MASTER BUILDERS
AUSTRALIA

CONSTRUCT YOUR CAREER

The **Ultimate Guide** to Jobs in Building and Construction

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First, we need to say thanks

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Now, just a bit about Master Builders

Master Builders Australia represents all parts of the building and construction industry; being residential, commercial and civil. It has been around for more than 130 years and represents 32,000 businesses across the country.

The Master Builders Associations (that collectively make up the membership of Master Builders Australia) represent the interests of businesses and tradespeople, and they have offices in each capital city, plus 34 regional locations around the country.

Membership of Master Builders is a stamp of quality, a demonstration that a builder values high standards of skill, integrity and responsibility to its clients.

Master Builders is here to represent and support people within the industry throughout their whole career.

In some states and territories, Master Builders Associations train and employ apprentices. In others, they offer professional development courses to make sure their members are always ahead of the curve. All of the Master Builders Associations advocate for the needs and rights of people across the whole building and construction industry.

So, no matter which state or territory you live in, Master Builders can help.

Want to learn more about us? Check out the website of Master Builders in your state or territory.

Click on the state/territory to visit their Master Builders website

HEY! Are you thinking about a career in building & construction? Yeah you are!

This **Ultimate Guide** is for anyone thinking about joining our industry and it can be used by future tradespeople, parents, teachers, careers advisors or people just trying to figure out what they want to do when they grow up!

It will give you an idea of the kinds of jobs we offer, how much you might get paid and what you need to do to land one of them.

So...

Have you ever thought about a job in the building and construction industry?

Have you always wanted to work in a trade but you're not sure where to start or which one you'd enjoy?

Have you ever wondered what other kinds of jobs there are if you don't want to be on the tools?

Or what happens when you finish your apprenticeship?

Trying to convince your parents to let you to start an apprenticeship early?

Can't get a straight answer about what a career path could look like, or how much money you could be earning once you finish your apprenticeship?

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You've come to the right place

Lots of people talk about building and construction, but it's getting harder to know what the industry is really like.

Don't worry – Master Builders is here to help!

This is the Ultimate Guide to the different kinds of jobs in the industry, where you can learn from people who are already doing them and get a taste for what a career in construction could look like for you.

And if you're keen to learn more, we're here to point you in the right direction.

Okay, let's do this, let's Construct Your Career!

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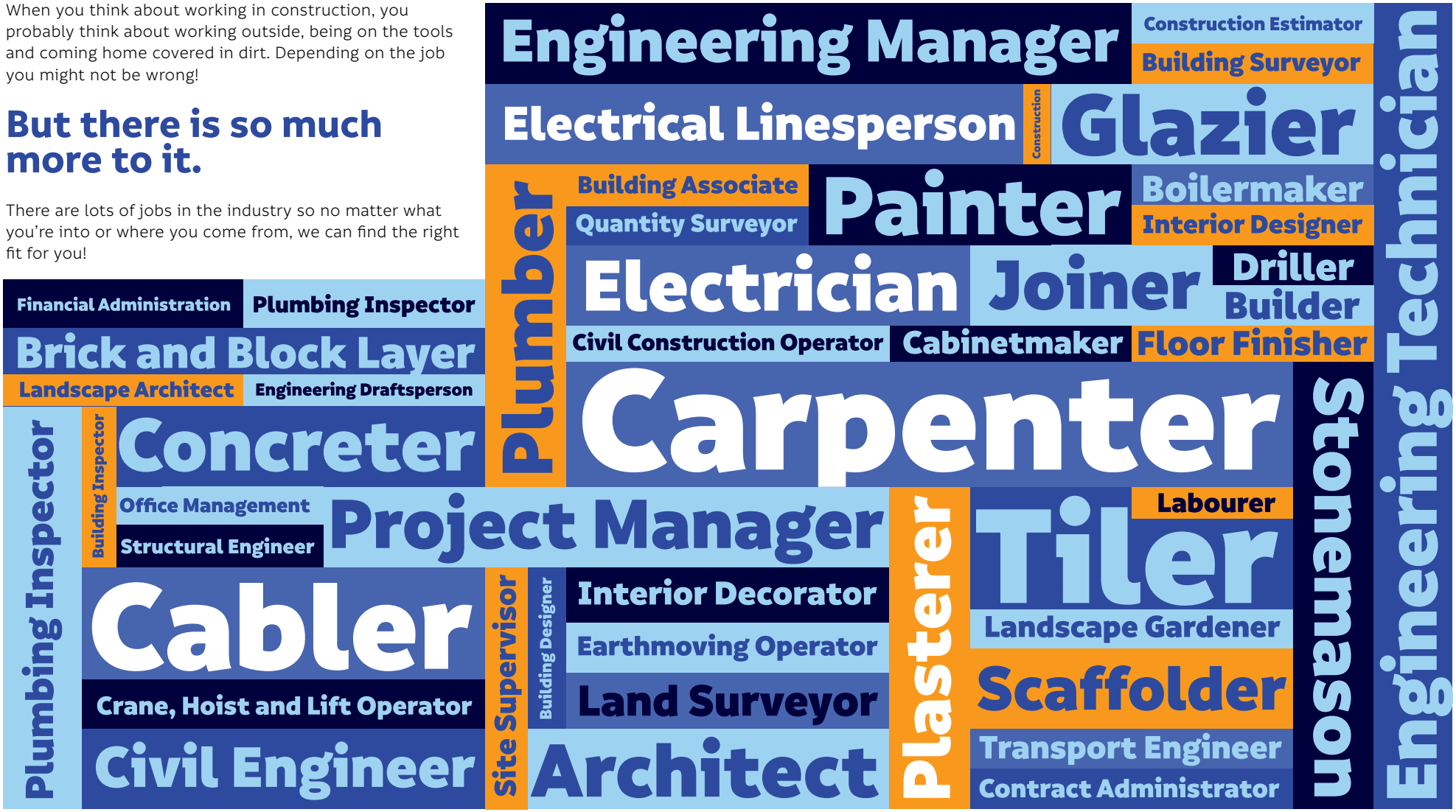
Construction jobs

When you think about working in construction, you probably think about working outside, being on the tools and coming home covered in dirt. Depending on the job you might not be wrong!

But there is so much more to it.

There are lots of jobs in the industry so no matter what you're into or where you come from, we can find the right fit for you!



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All roads lead to construction

There are lots of ways to get into this industry. The path you take out of school, or when you decide you want to be in construction, will be shaped by the job you want to go into.

If you want to be a tradesperson then you probably need to do an apprenticeship.

If you want to be a machinery operator then maybe you will need to do a traineeship.

If you want to be on the technical design side, then you're probably bound for university.

And if you want to be in administration support, then it's probably vocational education for you.

Whatever the pathway you choose, we have it covered!

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To start: the Construction Induction (White) Card

Everyone on a job site needs to have one of these.

You can't set foot on site without it because it is proof that you have learned and understand basic on-site safety protocols and requirements.

Safety is number one when it comes to this industry (because it can be a high risk work environment) and you must have the capacity to keep yourself and others safe on site.

If you're thinking about a career in construction, go and get your white card first.

Most of the Master Builders Associations offer white card training. You should start there and contact your local Master Builders office.

There are also other providers you can go through if you aren't able to do your training at Master Builders. You can find them online here.

Note to careers advisors and parents

Make sure when you are helping a student find and enrol in a white card course, you're looking for a reputable RTO that is offering the course called CPCWHS1001 – Prepare to work safely in the construction industry (or whatever supersedes it).

