



**CIVIL CONTRACTORS
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Infrastructure Misses Out on Extension of the Boosting Apprenticeships Commencements Program

Australia's peak voice for the civil infrastructure sector has warned the Federal Government's efforts to create additional jobs in the construction sector, including through the extension of the Boosting Apprenticeships Commencements (BAC) Program, is being undermined by its failure to list civil occupations on the National Skills Needs List (NSNL).

Civil Contractors Federation National (CCF) is highly critical of the Federal Government's failure to adopt the CCF's long running advice to list critical civil construction occupations as 'essential skills' on its NSNL in lieu of mounting evidence that shows construction apprenticeship enrolments continue to decline in the sector, and in turn point to an alarming skills shortage at a time when Australia is trying to build its way out of the economic recession.

Chief Executive of Civil Contractors Federation National Chris Melham said: "The Federal Government's failure to update the NSNL to include civil infrastructure occupations means that apprentices, VET providers and employers are unable to access the full suite of funding incentives available, such as those provided under the BAC".

"CCF's Federal Government pre-budget [submission](#) has once again highlighted this glaring omission, warning increased infrastructure investment must run in parallel with other much-needed reforms, the most urgent of which is the listing of civil construction occupations on the NSNL", Melham said.

"CCF has also previously provided this recommendation to a Federal Government review of the National Skills Needs List, to the National Skills Commission and the Productivity Commission – yet our advice and recommendations continue to be ignored by the Federal Government," he said.

CCF's pre budget submission also notes a recent [report](#) by McKinsey that found Australia could potentially need an additional 260,000 to 385,000 infrastructure construction workers over the coming years if the projected infrastructure pipeline materialises.

In sharp contrast to this growth in demand is the latest data from the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) which found commencements for apprentices and trainees in construction continue to slide.

"According to NCVER, commencements have fallen 4.2 percent from 2019 to 2020, decreasing from 19,360 to 18,540. More alarmingly, commencements have plummeted 18.4 percent from 2016 when they totaled 22,275. These figures paint an alarming and deteriorating skills situation in the civil construction industry which requires urgent attention by the Federal Government", he said.

"The civil construction industry is in a strong position to provide employment opportunities for new entrants to the industry and displaced workers from other industry sectors, and those who may lose their job when Jobkeeper ends on 28th March 2021.

"The peak voice of the Civil Construction Sector"



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However, we need the Federal Government to recognise the occupations which are delivering its infrastructure agenda by listing those occupations on the NSNL to ensure apprentices, VET providers, and employers can gain access to all government funding incentives available," he concluded.

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