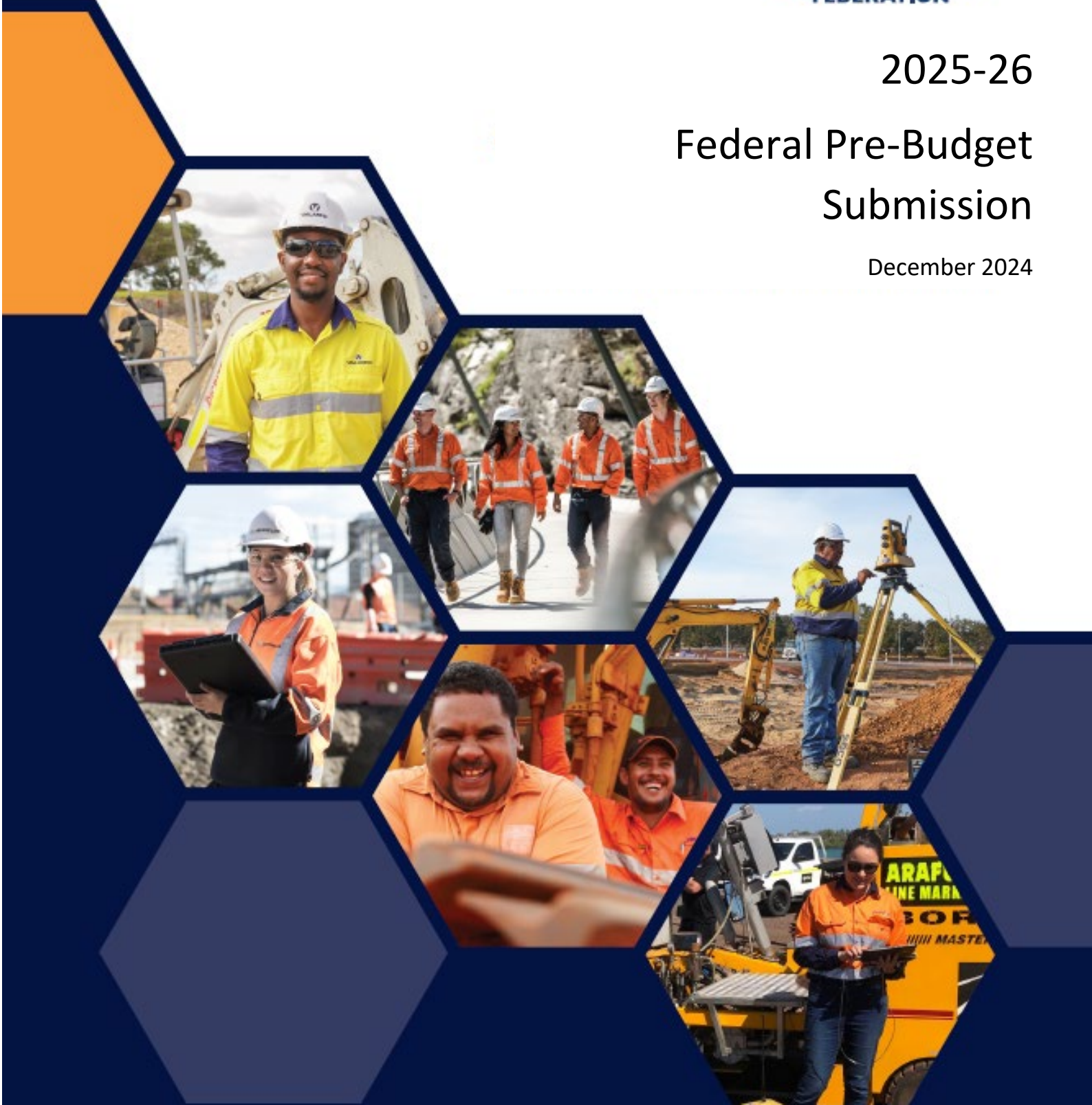




2025-26

Federal Pre-Budget Submission

December 2024



2025-2026 Pre-Budget Submission

Contents

Submission overview and key submissions	3
Civil Foundations for Australia’s Future.....	3
Our priorities are:.....	3
Our strategies to tackling our priorities:.....	3
1. Housing and Community Enabling Infrastructure.....	4
2. Paving the Way for Australia’s Energy Transition.....	6
3. Bridging the Civil Skills Divide	7
4. Infrastructure Procurement and Investment - More Constructive & More Productive.....	9
5. Restoring Civility to Civil Worksites	12
6. Innovation in Motion - Building a Productive Construction Industry	13
Conclusion.....	14
Recommended Commonwealth Policy Positions Summary.....	15
1. Housing and Community Enabling Infrastructure.....	15
2. Paving the Way for Australia’s Energy Transition.....	15
4. Infrastructure Procurement and Investment - More Constructive & More Productive.....	16
5. Restoring Civility to Civil Worksites	16
6. Innovation in Motion - Building a Productive Construction Industry	16
About CCF National Office	17

Submission overview and key submissions

As the peak national voice of the civil infrastructure sector representing more than 1,800 contractors engaged in the civil construction industry in Australia, the Civil Contractors Federation National (CCF) is excited by the opportunities to reshape communities in metropolitan, regional and rural Australia.

Having responsibility for the construction and maintenance of Australia's civil and industrial infrastructure works CCF Members create the foundations of communities, and their role is increasingly critical to livability.

Our member activities include road and bridge construction, utility (water, power, communications) installation, construction of housing enabling infrastructure, earthworks, drainage, pipeline construction, trenchless technology, bridge construction, rail construction, utilities and tunnelling.