On top of having your white card, some states and territories also need you to have undertaken asbestos and silica awareness training. In the ACT for example this training is mandatory.

You should talk to the Master Builders office in your state/territory about any additional requirements that will apply to you before you can begin your work in the industry.

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Pathways to trade roles

There are lots of pathways into trade jobs but they pretty much all involve an apprenticeship.

If you're not sure what kind of trade suits you best, then you can do a pre-apprenticeship course before you enrol in a full apprenticeship.

If you're still at school and want to go through to year 12, you might want to talk to your school and parents about doing a school-based apprenticeship.

You can also get recognition for your prior learning (it's called RPL) if you have enough experience working on the tools, for example as a carpentry labourer. If you think this might be you, contact your local Master Builders Association.

Pre-apprenticeships

Pre-apprenticeships are like a building and construction appetiser. They give you a taste of what a trade is like before you commit to a full apprenticeship.

Unlike an apprenticeship though, you don't need to find an employer to take you on to be able to do pre-apprenticeship training. You can get started yourself through an RTO!

They take between three weeks and six months and give you a chance to learn some of the fundamentals of a trade.

You can do as many pre-apprenticeships in as many different trades as you want!

Pre-apprenticeship programs are great for anyone who is thinking about a trade career. They are especially useful for school-aged students, or recent high school graduates who aren't sure which trade is right for them, or people who just want to have a go in the industry before committing to it.

To do a pre-apprenticeship you need to be 15 years or older.

Master Builders NSW has a three-week pre-apprenticeship program where students learn how to build house frames, use tools safely, take measurements, work safely at heights and apply first aid.

Depending on where you do your pre-apprenticeship it might even be government-subsidised – ask the RTO you're considering enrolling with about this.

You may also be able to claim credit from a pre-apprenticeship program against your apprenticeship if you choose to continue in that trade.

If you want to do a pre-apprenticeship you can start by contacting the **Master Builders office** in your state/territory checking with your local TAFE what they offer, or reaching out to the **Apprentice Connect Australia Provider** in your state/territory.

Need to break it down a bit more? No worries – meet Eilysh Scowcroft!

Eilyshis the RTO Manager at Master Builders ACT and is here to give you the run down.

What is a pre-apprenticeship?

A pre-apprenticeship is a short training program designed to give you an introduction to a specific trade. It will give you initial skills and knowledge that make you more competitive when applying for a full apprenticeship. It's an excellent way to "test the waters" in a trade, giving you hands-on experience and insight into the industry before you commit to a full apprenticeship.

Can you do a pre-apprenticeship in multiple trades?

Yes! Lots of programs offer flexibility, allowing you to explore different trades like carpentry, plumbing, electrical, and more. Some pre-apprenticeships even have units that cover skills applicable across various trades, which can help you decide which path best fits your interests and strengths.

Why are pre-apprenticeships a good idea?

Pre-apprenticeships are beneficial for several reasons. They give you a head start when it comes to essential skills, understanding workplace safety, and learning basic tools and techniques. Plus, they improve your employability! Lots of employers look favourably on applicants who have completed a pre-apprenticeship because it shows commitment and provides a foundation for further training.

Can I do a pre-apprenticeship while I'm still at school?

Absolutely! Many schools offer pathways that allow you to complete a pre-apprenticeship as part of your high school studies. This means you can start gaining industry experience and earn credit toward your apprenticeship even before you graduate, giving you a head start on your career.

You could also complete a School-Based Apprenticeship. This gives students who are at least 15 years old the opportunity to achieve a nationally recognised vocational qualification by combining paid work and training as part of their education program.

Do I need my white card or any other training or experience to be able to do a pre-apprenticeship?

In most cases, you'll need a white card, as it's a mandatory safety credential for anyone working on a construction site. Some pre-apprenticeship programs include white card training, so you're covered before stepping onto a site. Other than that, no prior experience is usually required, as these programs are designed to introduce you to the industry from scratch.

In the ACT we also require you to have done Silica and Asbestos Awareness training, but not all states/territories require this. **Check out your requirements here.**

Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships are not unique to building and construction, but to become a tradesperson, you need to do an apprenticeship, or be able to apply for recognition of prior learning.

They're a really common educational pathway in this industry and, fun fact, building and construction apprentices make up a third of all apprentices in Australia!

There are other pathways in and around the industry though which we will explain too but apprenticeships are a big one.

Apprenticeships are a combination of classroom learning at an RTO and on-site learning with an employer. Once you know which trade you want to do your apprenticeship in, you need to decide how to structure it. You could find your own employer, use a group training organisation (called a GTO), or maybe if you're still at school you want to do a school-based apprenticeship. You work towards getting your Certificate III or IV in a trade, and you're employed and getting paid while you do it.

Not a bad deal, hey?

Speaking of getting paid – this is an important part of an apprenticeship.
All trade apprenticeships are covered by an Award. This is a stipulation that dictates the minimum payment rate and other entitlements you should receive.

For example, carpentry apprentices are covered by the Building and Construction General On-Site Award 2020 – Apprentices. Plumbing apprentices are generally covered by the Plumbing and Fire Sprinklers Award 2020. Apprentices and landscape gardening apprentices are covered by the Gardening and Landscaping Services Award 2020 – Apprentices.

The Awards set out the minimum amount an apprentice must be paid. This amount is determined by their age, whether they finished year 12 or not, and the stage they're at in their apprenticeship.

You get paid a higher rate per hour as you progress through the apprenticeship.

The Awards also set out allowances like those made for apprentices who are living away from home or required to travel for their work.

You can calculate how much you should be getting paid, and your additional entitlements on the **Fair Work Australia website.**

Speaking of getting paid...

Sometimes it will be hard to figure out what your earning potential could be as a tradesperson, especially during your apprenticeship.

You need to remember that apprentice wages are only short-term while you learn. You have significant earning potential once you qualify in your trade.

Put it this way – you're getting paid to learn, not paying someone else (like a university) so they can teach you.

Let's break it down.

Say you know you want to get into site or project management in the building industry but you're not sure about following the university or apprenticeship pathway. Compare the outcome after four years of a carpentry apprenticeship versus a Bachelor of Building and Construction (Honours).

	Carpentry Apprenticeship Wage	Bachelor of Building and Construction (Honours) HELP Debt
1st Year	+$32,881	-$8,948
2nd Year	+$38,055	-$8,948
3rd Year	+$43,229	-$8,948
4th Year	+$50,990	-$8,948
Graduating Position	+$165,156	-$35,792
Qualified Starting Salary	$70,000	$65,000

Add to this that a carpentry apprentice will spend about 35-40 hours a week on their apprenticeship (classroom and on-site time) and get paid for that time. After work they can hit the gym, catch up with friends or chill out at home – whatever they want, it's their time!

A university student will have between 12 and 20 contact hours in a classroom per week, plus around 20 hours a week of study. After that, most of them head out to their part-time jobs.

So even though apprentice wages (especially in your first year) might not be quite what you were hoping to make straight away, try to keep your eye on the long game! It's worth it and the apprenticeship is just the beginning of lifelong learning and earning.

Adult apprentices

Don't be fooled into thinking apprenticeships are just for school leavers. Plenty of people come to apprenticeships later on in their careers.

In fact, when we were writing this guide, 27% of all apprentices in training in building and construction were adult apprentices – they're 25 or older.

