

JOBS & SKILLS SUMMIT

Master Builders State and Territory Briefing
Parliament House, Canberra, 1-2 September

The Federal Government's Jobs and Skills Summit is poised to bring together key stakeholders including unions, employers, communities and governments to address shared economic challenges.

The Summit is a precursor for the development of an Employment White Paper. The Summit and White Paper will focus on: productivity; increasing wages; job security; employment opportunities; skills shortages; migration; climate jobs; closing the gender divide; and vocational education and training (VET).

Master Builders estimates the building and construction industry will need 477,000 workers to enter the industry in the next four and a half years to meet forecast growth and replacement. 200,000 of these workers will be in the trades, with current apprentice completion rates below 60 per cent, around 350,000 apprentices will need to commence to attain 200,000 completions.

Master Builders has four key policy priorities for jobs and skills in 2022-23 and beyond

- Establish a Building and Construction Industry Cluster: to lead workforce planning and training development
- Clarify and address current and future workforce needs: so the industry can attract, train and retain workers
- Improve workforce mobility: so workers can undertake comparable work anywhere in Australia
- Improve transparency in VET funding and governance: to incentivise quality and improve value for money

Key messages for the Jobs & Skills Summit

1. Australia needs **flexible working environments** and employment conditions that are able to meet the needs of both employees and employers.
2. Increases in **wages** need to be linked to **productivity** enhancements.
3. The construction industry is actively working to improve **labour force diversity** by addressing barriers to entry and retention of under-represented workers, including women. Continued government support is critical to facilitate long-term change.
4. **Automatic mutual recognition and occupational licensing** needs to be fast-tracked so workers can undertake comparable work anywhere in Australia.
5. **Migration settings** need to be flexible and responsive to enable employers to access international workers for roles where domestic supply is insufficient. In the immediate term, the backlog of applications needs to be cleared, temporary occupation lists removed, and Australia promoted as a great destination to work.
6. **Industry Clusters** need to bring together workforce planning and training development to breakdown silos, better address current and future skills needs planning, and ensure training products align with needs.
7. The new **VET funding agreement** needs to deliver real growth in funding for training delivery, improve the transparency of how funds are spent, and allocate funding based on evidence of training quality and outcomes while representing value for public expenditure.
8. An **Apprentice Commencement and Retention Strategy** is needed to bring together the findings from decades of pilot projects, improve consistency of programs and incentives, and establish long-term targets.

Key actions for state and territory governments

- Increase real funding for VET training delivery and take a long-term evidence-based approach to funding distribution that rewards training quality and outcomes.
- Work collaboratively with jurisdictional and federal governments, employers, and training providers to develop and implement an Apprentice Commencement and Retention Strategy.
- Provide funding and support for initiatives that aim to increase female participation in traditionally male-dominated industries and occupations.
- Maximise workforce mobility by:
 - fast-tracking Automatic Mutual Recognition of occupational licensing and remove exemptions for construction
 - ensuring occupational licensing bodies and regulators recognise comparable international qualifications and trade pathways.

Attract, train and retain the workforce our industry needs

With a forecast 477,000 workers needed by November 2026 action is needed to ATTRACT, TRAIN and RETAIN the workforce our industry needs.

ATTRACT	TRAIN	RETAIN
<p><u>Aim:</u> Workers are attracted to the industry regardless of gender, age, experience or nationality. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The next generation of workers • Under-represented cohorts, including women • Workers in other industries • International workers. <p><u>Enablers:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industry Cluster workforce plans and forecasting capability • Research on the work needs and preferences of cohorts, including the next generation • Government funding for initiatives to attract under-represented workers, e.g. for Women Building Australia • Career education in schools is up to date, thorough, and unbiased • Simple, cost-effective migration settings that enable employers to access international talent • Training providers and licensing bodies recognise comparable international qualifications and trade pathways 	<p><u>Aim:</u> Education and training is up to date, fit for purpose, and meets the skills and knowledge needs of entering and existing workers in the industry.</p> <p><u>Enablers:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stable and transparent government funding and incentives for VET that represent value for money and incentivise quality outcomes • An Apprentice Commencement and Retention Strategy • Independent information on RTOs to incentivise higher quality training, improve outcomes, and enable informed decision making • Strong governance for Industry Clusters to ensure project initiation and development is in the best interests of the industry • Improved work placement opportunities for higher education students to improve work readiness • Bridging opportunities to assist international workers understand Australian building requirements 	<p><u>Aim:</u> Meaningful and rewarding job and career opportunities in an industry that is inclusive and supportive will mean workers stay in the construction industry for longer.</p> <p><u>Enablers:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and promote best practice businesses and employers • Identify and bridge the gap between the expectations of employers and the next generation of workers • Improve worker understanding of careers and pathways • Develop an Apprentice Commencement and Retention Strategy • Address cultural issues, including by calling out poor behaviour and providing training to facilitate change • Automatic mutual recognition of occupational licensing so workers can undertake comparable work anywhere in Australia



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