



MASTER BUILDERS
A U S T R A L I A

Submission National Skills Passport Consultation

February 2024



WA

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SA

QLD

NSW

NCL

ACT

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Introduction

Master Builders Australia (Master Builders) welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the Department of Education and Department of Employment and Workplace Relations' (the Departments) *National Skills Passport* consultation.

Master Builders is the nation's peak building and construction industry association which was federated in 1890. Master Builders' members are the Master Builder state and territory associations. Master Builders is the only industry association that represents all three sectors: residential, commercial and civil construction.

Master Builders members represent over 32,000 businesses, including the top 100 construction companies.

Members include registered training organisations (RTOs) and group training organisations (GTOs) that provide apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship services, as well as other education and training to people in the building and construction industry.

Master Builders RTOs have higher rates of retention and completion than other RTOs in the building and construction sector. They provide training by industry, for industry.

Master Builders is supportive of a National Skills Passport in principle, and notes that the building and construction industry does already have access to similar services, for example, MyPass¹.

The Building and Construction Industry

WORKFORCE



EMPLOYS 1.31M PEOPLE

86 per cent of all jobs are full-time.

The most consistent employer of full-time workers than any other industry. (August, 2023)



\$77.2 BILLION

in wages paid. (2021–22)



124,440 APPRENTICES

are employed in the building and construction industry, accounting for roughly half of the economy's trade apprentices.

BUSINESS



OVER 444,000 BUSINESSES

of which 98.7 per cent are small businesses. (June, 2023)



OVER 262,000

independent contractors typically operate as sole traders or partnerships. (June, 2023)



57.2%

of businesses turn over less than \$200,000 a year. 1.4 per cent of businesses have annual revenues of more than \$10 million.

ACTIVITY



\$127.2B

worth of civil and engineering construction done. (Year to September 2023)



171,000

new home starts 63 per cent detached dwellings. (Year to June 2023)



2,930

new units of public sector housing commenced. (Year to September 2023)

¹ See <https://en-us.mypassglobal.com/>

Building and construction is one of the largest sectors of the Australian economy. With more housing needed than ever before, the industry workforce needs to grow significantly in coming years. At least half a million new workers will be needed by the end of 2026, with even more required to meet National Housing Accord and net zero transformation targets.

Apprenticeship commencements are dropping, and completions are not growing at a rate that will fill workforce shortages. In the year to June 2023, a total of 23,297 new building and construction apprenticeships were completed with a further 41,552 apprentices and trainees commencing. At the end of June 2023, 122,677 building and construction industry apprentices were in training.

The apprentice completion rate for building and construction related trades at TAFE is around 50 per cent. At non-profit RTOs it is higher and at Master Builders RTOs and GTOs around the country, it is even higher again.

The industry needs more students and apprentices.

To become skilled in a trade is no easy feat. It takes years of learning and finessing one's craft. The educational journey of a tradesperson usually starts with a pre-apprenticeship, then an apprenticeship, then further study to obtain licensing. On top of this is a need for continuing professional development, White Card training, asbestos awareness, and other short courses to upskill and ensure relevance in the ever-evolving regulatory environment.

The opportunities for training in this sector are seemingly endless. By way of example, a list of some of the accredited and non-accredited courses offered by the Master Builders network is at Appendix A. The scope of training is immense and a clear example of how much education and continuous learning is involved in a career in building and construction. Listed is vocational education and training (VET). There are also higher education degrees to consider, as well as extensive learning in business management, law, finance, management and communications that business owners and tradespeople in this industry undertake.

It is not just about apprenticeships. Building and construction truly is an example of where lifelong learning is critical.

Master Builders makes the following comments on behalf of employers, training organisations and students on how a National Skills Passport might impact this industry.

Building and Construction Employers

Credentials Verification

Building and construction is a sector largely based on practice. It is quickly obvious if someone is not truthful regarding the practical skills they possess. That said, a platform that would allow employers to more easily verify a prospective employee's credentials would be of value. This is particularly useful where employers cannot verify qualifications using the Unique Student Identifier (USI) system.

