



**CIVIL CONTRACTORS
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PEAK INFRASTRUCTURE BODY CALLS OUT BUREAUCRATIC INACTION ON SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Australia's peak national body for the civil infrastructure sector, Civil Contractors Federation National has pointed the finger at the Federal Department of Education, Skills and Employment (DESE) and the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) for being asleep at the wheel by ignoring Civil Contractor Federation calls (dating back to 2013) to incentivise the labor market in the civil infrastructure sector to ensure Australia's record infrastructure investment pipeline has the workforce to construct it.

Chief Executive Officer of Civil Contractors Federation National, Mr. Christopher Melham was today responding to the release of Infrastructure Australia's '[Infrastructure Market Capacity Report](#)' that concludes Australia is on the cusp of an unprecedented wave of investment in public infrastructure projects over the next 3 years, but the Report also says over the next five years demand for labour is forecast to be two-thirds higher than the previous five years (to 2019-20).

Melham has taken aim at the bureaucrats in Canberra alleging serious inaction over the past 3 years on skills development and training, despite numerous submissions by Civil Contractors Federation highlighting how to increase the level of interest and attract new entrants into the civil infrastructure sector to construct our record levels of infrastructure investment.

"CCF has provided submissions to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2013 and 2018), the 2019 Federal Department of Education & Training Review into the National Skills Needs List (which continues to be delayed by the Department citing COVID19 as the reason), the 2020 Productivity Commission Review into Skills and Workforce Development, the 2021 National Skills Commission Skills Priority List Review and more recently into the House of Representatives Inquiry into Federally Funded Infrastructure Procurement – yet our advice and recommendations continue to be ignored by DETA and ABS," he said.

"Infrastructure Australia's Report forecasts a surge in demand for skills in the infrastructure sector which underscores why our primary recommendation has been to reinstate several civil occupations on the National Skills Needs List at a classification level that allows those occupations to qualify for financial training incentives under the Federal Government various apprenticeship incentives programs," said Melham.

The [National Skills Needs List](#) identifies trades that are experiencing a national skills shortage, is based on an outdated and retrospective labour market research methodology conducted by the Australia Bureau of Statistics (known as the ANZSCO Coding System) and is used to determine eligibility for several commonwealth financial training payments.

The Civil Contractors Federation is the peak national representative body for the Australian civil construction industry comprising over 1,900 civil construction companies across the construction supply chain.



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“Reinstating civil occupations on the NSNL (several were delisted in 2012) would entice new entrants into our sector and help achieve a more equitable distribution of training and upskilling funding to apprentices, VET providers and employers by ensuring they have access to the full suite of funding incentives available”, he said.

“These civil occupations include for example bridge, road and tunnel constructors, civil plant operators, pipe layers and line markers.

The ‘Infrastructure Market Capacity Report’ adds further weight to CCF’s argument that greater action is needed to address a shortfall in skilled workers over the coming years in the infrastructure sector,” he said.

“We urge the bureaucracy and Government in Canberra to adopt the CCF recommendations contained in our submissions before the \$100 million *Incentives for Australian Apprenticeships* program commences on 1 July 2022, and in so doing, help attract more apprentices to the civil construction sector and address skill challenges within the industry,” Mr. Melham concluded.

For further information:

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