Adult apprentices follow the same structure to start an apprenticeship, but they are paid at a different rate under the Award and may have access to different financial incentives and supports.

If you're an adult apprentice, or prospective adult apprentice, calculate how much you should be getting paid, and your additional entitlements on the **Fair Work Australia website.**

Using a group training organisation

Hey parents

– listen up! If your child wants to be a building apprentice, but you're worried about starting that journey, then a GTO might be for you.

Some apprentices have the option to use a **group training organisation – sometimes just called a GTO**. These have been around for a long time and are more prevalent in certain states and territories than others.

The way it works is that the GTO employs the apprentice and then places them with a host employer for the on-site component of their apprenticeship. The GTO pays the apprentice's salary and entitlements and manages their leave and other employment matters in line with the relevant Award.

This means apprentices can sometimes work with multiple host employers across their apprenticeship, but they can always come back to the GTO for support, help and guidance.

It's a great model because the GTO can provide pastoral care and guide the apprentice through their journey. For example, at **Master Builders SA** you will be matched with a host employer who will work with you to help you improve your skills, experience, and knowledge as you work on obtaining your nationally recognised trade certification as an apprentice.

Master Builders Newcastle,
Master Builders NSW,
Master Builders Tasmania and
Master Builders SA are all GTOs.

If you live in one of those states and you're thinking about doing a building and construction apprenticeship, Master Builders is an excellent place to start.

The **GTO Directory** run by the National Apprentice Employment Network might also be helpful.

Note to careers advisors and parents

If you think a GTO model might be good for your want-to-be apprentice, have a look at some of the options in your area. **We have included a lift out on how the GTO model works and included some case studies from Master Builders GTOs that might help.**

If an apprentice is employed by a GTO, sometimes that GTO will also be an RTO that can offer their classroom training too. This depends on how they are set up. Master Builders NSW is an example of this.

Meet Jody McGann

Jody is the General Manager, Education and Apprenticeships at Master Builders NSW.

Master Builders NSW is an RTO and a GTO. This means they both employ their apprentices and train them at their Norwest Education Centre just outside Sydney.

We sat down with Jody to learn a bit more about how they do things at Master Builders NSW.

Can you explain what a GTO is and how it works?

GTOs facilitate an employment and training arrangement. They employ apprentices under an apprenticeship/traineeship training contract and place them with host employers.

The GTO has the responsibilities of the employer for the quality and continuity of the apprentice's employment and training. It also provides care and support for the apprentice throughout their engagement with the GTO.

How is that different from an RTO?

As part of an apprenticeship or traineeship, you need to attend RTO training. This can be conducted either on or off the job site depending on the training plan.

'On or Off the Job RTO Training' is delivered by an RTO like the Master Builders RTO or a TAFE and this is in addition to the hands-on training and guidance you get on site from your employer or host employer.

Can you give us a quick overview of how you go about pairing an apprentice with a host employer?

A key aspect of apprenticeship completion is making sure you get the right fit between the apprentice and the host employer.

We take a lot of time at the recruitment stage to get to know our apprentices.

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Our process includes an application and interview as well as aptitude testings. It's really important to understand the drivers and aspirations of our potential apprentices as well as get to know their personality type and any challenges they may have.

This helps us guide our potential apprentices and to look for the right cultural fit with a host employer.

With our host employers, we also take the time to get to know the type of work they are doing, the size and culture of their teams and what they are looking for in an apprentice.

We undertake extensive screening of our host employers and there is a requirement for them to meet the Master Builders Minimum Safety Standard and the Master Builders guidelines for supervising an apprentice.

How do apprentices do their RTO time with you?

At Master Builders, we have an education centre at Norwest just outside Sydney with dedicated facilities to support carpentry apprentice and pre-apprenticeship training.

Our scheduling and delivery model allows for students to start with us at any time – they don't have to wait for a semester intake.

Students can be scheduled into any of the 5-6 first stage subjects at any time in the year and then cycle through the completion of these subjects before moving onto the next stage where the process is repeated again.

We also run our training in blocks for 2-5 days with a focus on 1-2 subjects that match with site processes. Under a block delivery, students come to class on average every seven weeks.

Can apprentices choose one or the other with Master Builders NSW or do they have to be employed by the GTO to come to your RTO?

You do not have to do your RTO component at Master Builders to be employed as a Master Builders Apprentice through the GTO.

The Master Builders RTO offers Certificate III Carpentry apprentice training at our Norwest Education Centre and you do not have to be employed by Master Builders to undertake this training but you do need be employed as an apprentice and have a training contract in place.

Do you have many female apprentices employed through your GTO and studying at your RTO?

In our GTO nearly one in 10 apprentices are female and at our RTO 6 per cent of our carpentry apprentices are female. We are really proud of these figures because they are well above the percentage of female trades in construction in NSW but we are continuing to work on attracting more females into the industry.

You've seen so many apprentices come through Master Builders, what advice would you give to someone thinking about doing an apprenticeship?

Firstly, it's never too late to start an apprenticeship or traineeship - half the apprentices we employ at Master Builders are mature-aged apprentices.

For those still at school and considering an apprenticeship in building and construction, make sure you take maths as an elective. I would highly encourage students to complete their Higher School Certificate and get their driver's licence too.

Do some research – there are so many career options available in the building and construction industry. Make sure you know what apprenticeships or traineeships are available so that you can choose the right one for you.

Look into options like school-based apprenticeships or doing a pre-apprenticeship program.

Consider using a GTO for your employment option – GTOs ensure you get paid correctly with all your entitlements, they provide support throughout your apprenticeship and ensure you are safe on site.

What's your favourite thing about working with building apprentices?

There is no better feeling than seeing an apprentice build their skills and confidence and realise their dreams and career aspirations.

I am extraordinarily privileged to get to share this journey with our apprentices.

I get to see them experience the highs and lows and see them triumph as they overcome challenges, learn to problem-solve and grow as individuals. It is so rewarding to know you've played a part in helping someone to achieve their career goals.

GTOs are legally employers so make sure you do your research to find the right fit for you. If you find a GTO you'd like to work with, reach out and they will help you get started.

Finding your own employer

If you know which trade you're interested in, like plumbing, carpentry or bricklaying for example, you should start by finding an employer who is willing to take on an apprentice in that trade.

To hire an apprentice, the employer must be licensed – if licensing is a requirement of that trade in your state – and it's good to do some research on them and their business. They might be a sole trader who is the only one in the business, or it might be a tier one building company that's building high rises in the city and employs hundreds of staff.

You'll be working really closely with these people and learning from them so you need to do your best to find a good fit.

Do your research!

1

Find an employer that does the kind of work you're interested in learning and offers the kind of work environment you're after.

If you need some help finding an employer to approach you can check out the **Workforce Australia website.**

You must also contact an **Apprentice Connect Australia Provider** in your state/territory because they are the ones who will be along for the ride with you throughout your apprenticeship.

Once you know who you want to work for, approach them!

Let them know you are looking to do an apprenticeship in their trade and with their organisation and find out if they're recruiting. Send them an email or give them a call. Find out the name of the person who would be doing the hiring (like the Owner, Director, Office Manager or Head of People) and make sure you address them personally if you can.

Building and construction is a little different from other industries – just because there's no ad posted on Seek it doesn't mean the company isn't looking for workers!

Lots of businesses in building and construction will recruit by word of mouth and interview, rather than relying on a written application. But it still helps to have a resume and cover letter ready to go. And some references too!

