



CIVIL CONTRACTORS FEDERATION

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Civil Contractors Federation Policy on Skills and Skills Training

A skilled workforce is a critical and core requirement if Australia is to meet the challenges ahead. Nowhere is this more so than in the infrastructure sector.

Governments are committing substantial funds to building civil infrastructure such as roads, ports, bridges and rail, as well as opening up new sub-divisions and maintaining existing structures. Yet the industry is in skills shortage coming out of a major downturn.

If we are to meet these skills demands the following key issues must be addressed:

Structural Reforms:

- *Review* - The National Skills Needs List (NSNL) must be reviewed – it is based on traditional trades and occupations and a coding system through ANZSCO which does not support growth occupations like civil construction. Indeed reliance on ANZSCO in fact denies civil occupations a number of incentives designed specifically to support training and skills development;
- *Measurement* - Skills shortages and skills demands in civil construction must be the subject of separate data collection to highlight if and when the industry is in skills shortage.

Training Infrastructure:

- CCF members support training by the industry for the industry as meeting the needs of our members for highly flexible and responsive training. Accordingly, our policy places a strong emphasis on the provision of capital support for training and training infrastructure specifically in the form of funding for industry run and led Skills Centres and Centres of Excellence;
- Civil skills cannot be taught in the classroom alone and accordingly we will continue to seek partnered funding for initiatives such as live work sites and mobile training units.

Acquiring the Skills -Skills and Skills Development:

Support is needed in civil occupations at all levels of the career pipeline.

We therefore support programs which:

- Provide *incentives* for employer and employees to attract people to civil construction apprenticeships whether from school or more mature applicants, in particular for applicants over 25 wishing to retrain in civil skills;
- Support *Recognised Prior Learning* in a practical way that is cost and time efficient and that it can be done simply and efficiently particularly in the workplace;
- Provide support for *short courses and skill sets* to up-skill the workforce or retrain new entrants from other industries;
- Support *meaningful targeted training* through the development of industry led training centres and innovative approaches to training such as Mobile Training Units as noted above; and
- Particularly support training that is provided in a way that takes account of the need for “*on the job*” training in often quite diverse and challenging environments.

It is against these outcomes that we will assess Skills and Skills Training programs and policies.

Background

Skills and Skills Training has been a key focus of the work of the CCF. In early 2010 we produced with SkillsDMC under the auspices of Skills Australia a major report on training issues in civil construction. That report is the foundation for our policy position and contained a number of recommendations to Government. A copy of that Report may be accessed on our website under NRSET submission at www.civilcontractors.com