CCF's 2025–26 budget priorities align with our broader advocacy and policy priorities and strategies.

Civil Foundations for Australia's Future

Our priorities are:

- **Housing and Community Enabling Infrastructure**
 - Connecting Australians through sustained growth of federal infrastructure investment to build Australia's economic and social wellbeing. In particular infrastructure that supports communities and affordable housing is enabled by civil infrastructure.
 - A more sustainable and balanced approach to project allocation across all construction tiers and regions throughout Australia.
- **Paving the Way for Australian Energy Transition**
 - The Civil Contractors Federation (CCF) urges the Australian Government to prioritise and allocate substantial investment in infrastructure as part of the 2025-26 Federal Budget. Infrastructure is the bedrock of Australia's economy and is critical to achieving the nation's energy transition goals, alleviating housing and cost of living pressures, and supporting sustainable economic growth.
 - The CCF recommends increasing infrastructure investment to support Australia's energy transition. This includes funding critical projects such as grid upgrades, wind farms, and low-emission industrial precincts, which are essential for decarbonization.

Our strategies to tackling our priorities:

- **Bridging the Skills Divide**
 - Building and Skilling Australia's current and future infrastructure workforce by prioritising housing and community enabling capacity building occupations such as Earthmoving Plant Operators and Excavator Operators rather than Plant Growers, Cinema Managers and Yoga Instructors.
- **Infrastructure Procurement and Investment, More Constructive & More Productive**
 - The Australian Construction Sector has had a productivity drop over the last decade due in part to an increase in red tape compliance and reporting requirement during the procurement and delivery phase of infrastructure projects, the Commonwealth needs to take action on improving the productivity to ensure we can build and maintain the infrastructure that Australians rely on.
- **Restoring Civility to Civil Worksites**
 - A balanced approach by working collaboratively with governments and industry to achieve equitable environmental outcomes. In particular leading the energy transition is a critical component of our submissions.

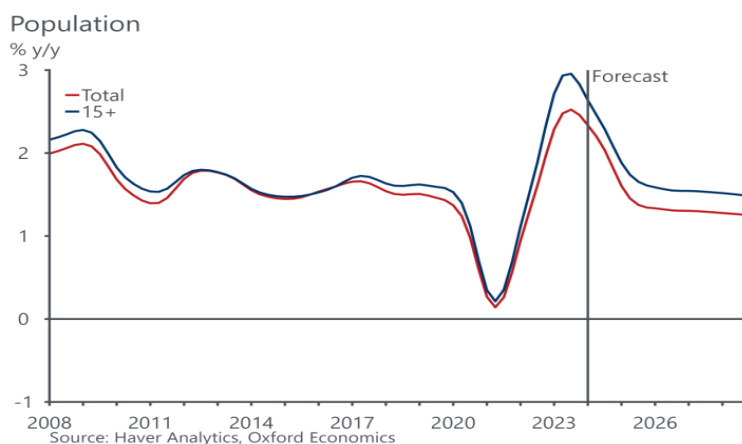
1. Housing and Community Enabling Infrastructure

Civil infrastructure underpins Australia’s progress and prosperity, playing a critical role in addressing housing needs, supporting the transition to renewable energy, and enhancing national productivity. Despite civil’s importance, it remains a missing link in the broader strategy for economic growth and social well-being.

Before any housing project—whether government-led or private—can commence, the civil construction industry must unlock the potential of the land. This includes earthworks, building roads, installing and connecting utilities, and laying the foundations necessary for sustainable development. Modern civil infrastructure is essential for creating affordable and sustainable housing that supports a growing population while reducing the cost of living for Australians.

Without significant changes to current investment practices, the civil construction industry will lack the skills, capital, and expertise necessary to achieve the Government’s ambitious targets in housing, energy, and climate action.

Australia has seen housing commencements slow from 228,842 dwellings commenced in the 2021 calendar year to just under 158,752 in the 12 months to June 2024. This is over a 70,000 dwelling delivery backwards step amidst record population growth. Whilst expected to moderate, we are building around 80,000 dwellings short of population needs today.



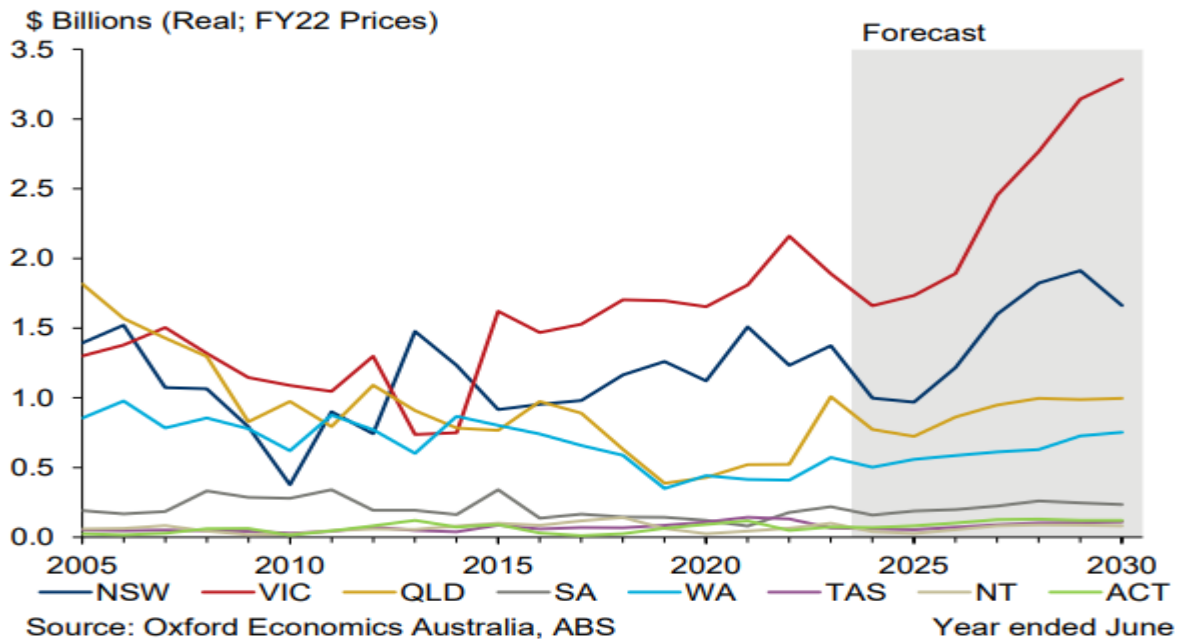
So, why is this the case? One of the key contributors to this decline are skills deficits to deliver the last kilometre housing-enabling infrastructure such as earthworks, roads, water, sewerage, and telecommunications.

