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Civil Construction Occupations Must Feature in Government's Skills Agenda

The peak voice for the civil infrastructure sector has once again called on the Federal Government to list civil construction occupations as essential skills on the Australian Government's ['National Skills Needs List'](#) so the sector can attract new entrants and upskill its existing workforce.

Responding to the Prime Minister's speech today at the National Press Club, Civil Contractors Federation National (CCF National) Chief Executive Officer, Chris Melham said: "by updating the List with the stroke of a pen, the Prime Minister can make a real difference in attracting more apprentices to the civil construction sector", he said.

"I commend the Prime Minister for flagging his intention to work closely with industry to reform the skills sector, so I call upon the Prime Minister to update the National Skill Needs List to include civil occupations such as bridge, road and tunnel constructors, civil plant operators, pipe layers and line markers.

In his address today, the Prime Minister said there is 'lack of clear information about what those skills needs are, now and into the future to guide training and funding'. I reject this statement in relation to the civil construction sector because the Civil Contractors Federation put forward a major submission to the Federal Government's review of the National Skills Needs List in which we clearly identified the skills required for our industry – instead we continue to wait for the outcome of the review which has now been delayed due to COVID-19.

"In light of this observation, the civil construction industry wishes to clearly reiterate its previous recommendation to Government to appropriately classify civil construction occupations on the List to ensure apprentices, VET providers, and employers gain access to funding incentives. This in turn will bring new entrants into our industry via the delivery of employer sponsored apprenticeships during this challenging economic period", Melham said.

"Providing industry with this incentive is paramount in the current conditions, particularly at a time when industry has demonstrated it has the capacity to undertake more projects and employ more workers as evidenced by a recent CCF National [survey](#) of its members", he said.

Mr Melham acknowledged the Prime Minister's commitment to strengthen the [National Agreement for Skills and Workforce Development](#) to achieve a greater line of sight between the Commonwealth's funding commitments and outcomes achieved by jurisdictions receiving funding under the initiative.

"I also welcome the Commonwealth's adoption of a CCF recommendation to better link funding to actual forward-looking skills needs based on what businesses need and we invite the Government to work with us on the skill requirements in the civil construction sector - noting that CCF has actual skin in the game as the owner of 'CivilTrain', one of the largest private Registered Training Organisations in the civil construction sector", Melham said.

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"The peak voice of the Civil Construction Sector"