Licensing Across Borders

If the National Skills Passport houses licensing information for trades, and allows organisations to determine whether a licence from another state or territory is comparable to their own, this would be helpful in encouraging more cross-border trade movement. This is increasingly important as states and territories aim to meet Housing Accord targets and prepare for large events such as the 2032 Olympics².

² Master Builders notes that there is already a process for assessing mutual recognition for the 2032 Olympics, although if the National Skills Passport included a description of the scope of work covered by the licence, that may assist in the mutual recognition process.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

If CPD becomes compulsory, a National Skills Passport would be useful for employers when verifying whether staff have undertaken the number and type of units required to continue to hold their licence and/or qualification or continue in a role.

It would also be worth exploring with the jurisdictions who have implemented compulsory CPD in the construction industry (NSW) and those looking to implement compulsory CPD (Queensland and Victoria), whether a national Skills Passport would assist in administration of the proposed schemes.

Site Inductions and Licences

If the National Skills Passport holds information relating to compulsory training such as White Card and Asbestos Awareness, this would be useful for employers to be able to verify completion. This may apply in future to other safety requirements that become compulsory.

It may also be helpful if it houses licences such as those required to work safely at heights, operate machinery and undertake certain trades, for example.

Effectively, a digital wallet of qualifications, licences and certifications required to work on site would be valuable.

Regulation

The industry is highly regulated. A National Skills Passport that cultivates a link between qualifications, accredited courses and non-accredited courses across all tertiary providers would be of value to the building and construction industry if it links training with regulatory requirements. For example, if the National Skills Passport shows that an employee has undertaken study in an area that is newly introduced by the National Construction Code, this would be of use to employers and clients in meeting regulatory requirements.

Types of Training and Work Experience

Master Builders holds concerns about what kind of non-accredited training records the National Skills Passport might house. As is clear in the Appendix to this submission, Master Builders RTOs provide a huge number of accredited and non-accredited courses to the industry. Accredited training should be included in the National Skills Passport, but if non-accredited training is proposed to be included, it must be only those courses delivered by RTOs.

Government has made its position on RTOs that are not operating in good faith clear. It must not allow the National Skills Passport to become a mechanism through which such organisations gain credibility. The National Skills Passport must preserve the reputation of excellent RTOs like those run by Master Builders Associations.

Master Builders makes the same point about the inclusion of volunteer work in the National Skills Passport and suggests that only volunteer work undertaken through organisations registered with the Australian Charities and Non-Profits Commission (ACNC) are considered for inclusion.

Longevity of Credentials

Master Builders notes that consideration should be given to whether credentials earned before a certain date will be listed. Furthermore, whether it will be noted in the National Skills Passport if a credential or qualification has been superseded. If a credential is achieved before 2011, it is often considered 'not equivalent' to the current one even though the student has undertaken years of training and work experience in the industry since. The National Skills Passport must include older and superseded qualifications.

Building and Construction Training Organisations

Trainer Qualifications

The National Skills Passport could be a quick and valuable means through which RTOs could verify the qualifications of their trainers or prospective trainers. Although this process is relatively simple currently, a National Skills Passport may remove the need for RTOs to verify credentials with multiple issuing educational institutions and could result in some administrative savings.

Comparable Qualifications

The National Skills Passport may provide insight for RTOs into which educational institutions are offering similar education and training and assist in gap analysis for their region. For example, if an RTO in the south-eastern region of NSW is able to determine that it is the only institution offering non-accredited training in the prevention of sexual violence in the building and construction industry, that may allow it to increase its student intake to meet demand.