In simplest terms, not one dollar in housing can be spent until a dollar has been spent in civil.

Homes in greenfield or brownfield developments where subdivision, water, sewerage, roads, energy transformation and other essential infrastructure will continue to be stifled whilst recognized skills shortages across civil trades compound the lack of housing underway.

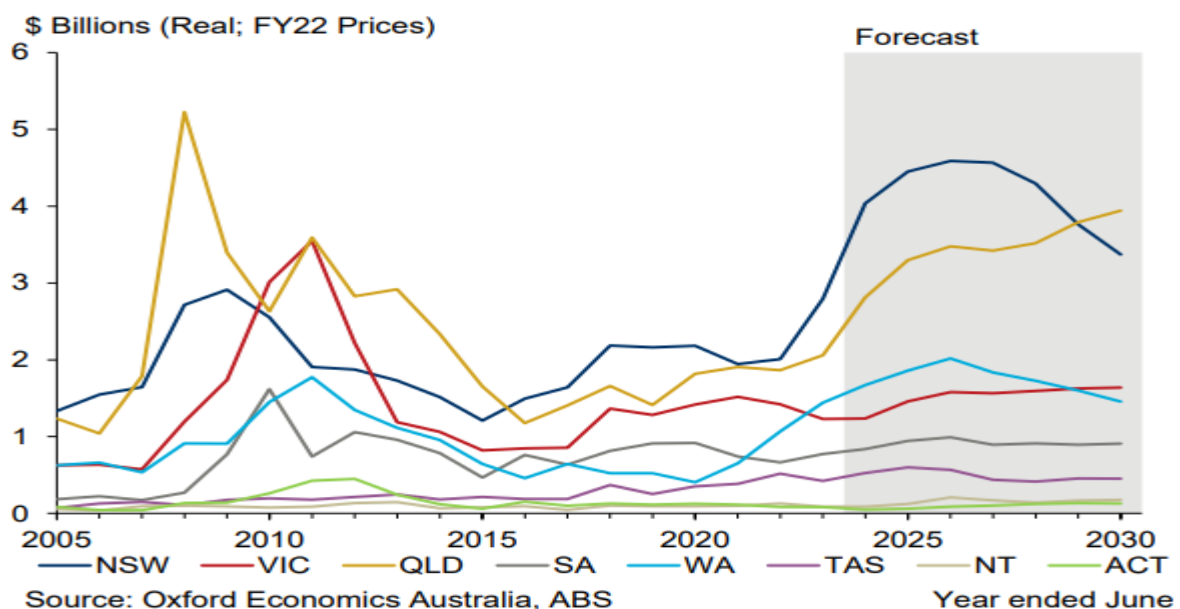
There will be a time very soon when every lever and every digger bucket will be pulled to build the 240,000 homes required per year.

Subdivisions Work Done by State



Investment in \$10-50m 'last kilometre infrastructure' particularly sewerage and water which is required to have more than a five year outlook to ensure civil skills are on hand to harness the uplift and halt the deepening housing delivery collapse.

Sewerage and Water Work Done by State



With 2025 just around the corner, the cost of rents and mortgages will be front of mind when the bills roll in and they will want the taxes that have already been extracted from the take home pay to be spent training, and prioritising anything that provides cost of living and housing relief. State and Federal funding that prioritises yoga instructors and flower growers as opposed to nation critical occupations will be a 'nice to have', just as having a residence is becoming for many today.

As the 2025-26 Federal Budget approaches, it is vital for the Commonwealth to prioritise housing enabling last kilometre civil infrastructure investment. This focus will ensure Australia is equipped to meet the challenges of a growing population, a transforming energy sector, and the need for equitable economic growth. Investing in infrastructure today lays the groundwork for a stronger, more sustainable future.

Last kilometre housing enabling infrastructure investment ensures that the subdivision is supported and the key to affordability is that those end consumers who can least afford the cost of infrastructure avoid this cost. In much the same way that first home owner grants reduce the burden on those with least capacity to pay, this will reduce the cost to people looking to secure a home.

Solution: The Commonwealth can plan for a 20-year plan for sustained infrastructure investment with \$10b for \$10-100m last kilometre housing enabling infrastructure projects supporting housing delivery in the communities with rising population, increasing rents/mortgages and low delivery rates of dwellings.

[Further information on the role of civil to in delivering housing and community enabling infrastructure can be found here.](#)

2. Paving the Way for Australia's Energy Transition

Beyond housing, infrastructure is critical to the success of major national projects. From enabling solar farms in regional areas to upgrading ports for international trade and creating the foundation for domestic manufacturing, civil construction ensures Australia's ambitions can be realised.