If you're not sure how to write a cover letter or resume, we have included a lift out of an example **letter** and **resume** that you can use as a template to send out to prospective employers.

Note to careers advisors and parents

Apprentices have employment rights just like everyone else does, and they are covered by an Award. You can find more information about this on the **Fair Work website.**

2

While you're looking for an employer (or if you already found one!) you will need to contact the **Apprentice Connect Australia Provider** in your state/territory.

These organisations are tasked by the government with helping apprentices and providing them with support throughout their entire apprenticeship. You need to start a relationship with them as early as possible.

3

Once you have an employer lined up, and you are working with your Apprentice Connect Australia Provider, it's time to confirm your RTO.

Some employers have a preferred RTO that you will do your classroom study through, so be aware they can choose where you'll go.

Employers will also pay your RTO fees, directly to the RTO.

You can search for RTOs around the country that offer the course you're looking for **online here**.

You will need to know the course code (which we have included throughout this document) and you can click the link that says "Find RTOs approved to deliver this unit of competency".

4

If you are ready to commence your training you will need to sign a **training contract**. This is a legally binding agreement between the employer and the apprentice for training that will lead you to having a nationally recognised qualification.

All apprentices need to have a **training contract** for the duration of their apprenticeship.

A **training contract** will outline your responsibilities as an apprentice, your employer's responsibilities to you, the length of your apprenticeship, the qualification you will get at the end of your apprenticeship, the RTO you will study through and what you should do if you need support or if any issues come up.

This is a legal contract so be sure you read it carefully and ask questions if there is anything in it you don't understand. Never sign a contract you don't understand!

Apprentice Connect Australia Providers will help with this process and it's up to your employer to get in touch with them. They will then organise a time for you, and your employer to discuss the contract before signing it. The **Apprentice Connect Australia Provider** will then submit the contract to your State Training Authority for approval.

You will get a confirmation letter and a Training Contract ID number (this is super important so keep it somewhere safe throughout your apprenticeship because you'll definitely need it!).

5

Within 12 weeks from when your **training contract** is approved you need to develop a **training plan** in consultation with your training provider and your employer.

You have to have a **training plan** to be able to get your qualification and complete your apprenticeship.
Your training plan will include information on your needs, abilities and circumstances, the Units of Competency you need to complete, your structured milestones, when you will need to meet certain milestones and whether you can get **recognition for any prior learning.**

Your employer needs to create workplace opportunities for you to put your **training plan** into action.

6

Once you have a training contract and training plan in place you can apply for financial support. There are lots of different financial supports available to apprentices in Australia. These include allowances for living away from home, buying tools and other support payments for apprentices that are on a **priority list.**

You can look up what incentives you might be able to claim **online here.**

Now you can start your training! Your training plan will set out when you are on site with your employer and when you are at your classroom training. It will be up to you to be in control of your time and make sure you are where you need to be and when.

It's only upwards from here!

Want to meet an apprentice?

Well, here's SARAH

WHO IS AN apprentice electrician, but double bonus points – she's a qualified PLUMBER TOO!

Sarah Newton

Qualified Plumber and Apprentice Electrician

ProPhase Electrical Solutions

Want to check out what the ProPhase team is up to? Follow them here

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What is your job?

Currently I am an apprentice electrician. I work alongside a licensed electrician to learn essential skills and gain hands-on experience.

What do you do on an average day?

My days as an apprentice electrician often vary but usually involve installing and repairing wiring, installation or repair of electrical devices, troubleshooting, and following safety guidelines to prevent hazards. Some days I will also read plans and assist with testing new and existing installations.

What do you like about your job?

I enjoy the hands-on work and the opportunity to learn something new every day.

I get to solve real problems and see immediate results, which is very satisfying.

Working with experienced electricians allows me to pick up valuable skills and safety practices that I'll use throughout my career. Plus, I like knowing that I'm building a practical, in-demand trade that offers a lot of job security and growth opportunities.

What was your career pathway to where you are now?

Before becoming an electrical apprentice, I was a qualified plumber. I knew I wanted to obtain a dual trade when I was in my second year of my plumbing apprenticeship. Before getting into the trade industry, I worked as a dispensary tech in a pharmacy and had no prior experience with tools or trade work.

What advice would you give to someone at school considering becoming a plumber or an electrician?

If you're thinking about becoming a plumber or electrician, go for it—it's an incredibly rewarding path!

Both trades let you work hands-on, solve real problems, and see the results of your work every day.

I'd recommend trying to get some work experience while in school to see if you enjoy it—it can be an eye-opener to see the variety of skills involved.

Having a good grasp of basic math will be helpful, but a lot of what you learn is on the job training through apprenticeships, where you get paid while building valuable skills.

It's a solid career with good job security and plenty of growth opportunities.

What advice would you give to a parent/guardian whose daughter is considering a career in building and construction?

If your daughter is interested in building and construction, I'd encourage you to support her in gaining hands-on experience early.

Working with tools and learning basic skills can build her confidence. This industry offers fantastic opportunities for both men and women, and it's rewarding to see more women breaking into trades and thriving—so let's encourage them to pursue what they enjoy, regardless of gender.

There are so many pathways available in this industry—whether they're interested in a specific trade, project management, or even technical roles in design and planning—so there's room for both men and women to thrive and make a real impact. Apprenticeships, certifications, and even technical programs at schools and colleges can open doors to specialised and rewarding careers.

Doing an apprenticeship while you're at school

School-based apprenticeships (sometimes called SBaTs or ASBAs depending on which state/territory you are in) are a pathway for school students who want to stay in school until year 12 but also start their trade training at the same time.

A school-based apprenticeship is a great way to get a head start on a trade if you think that's what you'd like to do, but also complete your schooling to year 12.

And let's face it – your parents probably want you to finish year 12!

This is why a school-based apprenticeship is a great option for students and parents to consider.

It allows students to combine vocational training with their regular school studies in years 10, 11 and/or 12 while working part-time in a paid job as an apprentice according to the relevant industrial Award, as mentioned above under the **Apprenticeship section.**

The best of both worlds!

And yes, you read that right, you get paid for your time as a school-based apprentice!

Plus, if you finish year 12 and continue with your trade you get paid at a higher rate as an apprentice than if you left school in year 10.

Here's how it works.

Students split their time between school, their RTO classroom, and working on site as an apprentice. They work towards a Certificate III qualification that, when they finish school, they can continue with.

It also means they become qualified tradespeople quicker than their non-school-based apprenticeship counterparts (starting as a school-based apprentice in year 11 can mean you only need to do three years of your apprenticeship post school to be able to qualify).

School-based apprentices will complete between 15 and 20 hours per week on their apprenticeship. This is usually one day on the work site and one day at the RTO – then three days at school. In some trades though you can do your training as a block (five days in a row at the RTO, usually in school holidays) which means you can do more like two days on site during term and three days at school. You can work more hours on site for your apprenticeship during school holidays to rack up more hours towards your apprenticeship if you want to.

The time spent on their apprenticeship can count towards the student's senior secondary certificate of education (like the HSC, VCE, QCE).

Students who do a school-based apprenticeship need to be 15 years or older and enrolled in a school.

The process for starting a school-based apprenticeship is similar to that of starting an apprenticeship. We've created a lift out for you and your parents on how to get started.

You would follow the same process we have **stepped out above**, but you would need to have your school on board with the process.

