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CIVIL CONTRACTORS FEDERATION WELCOMES LABOR'S COMMITMENT TO ALLOCATE MORE INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS TO AUSTRALIAN COMPANIES

Australia's peak national representative body for the Civil Infrastructure sector has today delivered a ringing endorsement to the Leader of the Opposition, the Hon. Anthony Albanese MP and the Australian Labor Party commitment to allocate more taxpayer funded civil infrastructure projects to Australian civil construction companies.

The Chief Executive Officer of the Civil Contractors Federation National, Mr. Chris Melham said that Mr Albanese's commitment (should the Australian Labor Party win the next Federal Election) to provide much needed reform to the procurement of infrastructure projects to ensure more work is delivered to Australian owned companies is imperative and very welcomed by all Australian civil construction companies.

The Civil Contractors Federation has been strongly advocating for the civil infrastructure sector to be used as a lever to lead Australia's economic recovery in the wake of COVID-19 and the economic recession and procurement reform of the Commonwealth Governments' \$110 billion rolling 10-year infrastructure investment program is an important first step in turning the economy around.

"Debundling major projects as a means of encouraging more tender bids from tier 2 companies and SME's was a key theme of CCF's recent report *Rebuilding Australia – A Plan for a Civil Infrastructure Led Recovery* ([click here](#)) which CCF presented to the Federal Government and the Australian Labor party earlier this year. It is pleasing to see the Leader of the Opposition is adopting CCF's key infrastructure procurement recommendations to increase Australia's sovereign capability.

"I commend Mr Albanese on this policy commitment and his understanding of the need to work with the states and territories to break up large contracts where possible to allow Australian tier 2, tier 3, tier 4 and smaller SME's an opportunity to bid for civil infrastructure tenders", Melham said.

Melham also said that Mr Albanese was right when he says: "*Mid and small tier companies argue that current government purchasing rules favour 'Tier 1' internationally owned companies in tenders for major infrastructure work due to their ability to meet guarantees in a single tender and fulfil certain insurance arrangements*".

I also applaud the Labor Party's commitment to ensure that the Australian infrastructure sector has the local capabilities to deliver projects and, if we don't, to determine what is required to make sure Australians get the training they need for the jobs they want.

The CCF's *Rebuilding Australia – A Plan for a Civil Infrastructure Led Recovery* ([click here](#)) provides the strategic recommendations to address Australia's skills shortage in the civil construction sector. This can be achieved in the very short term by reinstating civil occupations on the 'National Skill Needs List'. By doing so school leavers and displaced workers in other sectors will be incentivised to take up a career in the civil construction sector as they will qualify for VET funding i.e., apprentices, employers and training providers under the Commonwealths \$100 million Apprenticeships Incentives Funding Program. "I look forward to the Labor Party's support of this recommendation", Melham said.

The Labor Party commitment to make national partnerships work to maximise the use of local workers and businesses was a point Civil Contractors Federation made very strongly to the current House of Representatives Inquiry into Infrastructure Procurement and so it very pleasing to see Labor incorporate this commitment in their policy platform.

"The Commonwealth Government's \$110 billion 10 year rolling infrastructure investment program needs a massive shakeup including the state and territory procurement agencies charged with delivering the pipeline to market. It appears the Labor Party is committed to taking up the challenge and I look forward to continuing to work with both of the major parties to ensure this does happen, irrespective of which side wins government at the next federal election – the industry and the economy expects it", Melham said.

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