Australia's goals for reducing the cost of living and achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050 are best supported by prioritising investment in civil construction. A robust approach to civil infrastructure is essential to delivering housing affordability and broader economic resilience.

The CCF urges the Australian Government to prioritise and allocate substantial investment in infrastructure as part of the 2025-26 Federal Budget to facilitate and assist with planning, approval and rollout of vital energy renewable projects.

Infrastructure is the bedrock of Australia's economy and is critical to achieving the nation's energy transition goals, alleviating housing pressures, and supporting sustainable economic growth. To meet these objectives, the CCF presents key recommendations for consideration.

The CCF sees it critical that our country:

- increases infrastructure investment to support Australia's energy transition. This includes funding critical projects such as grid upgrades, wind farms, and low-emission industrial precincts, which are essential for decarbonization.

Secondly:

- Streamlines government procurement processes is essential to ensure fair opportunities for local contractors. The CCF advocates for reforms in risk allocation and tendering processes, alongside consistent, long-term planning for infrastructure projects. These measures will prevent the cyclical boom-and-bust nature of infrastructure development and foster a stable industry environment.

Therefore, establishing a National Renewables Infrastructure Plan will attract international capital, streamline approvals, and ensure that renewable energy projects are delivered efficiently to meet net-zero targets.

The CCF believes these recommendations align with the government's decarbonization commitments and will provide a robust foundation for economic stability and community development. We welcome the opportunity to collaborate with the government to implement these initiatives as part of the 2025-26 Federal Budget.

Solution: Establish a National Renewables Infrastructure Plan to guide investment, attract capable and enable civil contractors to deliver on our net zero targets.

3. Bridging the Civil Skills Divide

Civil infrastructure is the backbone of Australia's development and economic growth. It plays a pivotal role in addressing the nation's housing needs, supporting the transition to renewable energy, and driving productivity across all sectors. Without the skills in civil, health, educational, housing which is the community enabling infrastructure of water, sewerage, roads, subdivisions is costing more or simply not built.

With a workforce of 177,000 employees, civil construction is a major contributor to economic activity, particularly in regional areas.

However, the sector is facing a critical challenge. According to Infrastructure Australia, there is a projected shortage of 229,000 full-time infrastructure workers as of October 2023, with these shortages expected to persist. The Civil Contractors Federation's (CCF) 2024 Annual Market Capacity Survey revealed that contractors overwhelmingly identified the availability of local skilled tradespeople and professionals as the single largest cause of project delays.

Alarmingly, 81% of contractors reported significant skills shortages across their workforce, in roles such as Bulldozer Operators, Road Rollers, Earthmoving Plant Operators, and Crane Riggers. 60% of contractors reported shortages in Plant Operators in particular. As per the survey 82% of Contractors indicate that candidates don't have the appropriate skills or experience when seeking to employ. 69% reported that delays on timelines on projects are primarily caused by lack of availability of local skilled tradespeople and professionals.

In December 2024, the *Core Skills Occupations List* of key nationally prioritised jobs was released and included Flower Growers, Yoga Instructors, Wine Makers, Shoe Makers, Diving Instructors, Goat Farmers, Boarding Kennel Operators, Cinema Managers, and countless occupations who have not been in shortage for the past four years. Yet housing-enabling infrastructure civil occupations are left off the list.

Putting this into perspective, just to pick a few:

Flower Growers, Yoga Instructors and Cinema Managers are:

- Not in shortage anywhere in Australia or considered in national shortage for the past four years
- Can be trained here and provide jobs for Australians in a cooling economy
- Do not in any way enable one house to be delivered for a family squeezed out of the rental market.

In contrast, Earthmoving Plant Operators as well as Excavator Operators:

- Have been in shortage across Australia over the past four years, as noted by Jobs and Skills Australia
- Are not prioritised for funding for training, therefore less are able to be skilled up
- Are the first principle to build community, meaning a home can't be built if they and the civil trades have not been there first
- Can be prioritised to be trained to fill shortages that exist today.

The Skills Priority List (SPL) produced by the Australian Government - Jobs and Skills Australia provides a current assessment of the Australian labour market, including a detailed view of occupations in shortage and the anticipated future demand for occupations. Civil has a significant list of occupations in shortage for some time that pushes up cost or see projects simply not undertaken.

In response to these challenges, the CCF is calling on the Commonwealth Government to formally recognise the vital role of apprenticeships and trades within the civil sector.

Despite its critical importance to Australia's infrastructure and economy, the civil construction industry has not received adequate support for training and workforce development.

In shortage since 2021: Bulldozer Operator, Excavator Operator, Road Roller, Linemarkers, Earthmoving Plant Operator

In shortage since 2022: Civil Engineer, Quantity Surveyor, Civil Engineering Technician, Crane

- Operator, Mobile Plant Operator, Driller, Truck Driver, Construction Rigger, Crane Chaser
- Each of the trades require prioritisation to ensure we have the skills on the ground to provide the Community Enabling Infrastructure and build the energy transition.

The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations and the Department of Home Affairs continue to rely upon ANZSCO (Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations), as the only metric to identifying skills shortages. Under the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO) framework, construction workers tradies building a house are regarded as skilled – and eligible for skilled migration pathways – while their counterparts constructing housing-enabling roads, railways, subdivisions and pipelines are regarded as unskilled. The outdated ANZSCO framework harks back to a time when it was believed that houses were built by skilled tradespersons, while civil infrastructure was built by unskilled plant operators and labourers.

If anyone still believes this is the case, we invite them to visit a civil construction site and see the incredible level of trade-level skills required to construct modern infrastructure.