You will need a coordinator from your school who monitors your progress and helps out if issues arise. You also need your principal to endorse your apprenticeship in your training contract.

Your school very much needs to be along for the ride with you if you'd like to do a school-based apprenticeship.

Want to meet a STELLAR Careers Adviser guiding her students through this process?

THIS IS LEIGH SOUTHWELL

Careers Adviser and Teacher at Marist College Canberra

Leigh recently won the ACT Careers Association Career Development Practitioner of the Year for Excellence in career development service provision.

She's a bit of a boss when it comes to careers advice! Leigh is going to give us the downlow on school-based apprenticeships.

What sort of trades can someone do a school-based apprenticeship in?

Anything that has a Certificate III qualification – so that's lots of options when it comes to building and construction. Things like carpentry, plumbing, metal fabrication and electrotechnology for example.

What kind of student would a school-based apprenticeship suit best?

Students who can take initiative, are independent, passionate and driven. They need to be good communicators who can manage their time.

School-based apprenticeships aren't the easy option to get out of the classroom, they're really best suited to students who are self-driven and ready to learn.

What happens if a student doesn't like their school-based apprenticeship and wants to go back to school full-time?

They need to notify their School Coordinator and their employer. School-based apprentices have a three-month cooling off period where the student can change their mind and go back to school full-time.

If they change their mind after that three-month period, the process they need to go through depends where the student is, but in Canberra they can continue to go to school and go back to their classes full-time.

They're not locked in if they change their mind which is a really good function of the way school-based apprenticeships work.

Unfortunately in the ACT they won't be able to get an ATAR but in other states and territories, for example NSW, apprentices can have their school-based apprenticeship count towards an ATAR. It's best to check what applies in your state or territory.

What happens if a student changes their mind and wants to get an ATAR instead?

There are lots of pathways to university other than an ATAR, let me make that point really clear!

I would encourage students in this situation to do something like a university-bridging course if they change their mind and want to go to university after all. For example, there is UC Connect in Canberra or University of Wollongong College.

A bridging course is usually a six-month course with four subjects on university skills and analysis so the student can get an estimated ATAR for a university admission. Lots of universities offer these pathways for students without an ATAR (and who are not mature-aged students).

You can sometimes do these bridging courses while you are still finishing year 12, but mostly they are about six months long (sometimes 12 months) and done after finishing school.

There are also pathways to university through the VET system, for example you could go into a Certificate III in Business at TAFE and then have that credit count towards and Bachelor of Business at university.

Not getting an ATAR straight out of year 12 isn't the end of the world!

Whose responsibility is it to make sure the apprentice can manage their time – for example if exams at school clash with work?

The apprentice is responsible for managing their own time. Doing a school-based apprenticeship isn't the easy option! Communication is the key – the apprentice needs to keep the school and employer informed of their workdays and school demands so everyone else in the chain can support them when needed.

Who has the duty of care for the school-based apprentice?

At school they are under our care, at work they are under their employer's duty of care and at RTO training they are under that institute's care.

Most schools will have a school-based apprenticeship Coordinator to make sure all three arms of the process – being student, school and employer – are operating cohesively and as they should. If a student is not where they say they are for example, the Coordinator finds out pretty quickly.

Do parents keep paying school fees (in the non-government system that is) if the student does a school-based apprenticeship?

It depends on the school, and you should talk to them about the fee structure during a school-based apprenticeship.

If your school does require you to pay full fees, it's still important to look at a school-based apprenticeship as an investment in your child's education because the school keeps providing support and guidance throughout the process, and is always there if the student changes their mind and wants to come back full time.

What are your top tips for parents when it comes to managing the schedule between work, RTO time and school? Monthly calendars? Family diaries?

A big calendar on the wall! This is most effective and it helps people know where they need to be each day. Teenagers need to learn these organisation skills anyway so it's a good place to start!

If you are also managing getting kids to sport or out of school activities, family events and other responsibilities, you will definitely need a calendar!

Parents/guardians play a big role in helping their child be successful in their school-based apprenticeship.

You can't always rely on the school to be fully resourced – so you might need to be prepared to step in a bit more.

What advice do you have for parents on helping to get the apprentice to the job site on time, especially if they don't have their driver's licence?

Parents will need to be flexible and supportive to enable their child to get to site on time. It might be that the employer can help with transport but you'll need to talk to them about this.

And yes – some trades start really early!

Can the apprentice make up hours during the school holidays to get themselves ahead by the time they finish school?

Yes, they sure can!

They can work full-time during school holidays if the work is available and that's what they want to do. If they start at the beginning of year 11, by the time they finish year 12, they will likely have done the first year of their apprenticeship. Making up hours in the school holidays helps with this.

Anything else you want to say to students?

I'd say try to do some work experience across different trades before you sign up so you can get an idea of what you do and don't like. This also gives you the chance to meet some employers to see if you get along with them and the team. This is really important!

A school-based apprenticeship can be a really great way to kickstart your career and get going down the path you want to follow, while you finish year 12. You get to keep being a student, while you are already starting on your career.

And if you start your school-based apprenticeship and you don't like it, it's totally okay to change track and do something else. You're not locking yourself into anything so try not to look at it like that!

Anything else you want to say to parents and guardians?

This is a great option for your child if they are really compelled to go into a trade. They will need your support and guidance, and you'll need to try to be flexible and accommodating.

And try to remember that success comes in many forms – it's not just a high ATAR and entry to university.

What is a traineeship?

Traineeships are different to apprenticeships.

Apprenticeships are about learning a trade and the practical applications of it in building and construction.

Traineeships are broader and usually focus on gaining the skills needed for general roles in the industry.

Traineeships don't lead to a trade qualification so if you want to be a tradesperson you will need to do an apprenticeship.

Traineeships cover areas such as construction administration, project management support, site supervision, and occupational health and safety. You can also do a traineeship in labouring or machinery operator roles.

Traineeships usually are not as long as apprenticeships – they're more like one or two years instead of four. Like apprentices, trainees also get paid while they are undertaking their traineeship.

If your chosen occupation has a traineeship pathway, the best way to find more information about how to get started is to get in touch with the peak body that represents that occupation.

For example, if you'd like to learn about becoming a trainee Driller, you could start with the **Australian Drilling Industry Association.**

Other pathways onto the tools

While trades and professional staff play a huge role in the industry, it's important to remember that 22% of people in building and construction are in labourer or machinery operator roles.

These jobs are not for the faint-hearted, but they're vital to the industry and its operations.

They include roles like:

- Concrete Production Machine and Plant Operator
- Driller
- Earthmoving Operator
- Crane, Hoist or Lift Operator
- Civil Construction Operator
- Builder's Labourer
- Road Construction
- Scaffolder

Without these roles, the building and construction industry could not do what it does.

Some of these jobs have apprenticeship pathways – which are detailed later in the document – and some of them have a requirement for a Certificate level qualification from an RTO. Some of them don't need a qualification to begin with and some will follow the traineeship pathway.

This means if you're looking to hit the ground running, and you're not a huge fan of classroom work, perhaps one of these roles might be right for you.

There is more information later in the document on what you'd need to be good at, what qualifications you'd need and what the job would actually entail.

You can start some labouring jobs, like as a builder's labourer or a bricklayer's labourer without a qualification, but you will still need a white card. This would give you a good taste of the industry too and can help you figure out what jobs you like doing most.

You'll see from lots of the case studies that this is how heaps of successful people in the industry started out.

University pathways

So many people think the building and construction industry is just about working on the tools.