Credit Transfer

Existing credit transfer processes for RTOs in the Master Builders network are not overly time consuming or complex.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

In many areas of the building and construction industry, RPL is largely practical. For example, if a tradesperson seeks RPL for a competency or qualification, they must prove in practice that they meet the requirements. They must do this in person or via a time-stamped video of themselves undertaking the work. Only after the practical competency has been assessed could RPL be granted. This is unlike many other industries – particularly those requiring a higher education qualification – that take a simple record of work experience, or reference to grant RPL. To that effect, it is unlikely that a National Skills Passport will have an impact on the way RPL is granted in building and construction RTOs like those operated by Master Builders Associations.

Administrative Burden

The design of a National Skills Passport must consider the burden it places on RTOs when it comes to providing information. RTOs already submit information and data to regulatory and government organisations including USI and the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA). The National Skills Passport must ingest information via existing portals and not require RTOs to provide information separately. The administrative burden of this may outweigh the value of a National Skills Passport.

Building and Construction Students

Pre-apprenticeships

A National Skills Passport may be useful in connecting students who are undertaking a pre-apprenticeship with an appropriate RTO or GTO through which they can pursue their apprenticeship. It may also be useful, if designed appropriately, for students and prospective employers to connect.

Flow Between Higher Education and Vocational Education

The National Skills Passport might provide value to students in the building and construction industry seeking to go between higher and vocational education. Anecdotally, Master Builders understands from members that the flow between the two tertiary streams is minimal in their experience – mostly VET-qualified students moving to higher education. However, if the National Skills Passport allows students to determine pathways for more – and different – learning across the tertiary system, Master Builders is supportive of this objective.

Other Considerations

Master Builders notes that platforms of this kind have been recommended and explored in the past. The National Credentials Platform and Microcredentials Marketplaces form recent history in this space and did not achieve their goals. It is important that Government learns from the processes undertaken through both of these consultations and does not repeat mistakes.

It will be important for Government to better define a microcredential to ensure that a National Skills Passport is not undermining the quality of education offered by legitimate and well-regarded educational institutions.

Education and training – the way students learn and teachers deliver – is rapidly evolving. Master Builders wholly supports an objective to better integrate the tertiary system and ensure there are many valid, quality opportunities for upskilling and lifelong learning. It is fundamental in this industry. However, it must be noted that tinkering around the edges will not bring about the education system Australia seeks. Until the tertiary system – especially vocational training – is reformed to become more responsive, fit for purpose and future-focussed, Australia will not meet its goals.

Contact


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Appendix A

Qualifications and Accredited Courses	Non-Accredited Short Courses
CPC50220 Diploma of Building and Construction (Building)	Fundamentals of pre-start consultation course
CPC40120 Certificate IV in Building and Construction	Scaffolding appreciation
BSB41419 Certificate IV in Work Health and Safety	Future builder: pathway towards your builders licence in WA
CPC30220 Certification III in Carpentry	MS Excel 2016 basic/intermediate
BSB40920 Certificate IV in Project Management Practice	MS Excel 2016 advanced
BSB50420 Diploma of Leadership and Management	MS Project 2019 basic
CPC31420 Certificate III in Construction Waterproofing	MS Project 2019 intermediate/advanced
CPC60220 Advanced Diploma of Building and Construction (Management)	As a residential builder - how do I manage subcontractors and my safety duties
BSB50820 Diploma of Project Management – Online	Asbestos awareness
CPC10120 Certificate I in Construction (Fencing)	St John first aid for mental health
CPC10120 Certificate I in Construction Minor Maintenance and Non-Structural Repair	Job Safety Analysis
CPC20120 Certificate II in Construction	Leadership in WHS for supervisors and managers
CPC30220 Certificate III in Carpentry	WHS for supervisors and managers
CPC31220 Certificate III in Wall and Ceiling Lining	Psychological hazards in construction
CPC31320 Certificate III in Wall and Floor Tiling	Supervise asbestos removal including remove non-friable asbestos
CPC31420 Certificate III in Construction Waterproofing	Health and safety representative training
CPC33020 Certificate III in Bricklaying and Blocklaying	What is an 'officer' under the new WHS laws?
CPC40120 Certificate IV in Building and Construction (Building)	What so I need to do to comply with Section 18 ('what is reasonably practicable in ensuring health and safety')?
MSF31113 Certificate III in Cabinet Making	Basic contract administration
BSB30719 Certificate III in Work Health and Safety	Building applications, permits and approvals course
CPC40120 Certificate IV Building and Construction (Building)	Building with light gauge steel
Accredited Short Courses	Contract management
CPCCLRG3001 Licence to perform rigging basic level	Plan reading and building basics
CPCCLSF2001 Licence to Erect, Alter and Dismantle Scaffolding Basic Level	Tendering for government to win building and construction work
RIIWH202E Enter and work in confined spaces	Tendering and winning work
MSMWHS217 Gas Test Atmospheres	Internal waterproofing
CPCCLDG3001 Licence to perform dogging	External waterproofing
CPCCLRG3002 License to Perform Rigging Intermediate Level	Below ground waterproofing