The 2023 Migration Strategy stated that skilled operators of excavators and other heavy construction equipment would be eligible for the Core Skills stream of the new Skills in Demand visa, subject to meeting skills shortage and wage threshold requirements. After skilled civil construction occupations had been locked out of migration pathways for decades, it finally looked like common sense would prevail. It seemed that politicians and policy makers were finally acknowledging that the archaic ANZSCO occupation classification framework was no longer fit for purpose.

This framework poorly classifies most civil trades as low skilled, excluding them from various programs including the Australian Apprenticeship Incentive Scheme and the Migration Strategy's Core Skills Occupation list.

These civil construction skills shortages are directly impacting our nation's ability to address the housing crisis

Solution: The inclusion of civil trades on the Australian Apprentice Priority List 2026 and Core Skills Occupations List will allow the industry to compete with other options such as university. The Commonwealth Migration and Skills paths must resolve issues with assessment via outdated and rigid ANZSCO classifications and support the skills and workforce the construction industry requires.

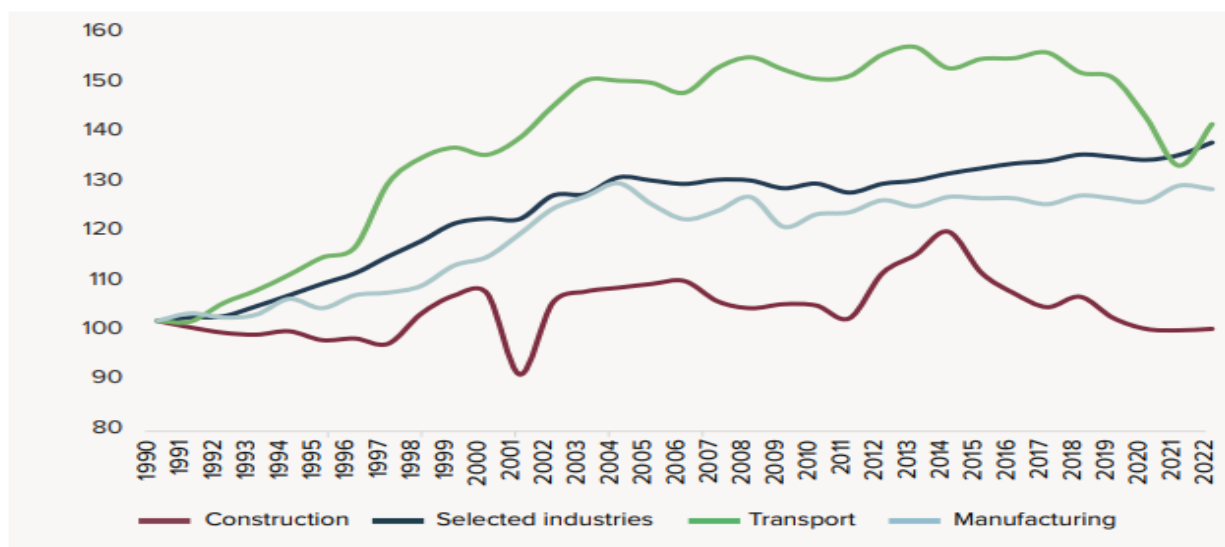
Listings on the Australian Apprentice Priority List for 2026 to allow civil apprenticeships (RII30920 - Certificate III in Civil Construction and RII30820 - Certificate III in Civil Construction Plant Operations & Certificate III in Civil Construction Plant Operations) to compete with other options such as tertiary education as a viable career.

4. Infrastructure Procurement and Investment - More Constructive & More Productive

Infrastructure delivery in Australia has traditionally focused on the largest tier-one firms due to the nature of the project pipeline and a risk-averse approach from procurers. This focus often fails to adequately reach local communities and contributes to significant multi-billion-dollar blowouts in the national infrastructure pipeline. Promoting smaller projects, particularly those under \$500 million, supports a “Made in Australia” agenda, fostering local employment, skills development, and project delivery in every community.

Smaller projects ensure greater local content, appropriate risk allocation, workforce upskilling, and higher economic growth across Australia’s regions through Commonwealth government contracts.

The 2023 Infrastructure Australia Annual Market Capacity Report indicates a concerning dip in national productivity, making it clear that Australia’s current infrastructure delivery methods must evolve. The Commonwealth is uniquely positioned to lead the way by trialling innovative approaches to infrastructure procurement and project delivery. By piloting new models that emphasize collaboration, competition, and risk-sharing, the government can set a new standard for infrastructure delivery that drives productivity and enhances value for money.

