into schools and the community of previous sponsors and contacts are incredibly valuable in identifying future prospective sponsors and supporters for the program.

We are realistic, yet hopeful that there will be positive outcomes for QPEC ECOMAN in terms of support to sustain our mission and continue to deliver the ECOMAN Program in Queensland.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Executive Committee's thanks and appreciation go to Education Coordinator Debbie Perrett and facilitators Amanda Barnes, Kaylene Holley and Peter Hondroudakis, Doneene King and Debbi Pidgeon. This team delivers the programs and interacts with students to impart important messages about the commercial realities of running a business and the role of private enterprise. They are the face of ECOMAN.

For and on behalf of the QPEC Executive Committee



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Penny Ellenger, Acting Chairman