Across the industry there is actually a pretty clear split where 51% of the workforce is made up of tradespeople, 22% are labourers/operators and 27% are in professional roles.

If you don't think a trade or operator/labourer role is for you, then you will probably need to have, or pursue a university degree.

Jobs that require this include:

- Engineering Manager
- Civil Engineer
- Structural Engineer
- Transport Engineer
- Civil Construction Manager
- Construction Manager
- Land Surveyor
- Building Surveyor
- Building Inspector
- Project Manager
- Architect
- Landscape Architect
- Interior Designer
- Quantity Surveyor
- Bookkeeper

This document mentions what sort of qualification each of those roles requires.

To pursue a university degree you will need to finish year 12, or have enough work experience to qualify for admission as a mature-age student.

If you are at school, you will need to obtain an ATAR. This is a number between 0.00 and 99.95 that shows your position relative to all the students in your age group (i.e. all 16- to 20-year-olds in NSW). So, an ATAR of 80.00 means that you are 20 per cent from the top of your age group (not your Year 12 group).

Universities use the ATAR to help them select students for their courses and admission to most tertiary courses is based on your ATAR.

When we were writing this, the ATAR required depends on the course. If you want to do a Bachelor of Engineering at UNSW, you will need an ATAR of at least 90. If you want to do a Bachelor of Building and Construction Management at the University of Canberra you will need an ATAR of at least 60. If you want to do a Bachelor of Architectural Design at Queensland University of Technology you will need an ATAR of at least 80.

Work with your Careers Advisor or start doing some research on the degree you want to pursue and which university you want to attend. You will need to list your preferences and meet the selection criteria to receive an offer to study from that university.

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Other pathways to the industry

Apprenticeships, traineeships and university are not the be all and end all of starting your career in construction.

There are other ways you might come to the industry.

For example, if you are interested in working in an administrative support role you may need to hold a Certificate II or III qualification from an RTO. Or if you think you'd like to try out labouring work you might not need any additional education.

For women in particular, many join the industry later on in their career with higher education degrees under their belts. They go on to run construction businesses, project manage, site manage and look after business operations.

We have included a lift out for women who might be considering a career change to work in building and construction. It looks at possible roles to consider and has some case studies from women in the industry.

If you have qualifications or work experience in another industry, your skills are very likely to be transferable to the construction industry.

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Qualifications cheat sheet – choose your own adventure!

	Apprenticeship	Traineeship	University	Other pathways
Carpenter	✓			
Joiner	✓			
Cabinet Maker	✓			
Plumber	✓			
Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning Plumber	✓			
Electrician	✓			
Electrical linesperson	✓			
Brick and block layer	✓			
Stonemason	✓			
Tiler	✓			
Plasterer	✓			
Painter	✓			
Floor finisher	✓			
Glazier	✓			
Welder/Fabricator	✓			
Concreter	✓			
Data and Telecommunications Cabler	✓			
Fire Protection Equipment Technician	✓			
Landscape Gardener	✓	✓		
Labourer		✓		✓
Scaffolder		✓		
Concrete Production Machine and Plant Operator		✓		
Driller		✓		
Earthmoving Operator (General)		✓		

	Apprenticeship	Traineeship	University	Other pathways
Crane, Hoist and Lift Operator		✓		
Civil Construction Operator /Project Manager		✓		
Architect			✓	
Landscape Architect			✓	✓
Interior Designer			✓	
Interior Decorator				✓
Engineering Manager			✓	
Civil Engineer			✓	
Structural Engineer			✓	
Transport Engineer			✓	
Engineering Technician		✓		
Engineering Draftsperson		✓		✓
Construction/Project Manager		✓	✓	
Builder	✓	✓		
Building Associate/Site Supervisor	✓	✓	✓	
Quantity Surveyor			✓	
Land Surveyor			✓	
Building Surveyor			✓	✓
Building Inspector or Certifier			✓	✓
Plumbing Inspector or Certifier	✓			✓
Construction Estimator				✓
Contract Administrator				✓
Financial Administration			✓	✓
Office Management				✓

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How to read this Ultimate Guide

The average income used throughout is based on the Australian Taxation Office 'Taxation Statistics 2021–22' if tax is your thing.

Please know that if they look a little lower than you expected, that's because they include everyone in those jobs! Full-time, part-time, apprentice, trainee, graduate, manager, early career or ready to retire, it doesn't matter! They're all included to come to an average and that's the number we have used.

Also please know that the advice throughout this document is general in nature. It may not suit everyone, and it might be slightly different depending on which state or territory you are living and working in.

Please make sure you take it as a guide only, not the be-all and end-all of how you could pursue a career in building and construction!

Okay, that's the technical, admin stuff out of the way. Let's get into the jobs!

Meet Craig Edmunds

Craig Edmunds is the President of Master Builders Australia. He is also the Chair of Fairbrother Construction, and was their Chief Executive Officer for 18 years before that.

Fairbrother is a National award-winning commercial and industrial construction, joinery and facility management company located throughout Tasmania and regional Victoria.

Their work ranges from university buildings, to apartments, and other construction projects with budgets as high as $100 million. One of their standouts is the $30 million **Pharos** building at MONA in Hobart.

Craig started his stellar career as an apprentice in carpentry and joinery.

Why did you decide to do an apprenticeship?

I left high school at the end of year 10 and all I wanted to do was learn to be a builder. I enjoyed woodwork, technical drawing and maths at school which supported a pathway into a carpentry and joinery apprenticeship.

What was your career path after that?

Towards the end of my apprenticeship, I undertook some additional training at TAFE to gain better knowledge and a further qualification. Training that would be equivalent to a Diploma in Building and Construction today.

I gained an understanding of the Master Builders Federation and how it represented the Building and Construction Industry when I was awarded the Master Builders Tasmania Apprentice of the Year. This helped my desire to give back to the industry later in my career.

When I finished my apprenticeship, I was lucky enough to gain a position with Fairbrother, a small but progressive commercial construction company, as a trainee site administrator.

As the company grew, so did my opportunities. I learned on the job and did selected training along the way. I advanced into an estimating and project manager role, then manager of a new regional office in Northern Tasmania before becoming their Tasmanian Manager. I ultimately became a director of the company and a shareholder and the Managing Director/CEO for 18 years prior to becoming our Board Chair three years ago.

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I was fortunate to have the opportunity to grow and develop my skills and have a career pathway in the one company. I have been with Fairbrother 35 years.

Do you think doing a trade first helped you become a leader in the industry?

In my case I didn't want to go to University, I really wanted to start working and earning an income.

So yes, it did help me build a career in the industry. I was able to work, learn and build a career and be paid well while I was doing it. Learning on the job and gaining experience first-hand was best for me. I was able to more easily demonstrate my capability and continue learning as I moved into different roles.

What advice would you give to someone thinking about doing a trade apprenticeship?

A university pathway is not the only way to have a successful career. The building and construction industry offers many and varied pathways that can be far more rewarding.

Doing a trade apprenticeship does not mean you are committed to physical work for the rest of your life. There are many types of supervisory and management roles, on and off the work site, that you can pursue.

Some of the many advantages of completing a trade apprenticeship are:

- You are paid to do your training rather than incur a debt attending university.
- You can build you own house or undertake home renovations saving considerable money.
- There is an enormous amount of different pathways available to grow a satisfying career.
- There is huge demand for construction workers.
- The trade skills you gain are transportable anywhere in the world and are also sought after in many other industries and jobs.
- The building and construction industry is extremely rewarding.