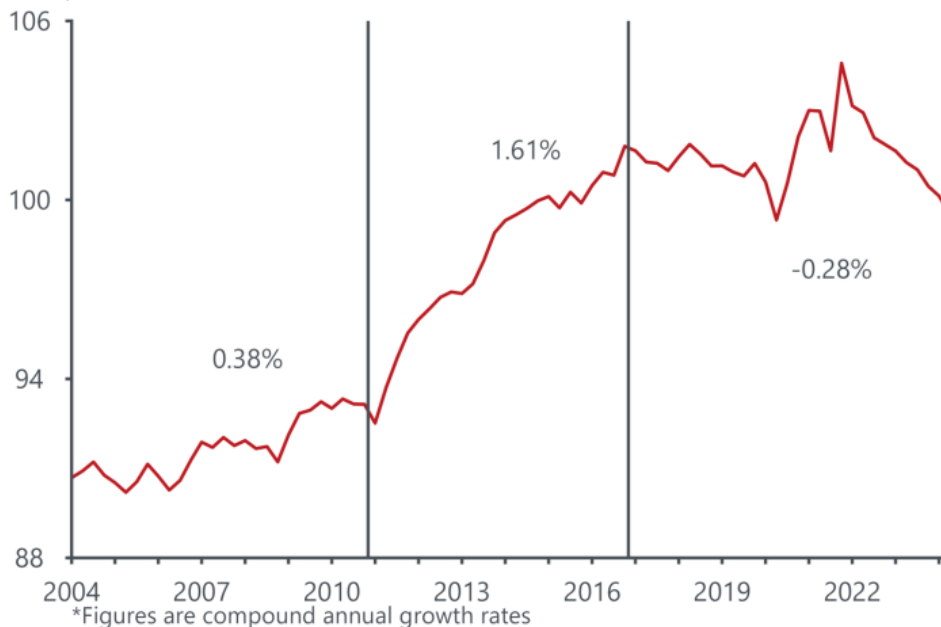


Federal infrastructure investment is critical to building Australia’s economic and social well-being. Civil infrastructure, in particular, enables the development of affordable housing and the growth of sustainable communities. With Australia facing a housing crisis, the flagship \$10 billion Housing Australia Future Fund and the target of delivering 40,000 homes are reliant on robust infrastructure

investment. Future pipelines, especially in regional areas, must prioritise civil infrastructure to meet the housing challenge and deliver results by 2030.

Labour Productivity

Index, 2015=100*



The Federal Government’s \$120 billion Infrastructure Investment Program has the potential to transform Australia’s economy and communities. However, clarity is urgently needed on the timing and allocation of funds set aside for delayed projects. Construction costs have risen significantly, with increases in the prices of labour, concrete, steel, asphalt, fuel, and other inputs. The Federal Government must adjust its infrastructure funding commitments to reflect this new reality and ensure that its investments remain viable.

States and territories have limited capacity to raise the necessary funds to deliver critical infrastructure projects. The Federal Government’s new 50/50 funding rule for regional projects places an additional burden on the states, jeopardizing the viability of many nationally significant regional projects. The CCF strongly urges the Federal Government to reconsider this funding model and provide greater financial support for critical regional infrastructure.

Moreover, the Federal Government’s \$500 million threshold for projects to qualify as “nationally significant” risks excluding many worthy initiatives, particularly in regional areas and smaller metropolitan centres. This threshold could disadvantage the very local contractors and communities that the government aims to support. Instead, the guiding principle should be that projects are cost-effective and backed by strong business cases. While a minimum threshold is reasonable to manage the project pipeline, \$500 million is too high and could stifle essential infrastructure development.

In this context, the CCF advocates for ongoing procurement reform to maximize the economic and social returns on the government’s infrastructure spend. This includes better utilization of diverse procurement models tailored to the specific needs of different projects. Where significant risk

exists, a collaborative approach is essential to achieve fair and improved risk allocation. The Commonwealth should take a stronger leadership role, trialling new delivery models and ensuring states and territories have the resources necessary to manage tender processes and these new more collaborative delivery models more efficiently and effectively.

The CCF applauds aspects of the 2024-29 Federal Funding Agreement (FFA) which provides a pivotal opportunity to drive meaningful improvements in the construction industry.

Clause 21 of the FFA outlines shared responsibilities between the Commonwealth and the States to enhance the productivity, capacity, capability, and diversity of the industry. Specifically, the agreement emphasises the need to ensure projects are delivered appropriately while supporting firms across all tiers of the market.

Additionally, the FFA includes a commitment requiring States to develop and submit a 10-year Annual Infrastructure Plan. This plan must provide a strategic view of land transport priorities, including project sequencing and responses to challenges such as cost pressures, population growth, carbon emissions, regional development, and urban policy. These plans represent a critical mechanism for improving project visibility and strategic alignment across jurisdictions.

To maximise the potential of the FFA, it is essential to ensure these commitments are prioritised and implemented transparently.

For example, promoting smaller projects within the framework of the FFA could ensure a more equitable distribution of resources and opportunities for firms of all sizes.

Furthermore, requiring States to publish their Annual Infrastructure Plans would enhance accountability and foster collaboration between the Commonwealth, States, and industry stakeholders.

By addressing these challenges and pioneering innovative approaches to infrastructure delivery, the Federal Government can reverse the productivity dip, build a more inclusive and impactful infrastructure agenda, and support local communities while meeting Australia's long-term housing and economic needs.

Solution: The Commonwealth must increase or maintain the \$120b infrastructure pipeline to pilot innovative approaches to enhance productivity in infrastructure delivery and focus on procurement that address final kilometre housing enabling investment that focus on shortages.

This involves collaborating with state governments, industry associations, local councils, and stakeholders to identify critical housing-enabling infrastructure and implement efficient procurement and project management practices applied to local infrastructure projects (between \$10m-100m). By focusing on direct contracting, competitive procurement, and active project oversight in targeted areas of housing need, such initiatives can mitigate common issues like cost overruns and delays in major projects.

Success metrics should include procurement timeframes, contractor diversity, cost variance, and adherence to schedules, with particular attention to areas experiencing low housing commencements, high mortgage and rental price growth, and low rental vacancies.

Implementing these pilot programs can provide replicable models for future infrastructure investments, fostering a more efficient and responsive approach to Australia's housing and infrastructure needs.

Solution: The Commonwealth to make available funding and support to enable State Governments, Local Governments and Civil Contractors to trial and adopt more efficient technologies and systems to boost productivity particularly in smaller housing enabling.

5. Restoring Civility to Civil Worksites

The Civil Contractors Federation is dedicated to fostering a safe and sustainable civil construction industry that consistently delivers high-quality, fit-for-purpose infrastructure for the people and communities of Australia.

