

Media Release – For immediate release

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INFRASTRUCTURE SECTOR WELCOMES JOBS AND SKILLS AUSTRALIA

Australia's infrastructure sector welcomes the Federal Government's announcement of the establishment of Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA) and commends the Federal Minister for Skills and Training, The Hon. Brendan O'Connor MP for introducing the the government's first bill into the Federal Parliament - the *Jobs and Skills Australia Bill 2022*.

The Civil Contractors Federation looks forward to working with Jobs and Skills Australia to address the significant skills shortages in the infrastructure sector as evidenced by a recent industry survey undertaken by CCF, a copy of which can be found here [click here](#)

"Survey respondents were asked to rank a number of threats to the delivery of the Federal Governments \$120 billion infrastructure investment pipeline, ranging from the availability of raw materials, through to the availability of skilled and unskilled labour. In each state and territory, the highest ranked issue was the lack of availability of local skilled tradespeople & professionals to undertake construction projects", Mr Melham said.

"This finding provides clear evidence that urgent action is needed to address the shortage of skilled labour in Australia's infrastructure sector and the CCF's recommendations which were brought to the attention of the previous government but have been frustrated due to bureaucratic inaction and an unwillingness to act", he said.

For example, in 2019, CCF provided a submission to a review being undertaken by the then Federal Department of Education and Training on updating the National Skills Needs List to include civil occupations such that the sector (apprentices, employers and VET providers) could qualify for federal VET grants. Inexplicably, the Department canned the review citing COVID19 as the reason.

Earlier this year and prior to the Federal election, the Australian Bureau of Statistics commenced a review to update civil occupations on the Australian New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations which once again appears to have stalled following the granting of an additional \$20 million to the budget of ABS by the previous Government in its 2022 Budget.

Mr Melham said: *"The establishment of Jobs and Skills Australia is a welcome step as has been the announcement that the government will consult industry and employer bodies, unions, education and training providers, state and territory governments and others to determine the next stage of implementing Jobs and Skills Australia, its scope, its structure and its governance.*

We look forward to a more streamlined and collaborative decision-making framework enabling all stakeholders, including employers, unions and government, to work together to address critical skills shortages facing the infrastructure sector.

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