



Media Release

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Apprentice employment critical to industry's future

The peak industry body representing the Civil Construction industry says that apprenticeship employment is critical to the future of business and industry in Australia but clearly more needs to happen if the ALP's quota arrangements announced today for government-funded infrastructure projects is to succeed.

The Civil Contractors Federation said any measures to improve the opportunity for apprentices and aspiring professionals to gain employment in industry are welcomed although it is equally important to understand why the employment and retention of apprentices is currently nothing short of diabolical.

"When you see figures on average of 50% retention rates for apprentices, it leaves CCF members very concerned about workforce development and in ensuring that there is a sustainable new wave of skilled practitioners ready to join the industry," said CCF National Chief Executive Officer, John Miller.

"The civil construction industry understands the need and its responsibility to make sure that a new generation of employees are properly trained and equipped to cope with the next wave of infrastructure demand and deal with the loss of experienced people leaving the industry for retirement or other reasons.

"The difficulties faced by employers in hiring and training apprentices often come down to cost, costs that have risen dramatically in recent years, and also due to uncertainty in terms of future workflow, especially for those who do most of the employing."

"Nobody is looking to dampen down innovative and employment producing initiatives however more needs to be done to make sure when apprentices are brought into the system that they have every opportunity to come out the other end with a worthwhile qualification and wanting to remain committed to the industry.

"What we are seeing at present in the engagement and retention of apprentices is a far cry from that ideal and therefore new initiatives need to be carefully considered in the context of current experience," concluded Mr. Miller.

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