Safe and Secure Worksite: The safety of every person in the construction industry is paramount. We must get serious about improving psychosocial safety, and address issues like bullying and suicide prevention with the same rigour we have applied to physical safety.

A Competitive and Productive Industry: We strive for a construction industry where businesses of all sizes—whether multinationals or small family operations—can thrive and successfully secure government contracts as head contractors. A strong economy relies on a robust construction industry, and a healthy industry depends on the well-being of all: workers, employers, and clients alike.

Strong and Fair Representation: We believe unions must represent their members fairly and with integrity, ensuring that the rights and interests of workers are upheld in a manner that contributes positively to the industry's overall health.

Independent Oversight: Is needed to ensure long term cultural change, compliance and industry health. The Civil Contractors Federation National Infrastructure Market Capacity Survey 2022 confirmed that the civil infrastructure industry continues to be in a strong position to deliver on the Government's infrastructure agenda and has capacity to tender for additional projects.

Following the CFMEU being placed under administration, there has never been a more critical time to begin the process of reforming the industrial relations framework.

The broader union movement, government, and industry have entered into a dialogue not seen in decades, presenting a unique and timely opportunity for meaningful collaboration.

The government should seize this moment to drive constructive change and lay the foundation for a modern, balanced industrial relations system.

Solution: As the first step, the government should call for submissions on a 2025 Industrial Relations Reform Package specifically tailored to the construction industry, ensuring the framework supports productivity, fairness, and long-term sustainability.

[Further details on the CCF's comprehensive plan to restore civility to civil construction can be found here.](#)

6. Innovation in Motion - Building a Productive Construction Industry

The Civil Contractors Federation advocates for targeted measures to improve multi factor productivity within Australia's civil construction industry. These measures focus on reducing costs, fostering innovation, and streamlining processes to enable the delivery of critical infrastructure projects efficiently and effectively.

Continuation of the Current Fuel Tax Credit System: The Fuel Tax Credit (FTC) system is a critical component for the civil construction industry, ensuring that businesses are not unfairly taxed for fuel used in off-road activities. The Australian Treasury has clarified that fuel tax credits are not subsidies but mechanisms to offset excise or duty levied on fuel used off-road or in heavy on-road vehicles.

In civil construction, machinery such as excavators, bulldozers, and graders operate primarily off public roads. Without the FTC system, companies would face increased operational costs due to fuel excise taxes intended for road maintenance, despite their equipment not contributing to road wear and tear. This misalignment would lead to higher project costs and, ultimately, increased expenses for infrastructure development.

Maintaining the current FTC system is essential for the financial viability of civil construction projects. It ensures that businesses are not subjected to inappropriate taxation, allowing them to allocate resources more effectively towards innovation, safety, and quality in infrastructure delivery.

Therefore, the continuation of the FTC system is vital for sustaining a competitive and productive civil construction industry, which is foundational to Australia's economic growth and development.

Solution: The Commonwealth Government must rule out any changes to the Fuel Tax Scheme.

Grants for Modernisation and Efficiency Improvements: The civil construction industry operates in a highly competitive environment, with contractors frequently required to tender for individual projects. This tendering model, coupled with an uncertain infrastructure project pipeline, creates significant disincentives for contractors to invest in new technologies and modernisation. The short-term nature of project commitments often means contractors lack the financial security or confidence to make long-term investments in advanced equipment, technologies, or innovative construction methods that could improve efficiency and productivity.

To address this issue, the Commonwealth Government should consider establishing targeted grant programs aimed at enabling contractors to invest in modernisation. These grants could help bridge the gap between the industry's current capabilities and the advancements needed to meet

Australia's growing infrastructure demands. By reducing the financial barriers to innovation, such initiatives would promote the adoption of new technologies and practices, leading to improved project delivery and cost-efficiency.

Grants of this nature are not unprecedented. Similar programs are available at both Federal and State levels to support sectors like agriculture and manufacturing under the Commonwealth's *Made in Australia* policy agenda. These programs have demonstrated that targeted financial support can effectively drive innovation, improve competitiveness, and ensure the long-term sustainability of critical industries.

Extending this approach to the civil construction industry would yield similar benefits, ensuring contractors are equipped with the tools and technologies needed to deliver high-quality infrastructure projects efficiently. Such grants would also position the industry to contribute more effectively to the nation's economic growth, environmental sustainability, and job creation goals. By fostering a more modern and productive civil construction sector, the Commonwealth Government would be investing not only in infrastructure but in the future resilience and capacity of the industry itself.

Solution: The Commonwealth Government should give consideration to a grants program targeted to boost productivity and efficiency within the construction sector as part of the 2025-26 Budget.

Simplifying Reporting Obligations and Cutting Red Tape

Excessive regulatory burdens and inconsistent reporting requirements across jurisdictions hinder productivity and create inefficiencies. The Commonwealth should work with States and Territories to harmonise regulatory frameworks, streamline compliance processes, and reduce unnecessary red tape. This will allow contractors to focus their resources on delivering high-quality infrastructure projects rather than navigating complex administrative requirements.

These measures are critical for strengthening the civil construction industry and ensuring it can meet the demands of Australia's growing infrastructure agenda while supporting economic growth and job creation.

Solution: The Commonwealth to encourage State and Territory Government to repeal red tape and simplify approval and reporting requirements.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Civil Contractors Federation National (CCF) underscores the pivotal role of the civil construction industry in Australia's economic and social development. Our members are instrumental in delivering essential infrastructure that enhances community livability and supports national growth. The 2025–26 budget priorities set forth by CCF are strategically aligned with the nation's objectives to address housing shortages, advance infrastructure investment, boost productivity, develop workforce skills, and promote environmental sustainability.