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Trade Roles

Trade roles are all desperately needed in Australia right now, and they have all been on the National Skills Shortage list for ages. This means they have a strong demand across cities and regional areas and will have for the foreseeable future.

To be a tradesperson, you need to have specific and specialised skills, knowledge and qualifications.

Some trades require a licence – like builders, plumbers and electricians – because they are high risk and complex jobs.

Licensing requirements are different in each state and territory so we have created a lift out for you on when your chosen trade might be licensed in your chosen area.

There is a bit of a perception in Australia that people only go into trades if they can't get into university, or don't know what they want to do after finishing school.

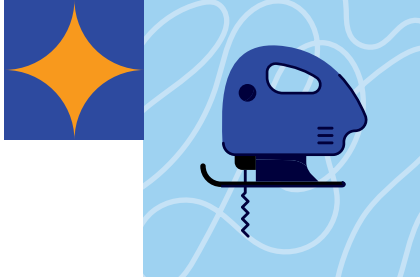
This couldn't be further from the truth.

Trade roles are great for people who have a logical mind, and are relatively left-brained, but who are excellent problem solvers and creative thinkers.

Many people who are highly successful in the industry started in a trade role as an apprentice. They learned their trade skills, about how the industry works, and about business. They have gone on to create and operate some of Australia's most prominent building and construction companies.

TRADES

Carpenter



What you need to know

A Carpenter will install and repair timber structures like the frames for buildings or renovations

Carpenters build, install, renovate and repair structures and fixtures of wood, plywood and wallboard. You will probably also work with materials like metals, plastics and laminates.

A lot of the people who go on to become licensed builders, start off as Carpenters.

As a Carpenter you will be doing things like building frameworks and structures for new buildings, installing doors, windows and fixtures, building kitchens and cabinetry, installing floors or decks and renovating houses.

You might work on residential projects like building homes or townhouses, renovating kitchens or whole homes, building decks or outdoor structures. Or you might work on commercial projects building schools, hospitals, childcare centres, high-rise apartments or shopping malls. Some Carpenters only do formwork carpentry which involves constructing the formwork (moulds) that shape and support poured concrete for foundations, pillars, and other concrete structures.

Some Carpenters will also study joinery so they can specialise in more intricate woodworking trades. If you love to work outside with a team and see amazing projects go from materials to houses, hospitals, schools and apartments, then maybe you should become a Carpenter!

Average income:
$80,106*

Training:
4 years

What should you be good at?

- Working with your hands
- Thinking logically
- Problem solving
- Technical design
- Maths
- Focussing on the task at hand

What should you enjoy?

- Being outside
- Working with a team
- Using tools and machinery
- Seeing a project through

Relevant qualifications

- Certificate III in Carpentry (CPC30220)
- Apprenticeship

What subjects are helpful to do at school?

- General maths
- Design
- English
- Business studies
- Industrial technology
- Design and technologies

How a career pathway can look

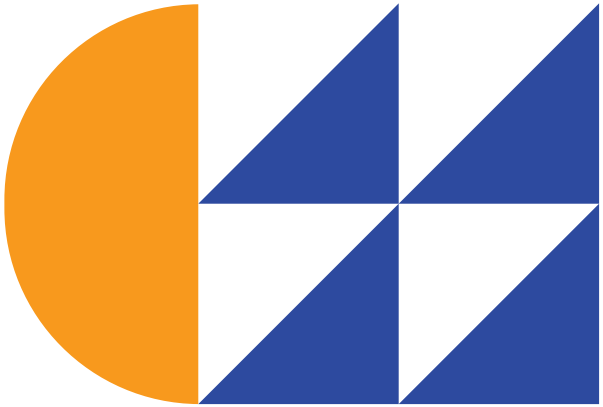
Many Builders start their career journey as apprentice Carpenters. Once they have their Certificate III and work experience on site, they go on to get their Certificate IV in Building and Construction (CPC40120) to become licensed Builders.

This means they get to run the jobs and bring other trades in to work on their projects. A lot of the time they will also project-manage that work to make sure it all comes together for the client on time, on budget and up to standard.

A lot of Builders own their own businesses, or run large companies and many go on to have successful careers as both tradespeople and businesspeople.

If you want to own or run your own building company, a Carpentry apprenticeship is a great place to start.

For more information on becoming a Carpenter, contact the **Master Builders office in your state/territory.**



**Please know that if they look a little lower than you expected, that's because they include everyone in those jobs! Full-time, part-time, apprentice, trainee, graduate, manager, early career or ready to retire, it doesn't matter! They're all included to come to an average and that's the number we have used.*

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Lewis Ferguson

Carpenter and Builder/ Business Owner

Ferguson Building Solutions, Tasmania

Want to check out what Lewis and his team are up to?
Follow them here

What is your job?

I'm a Carpenter by trade and a registered builder in Tasmania's south.

What do you do on an average day?

I currently have a small crew of three, so my days are still fairly worksite focused. I could be digging holes, pouring concrete or framing walls – it depends on where our projects are up to.

We offer a 'start to finish' building service so the workdays can vary a lot but I'll normally try to fit in an hour of admin daily to stay ahead.

The reason for starting my own business was to work closer to home instead of traveling to Hobart every day and working in the community area that I grew up in is really rewarding.

What do you like about your job?

The part of building I like the most is the difference we can make, whether that's just a new deck, kitchen and bathroom or a new million-dollar home, we as tradies make all that happen. We can start out with an empty paddock and some months later that is someone's forever home. We make people's dreams come true by making Architect's drawings into real life.

What was your career pathway to where you are now?

I completed two VET courses in my college years - one in furniture design and one in construction. During my construction course my teacher entered me into the regional Worldskills Competition which I ended up winning for the state. I then went on to compete at the national level where I placed third nationally and this made me want to enter the industry and become the best tradesperson that I could.

Then I got an apprenticeship out of college with Hazel Brothers in Hobart. The work was mainly civil and large commercial projects which was not exactly what I wanted to be doing and I knew I had the skills to do more. I started working weekends with other builders to widen my learning and the extra money was handy too.

During the Christmas break between the third and fourth year of my apprenticeship there were catastrophic bushfires that burnt through the area where I lived with my partner.

We lost most of what we owned including every tool I had purchased up until that point, I started the fourth year of my apprenticeship with nothing but a toolbelt and a hammer.

Hazel Brothers helped me get my tool kit back up by letting me purchase through accounts and setting up payment plans. I was also lucky to have some help from Master Builders Tasmania with some donations and tools finding their way to me from members.

I stuck out my last year and then the week I got qualified my job was made redundant unfortunately.

I was lucky to have a great group of workmates and they all made calls to see if anyone needed an extra chippy on the books, the next week I was working as a qualified carpenter with someone I had never met. But a good reference is all you need and if someone will back you then someone else will give you a chance.

I worked for a few different companies over the following few years just putting in time learning the trade. I was able to move on from each job on my own terms with a reference under my belt. From there it was through hard work and dedication that got me where I wanted to be. A long-time friend was talking about starting his own company so I quit my job and said 'when do we start?' I knew this was the opportunity for me so I worked with Eiszele Construction for the next six or so years. This was where I really thrived and learned how to run and manage projects, and keep to a project schedule and direct sub-contractors.

I did my Certificate IV in Building and Construction with Master Builders during this time knowing I still wanted to eventually have my own building business.