UEERL0003 Conduct in-service safety testing of electrical cord connected equipment and cord assemblies	Wall & floor tiling
CPCCCM2009 Carry Out Basic Demolition	Electrical testing & tagging
CPCCWHS2001 Apply WHS requirements, policies & procedures in the construction industry	Controlling condensation in buildings
TLILIC0005 Licence to operate a boom-type elevating work platform (boom length 11 metres or more)	Condensation management
RIIMPO301E Conduct Hydraulic Excavator Operations	Soil & erosion management
TLILIC0003 Licence to operate a forklift truck	Silica awareness
RIIHAN301E Operate Elevating Work Platform (<11m)	Hazardous manual tasks
RIIMPO318F Conduct Civil Construction Skid Steer Loader Operations	Safety management plans
TLILIC0008 License to operate a non-slewing mobile crane (greater than 3 tonnes capacity)	MBT Contracts
TLILIC0010 - Licence to operate a slewing mobile crane (up to 20 tonnes)	Health and Safety Representatives – Refresher Course
TLILIC0023 - Licence to Operate a Slewing Mobile Crane (up to 60 tonnes)	Health and Safety Committee Training (HSC)
RIIHAN309F Conduct Telescopic Materials Handler Operations (Tele-handler)	Health and Safety Representative (HSR) Training
CPCCBC4022 Supervise tilt-up work	Microsoft Project Training (Beginner)
CPCCOM1016 Identify requirements for safe tilt-up work	Microsoft Project Training (Intermediate)
RIIWS302E Implement a traffic management plan	Peer Supporter Mental Health Training (OzHelp)
RIIWS205E Control traffic with a stop/slow bat	Waterproofing – Industry Best Practice
RIICOM201E Communicate in the workplace	Wellbeing Empowerment Workshop (OzHelp)
RIIWS201E Work safely and follow WHS policies and work procedures	Introduction to Manual Handling
CPCWHS1001 Prepare to work safely in the construction industry	WHS for Supervisors and Managers in the Building and Construction Industry
RIIWS204E Work safely at heights	Workplace Impairment Training
HLTAID011 Provide first aid	BIFA - Payment Claims & Schedules
First Aid for Mental Health	BIFA - Project trust accounts
CPCCDE3014 Remove Non-Friable Asbestos	Building consultant and expert witness seminar
CPCCDE4008 Supervise Asbestos Removal	Resolve conflicts with ease
HLTAID010 Provide basic emergency life support	Commercial Building Contract Administration
HLTAID009 – Provide cardiopulmonary resuscitation	Insolvency workshop
HLTAID009 Provide cardiopulmonary resuscitation	Microsoft Project (Level One)
11084NAT Course in Asbestos Awareness	Negotiation Skills
10852NAT Course in Working Safely with Asbestos Containing Materials	Conflict resolution