By advocating for sustained federal investment in housing-enabling infrastructure, the CCF aims to alleviate housing pressures and support the government's housing targets. Emphasizing the need for procurement reforms and innovative project delivery models, we seek to enhance productivity within the construction sector, ensuring timely and cost-effective completion of projects.

Addressing the skills gap is critical; therefore, we call for the inclusion of civil trades on the Australian Apprentice Priority List and the Core Skills Occupations List. This inclusion will facilitate the development of a skilled workforce capable of meeting current and future infrastructure demands.

Environmental sustainability remains a cornerstone of our agenda. We advocate for the establishment of a National Renewables Infrastructure Plan to guide investments that align with Australia's net-zero targets, ensuring that the civil construction industry contributes effectively to the nation's energy transition.

The CCF is committed to collaborating with government entities, industry stakeholders, and communities to implement these priorities. Through collective effort, we can build a resilient, prosperous, and sustainable future for all Australians, reinforcing the civil construction industry's role as the backbone of the nation's development.

Recommended Commonwealth Policy Positions Summary

The Civil Contractors Federation urges the Commonwealth Government to adopt the following policy proposals to address critical challenges in civil infrastructure, workforce development, and economic sustainability:

1. Housing and Community Enabling Infrastructure

- **Proposal:** The Commonwealth can plan for a 20-year plan for sustained infrastructure investment with \$10b for \$10-100m last kilometre housing enabling infrastructure projects supporting housing delivery in the communities with rising population, increasing rents/mortgages and low delivery rates of dwellings.
- **Objective:** Ensure sustained support for civil infrastructure projects that directly enable affordable housing, addressing Australia's housing shortages and reducing cost-of-living pressures.

2. Paving the Way for Australia's Energy Transition

- **Proposal:** Establish a National Renewables Infrastructure Plan to guide investment, attract capable and enable civil contractors to deliver on our net zero targets.
- **Objective:** Support the energy transition by funding grid upgrades, wind farms, and low-emission industrial precincts, ensuring Australia achieves its decarbonisation commitments.

3. Bridging the Civil Skills Divide

- **Proposal:**
 - Prioritise funding and support for state and local governments and civil contractors to trial and adopt efficient technologies and systems, boosting productivity within the civil sector.
 - Include civil trades (e.g., Earthmoving Plant Operators, Excavator Operators) on the Australian Apprentice Priority List 2026 and the Core Skills Occupations List. Revise outdated ANZSCO classifications to better reflect the importance of civil trades.
- **Objective:** Address critical skills shortages in civil trades, enhance training opportunities, and ensure an adequately skilled workforce to meet current and future infrastructure demands.

4. Infrastructure Procurement and Investment - More Constructive & More Productive

- **Proposal:** Pilot innovative approaches to procurement and project management to enhance productivity and mitigate cost overruns and delays. This includes:
 - Collaborating with state governments, industry associations, and local councils to identify critical housing-enabling infrastructure projects.
 - Implementing direct contracting, competitive procurement, and active project oversight.
- **Objective:** Establish replicable models for future infrastructure investments, fostering efficiency and resilience in Australia's housing and infrastructure sectors.

5. Restoring Civility to Civil Worksites

- **Proposal:** The Commonwealth must commit to and begin consultation on a 2025 Industrial Relations Reform Package specifically tailored to the construction industry, ensuring the framework supports productivity, fairness, and long-term sustainability.
- **Objective:** Ensuring the industrial relations framework supports productivity, fairness, and long-term sustainability with safety and wellbeing at the centre.

6. Innovation in Motion - Building a Productive Construction Industry

- **Proposal:** Introduce regulatory reforms and initiatives to promote innovation and streamline processes, boosting productivity while reducing compliance burdens and fostering industry-wide efficiency by:
 - The Commonwealth Government must rule out any changes to the Fuel Tax Scheme.
 - The Commonwealth Government should give consideration to a grants program targeted to boost productivity and efficiency within the construction sector as part of the 2025-26 Budget.
 - The Commonwealth to encourage State and Territory Government to repeal red tape and simplify approval and reporting requirements.

These policy proposals align with national objectives to address housing shortages, advance the energy transition, and boost productivity while fostering a resilient, sustainable future for Australians. Adopting these recommendations will empower the Commonwealth to meet these critical challenges effectively.

About CCF National Office

CCF is the nationally recognized peak body representing the industry nationally for civil construction which refers to the design, construction, and maintenance of the physical and naturally built environment, including public works such as roads, bridges, dams, airports, ports, drainage, energy, water, sewerage systems, pipelines, and railways which is truly National Community Enabling Infrastructure that builds Australia.

The CCF National Office represents the industry for civil construction through both:

- Civil Contractors Federation National Registered Organisation (CCFNRO - ABN 41 639 349 350) is registered with the Fair Work Commission as the nationally Registered Organization for Civil Construction under the provisions of the Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth) with roughly 1200 registered contractor Members ranging from smaller businesses to tier 1 builders with over 1,000 employees each and 600 Associate Partners; and
- Civil Contractors Federation Australia (CCFA LTD - ABN 89 618 345 261) as per its objects was established for the charitable purposes of promoting, protecting and advancing the civil construction industry in Australia for the public benefit including by being the peak body representing the civil construction industry in Australia. Each State and Territory has branches that operate as incorporated entities with each jurisdiction electing a representative to the CCFA LTD Board. To achieve these objects CCFA LTD may, without limitation:
 - undertake facilitation and coordination functions in relation to the civil construction industry in Australia;
 - provide education and training;
 - lead discussion and implement policy for best practice and safety in the construction industry;
 - harness the resources of the community in support of the objects.