10830NAT Course in Crystalline Silica Exposure Prevention	Practical Communication Skills
CPCCLDG3001 – Licence to perform dogging	Residential Building Contracts Administration
CPCCLHS3002 – Licence to operate a materials hoist	Managing Psychosocial Hazards at Work
CPCCLRG3001 – Licence to perform rigging (basic)	Prepare Safe Work Method Statements
CPCCLRG3002 – Licence to perform rigging (intermediate)	Sexual Harassment at Work Obligations - For Business
TLILIC0013 – Licence to operate a slewing mobile crane (up to 60 tonnes)	Sexual Harassment at Work Obligations - For Workers
RIIWS201E Work Safely and follow WHS policies and procedures	Completed Residential Building Inspectors Course
RIIRIS301E Apply risk management process	Practical Licensing Applications Workshop
RIIWS302E Implement traffic management plans	Bullying in the workplace
RIIWS303 Position, set-up and program portable traffic control devices	Managing Ill and Injured Workers
RIIWS206 Control traffic with portable traffic control devices and temporary traffic signs	Performance Management – Managing Employees
RIIWS202E – Enter and Work in Confined Spaces	Paying Your People
RIIWS204E – Work Safely at Heights	Unfair Dismissal Training
TLILIC0003 Licence to Operate a Forklift Truck	Qld Anti-Discrimination Act
TLILIC0010 – C2 Licence to Operate a Slewing Mobile Crane (up to 20 tonnes)	NCC waterproofing workshop
TLILIC0005 – Licence to operate a boom-type elevating work platform (boom length 11 metres or more)	Home warranty insurance
RIIHAN301E Operate elevating work platform	Financial basics for construction
CPCCLSF2001 – Licence to erect, alter and dismantle scaffolding basic level	Understanding MFR's and QBCC licensing
CPCCLSF3001 Licence to erect, alter and dismantle scaffolding intermediate level	Construction business risks
QBLRSS1 Low Rise Site Supervisor Skillsset (10 units from 19 from CERT IV B&C)- new course	Trauma and resilience
BSBESB402 - Establish legal and risk management requirements of new business ventures	Diversity and inclusion
UEESS00174 – Electrical safety testing of electrical cord connected equipment and cord assemblies skill set	Introduction to Digital Marketing Skills
UEECD0007 Apply work health and safety regulations, codes and practices in the workplace	Building with Light Gauge Steel Frames
UEERL0003 Conduct in-service safety testing of electrical cord connected equipment and cord assemblies	Master Builders SA Contractors Licensing Course
CPCWHS1001 - Prepare to work safely in the construction industry	Industry Update Seminars
CPCCD3014 - Remove non-friable asbestos	Building Codes & Standards Commercial
CPCBC4024A Resolve Business Disputes	Building Codes & Standards Residential
CPCBC4007 Plan Building and Construction Work	Building Inspection and Report Writing (BIRW)

CPCCB4003A Select and Prepare a Construction Contract	Construction of Buildings
CPCCWHS1001 Prepare to work safely in the construction industry	Roof Trusses (RT)
MSFFT4009 Match furnishing style/materials to customer requirements	Timber Framing Code (TFC)
MSFFM3011 Measure and draw site layout for manufactured furniture products	Understanding Licensing and Approvals
MSFGN3002 Estimate and cost job	Wet Area Waterproofing - Internal (WAWP)
MSFFT4001 Coordinate on site installation of furnishing products	Understanding the Housing Provision in the NCC 2022
MSFFM3005 Fabricate custom furniture	Fundamentals of Building with Light Gauge Steel
MSFFM3006 Install furniture products	Site Safety & WHS Management
CPCCCM2012 Work safely at heights	Safe Work Method Statements (SWMS)
CPCCWHS2001 Apply WHS requirements, policies and procedures in the construction industry	Introduction to Managing Union Right of Entry
BSBWHS415 Contribute to implementing WHS management systems	Advanced Managing Union Right of Entry Training
BSSWHS418 Assist with managing WHS compliance of contractors	Hazard & Asbestos Awareness
BSBWHS416 Contribute to workplace incident response	Introduction to Sexual Harassment, Bullying and Discrimination
BSBLDR413 Lead effective workplace relationships	Advanced Sexual Harassment, Bullying and Discrimination
BSBWHS414 Contribute to WHS risk management	Builders Quantities and Estimating
BSBINS401 Analyse and present research information	Building an A Team
BSBWRT411 Write complex documents	Building Profitability
BSBWHS431 Develop processes and procedures for controlling hazardous chemicals in the workplace	Business Protection for Builders
BSBWHS412 Assist with workplace compliance with WHS laws	Complying Development
BSBWHS413 Contribute to implementation and maintenance of WHS consultation and participation processes	Contracts and Disputes
BSBINM302 Organise workplace information	External Waterproofing – Industry Best Practice
BSBWHS310 Contribute to WHS issue-resolution processes	Internal Waterproofing – Industry Best Practice
BSBWHS309 Contribute effectively to WHS communication and consultation processes	Managing Finance
PUAFER001 Identify, prevent and report potential facility emergency situations	Managing Business Risk
BSBTWK301 Use inclusive work practices	Manual Handling in Construction
BSBLDR413 Lead effective workplace relationships	Mental Health in Construction
BSSWHS416 Contribute to workplace incident response	Pre-Purchase Inspection Report Writing

BSBWHS307 Apply knowledge of WHS laws in the workplace	Processes and Personnel
BSBWHS308 Participate in WHS hazard identification, risk assessment and risk control processes	Project Cost Control
BSBWHS331 Participate in identifying and controlling hazardous chemicals	Project Planning
BSBWRT311 Write simple documents	Quality and Risk Management
PUAFER005 Operate as part of an emergency control organisation	Resolve Construction Disputes
PUAFER008 Confine small workplace emergencies	Selling Sustainability
CPCWHS3001 Identify construction work hazards and select risk control strategies	Site Management
CPCCBC4026 Arrange building applications and approvals	Supervision
CPCCBC4012 Read and interpret plans and specifications	Tenders and Contractual Obligations
CPCCBC4014 Prepare simple building sketches and drawings	The Features of AAC Panels
CPCCBC4018 Apply site surveys and set-out procedures to building and construction projects	The Sustainable Builder
CPCCBC4001 Apply building codes and standards to the construction process for Class 1 and 10 buildings	Understanding BASIX (The Building and Sustainability Index)
CPCCBC4053 Apply building codes and standards to the construction process for Class 2 to 9, Type C buildings	Waterproofing for Builders
CPCCBC4010 Apply structural principles to residential and commercial constructions	Asbestos Awareness for Workers in Construction
CPCCBC4008 Supervise site communication and administration processes for building and construction projects	Infection Control (Building and Construction)
CPCCBC4007 Plan building or construction work	OHS Refresher
BSBPMG422 Apply project quality management techniques	Builder registration
CPCCBC4006 Select, procure and store construction materials for building and construction projects	Internal Waterproofing (Domestic Wet Areas)
CPCCBC4024 Resolve business disputes	External Waterproofing (Decks & Planter Boxes)
CPCCBC5001 Apply building codes and standards to the construction process for Type B construction	Residential Construction Essentials
CPCCBC5018 Apply structural principles to the construction of buildings up to three storeys	Microsoft Project (Construction Industry)
CPCCBC4005 Produce labour and material schedules for ordering	Managing Priorities (Time Management)
CPCCBC4004 Identify and produce estimated costs for building and construction projects	Green Card - Spill Kit/Environmental Induction
CPCCBC4003 Select, and prepare and administer a construction contract	High Performance Site Management - Commercial
CPCCBC4009 Apply legal requirements to building and construction projects	High Performance Site Management - Domestic
CPCCBC4002 Manage work health and safety in the building and construction workplace	Leadership Essentials for Supervisors

CPCSUS4002 Use building science principles to construct energy efficient buildings	Communication and leadership essentials for graduates
CPCCBC4021 Minimise waste on the building and construction site	Inclusive Leadership Program
	Communication Essentials
	Simplicity in selling
	Stakeholder Engagement
	Managing on-site safety
	Managing onsite industrial relations
	Right of entry