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At the conclusion of my final project I parted ways with Eiszele Construction and started my own show: “Ferguson Building Solutions.”.

My mantra is building without limits and this is about not being restrained by standard construction methods doing things that haven’t been seen or done before to push the boundaries of what is possible within the building industry.

I grew up in a pretty remote part of the Tasman Peninsula. I was actually born in a humpy out in the rugged hills around Roaring Beach! I really think that it doesn’t matter where or how you start out, it’s what you want to make of yourself that matters.

What advice would you give to someone at school considering becoming a Carpenter?

If you are thinking about getting into a trade I would say have a go, do some work experience or placements. My work placements for my VET course showed me that building was the way I wanted to go so it was an easy choice for me.

It’s early mornings, long days and a low wage but the apprenticeship is only the beginning of your career so don’t think it’ll be like that forever!

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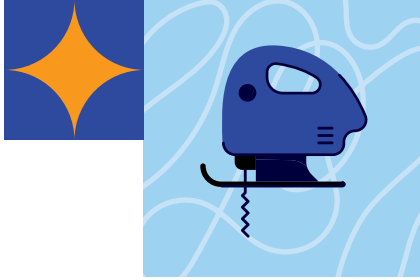
TRADES

Joiner



What you need to know

A Joiner will cut, shape and fit timber parts like furniture, fixtures and intricate woodworks.

Joiners usually work in a workshop to cut and put together wooden parts that will then be installed on projects. For example, they might make kitchen cabinetry and other intricate parts of new builds which are then installed on site.

Joiners are also sometimes Carpenters who work across different parts of timberwork. They might make the structure off-site in a workshop as a Joiner and then head to site to install it as a Carpenter.

Joiners will spend time creating new designs and developing different and innovative ways to build structures. This could be something like designing and building floating kitchen islands or hidden wine cellars in renovated kitchens.

If you've got great attention to detail, love working with timber, and have some innovative ideas about how things can look, feel, fit together and work, then maybe you should become a Joiner!

Average income:
$78,850*

Training:
4 years

What should you be good at?

- Working with your hands
- Working with intricate designs
- Technical design
- Developing innovative ideas
- Maths
- Focussing on the task at hand

What should you enjoy?

- Working with a team
- Using tools and machinery
- Seeing a project through
- Developing new ideas
- Thinking creatively

Relevant qualifications

- Certificate III in Joinery (CPC31920)
- Certificate III in Carpentry (CPC30220)
- Apprenticeship

What subjects are helpful to do at school?

- General maths
- Design
- English
- Business studies
- Industrial technology
- Design and technologie

How a career pathway can look

Previously there was a Certificate III in Carpentry and Joinery but now the qualifications are separate. Many apprentices still choose to study both, especially if they intend to go on to become builders.

Once a Joiner has their Certificate III and work experience on site, they can go on to get their Certificate IV in Building and Construction (Certificate IV in Building and Construction CPC40120) to become licensed Builders if that's the pathway they want to pursue.

This means they get to run the jobs and bring other trades in to work on their projects. A lot of the time they will also project-manage that work to make sure it all comes together for the client on time, on budget and up to standard.

A lot of Builders own their own businesses, or run large companies and many go on to have successful careers as both tradespeople and businesspeople.

That said, some Joiners prefer not to go down that route and instead continue to work as Joiners. Some of them will specialise in certain areas like kitchen renovations, refurbishments or commercial projects.

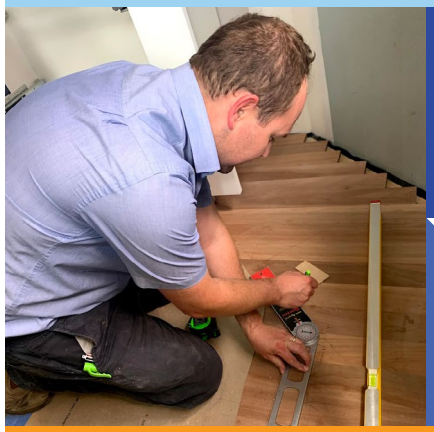
For more information on becoming a Joiner, contact the **Master Builders office in your state/territory.**

**Please know that if they look a little lower than you expected, that's because they include everyone in those jobs! Full-time, part-time, apprentice, trainee, graduate, manager, early career or ready to retire, it doesn't matter! They're all included to come to an average and that's the number we have used.*

Greg Widman

Qualified Carpenter, Joiner and Cabinetmaker

Operations Manager, Art of Kitchens



Want to check out what Greg and his team are up to?
Follow them here

What is a Joiner?

A Joiner is a skilled tradesperson specialising in creating and fitting custom woodwork for homes and businesses. In my role, I oversee all aspects of joinery production and installation, from designing and manufacturing custom pieces to managing the site work.

What do you do on an average day?

On an average day, I'm coordinating our team of skilled Cabinetmakers, spray painters, and installers to ensure each project is built to our high standards. I'm also closely involved with scheduling, quality control, and working directly with clients and Builders to bring their vision to life. Since we manufacture our joinery in-house, a big part of my job is overseeing that each step runs smoothly and efficiently.

What do you like about your job?

I love the variety and hands-on nature of joinery. Working with my hands has always been important to me, and I take pride in seeing tangible results by the end of each day. Because we work on custom designs, every project is unique, which keeps things interesting and constantly presents new challenges. The process of solving problems, whether in design or on-site logistics, is also something I enjoy.

My job allows me to combine creativity with technical precision, and that balance keeps me motivated and engaged.

What was your career pathway to where you are now?

I started my career right after finishing Year 12, joining Art of Kitchens as an apprentice Cabinetmaker.

Thanks to some experience I gained during school, I was able to accelerate my training and completed my TAFE studies six months early. From there, I progressed from apprentice to installer, then site supervisor, where I began managing job schedules, trades, and troubleshooting issues.

After a few years, I moved into check measuring, which involved drawing up jobs to scale using CAD software. Today, I'm the Operations Manager, overseeing the entire lifecycle of each project. Along the way, I've continued to learn—earning a Certificate IV in Building and Construction and expanding into areas like marketing and social media to stay connected with industry trends.

What advice would you give to someone at school considering a career as a joiner?

If you're interested in a career where you work with your hands, solve creative challenges, and see the results of your efforts every day, joinery is a fantastic choice. My advice is to be open to learning on the job, embrace every new skill, and stay adaptable.

When I started, I didn't realise the variety this career would offer, from practical skills to project management, CAD drawing, and even social media marketing. You don't have to know exactly where you'll end up—what matters is being willing to work hard, keep learning, and enjoy the journey.

What advice would you give to a parent/guardian whose daughter is considering a career in building and construction?

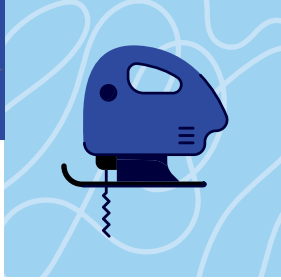
The construction industry is incredibly diverse, offering a range of career paths from hands-on trades like joinery to design, management, and even roles in technology. There's a growing need for skilled, passionate people, and there's a place for everyone, regardless of background or gender. Do what you enjoy and are passionate about. There are many different avenues to choose from. If you learn a trade and then go into design, engineering or architecture I believe you will learn many skills and be more respected by the tradespeople for knowing what you are talking about.

Women are bringing fresh perspectives to the field, and more companies are embracing diversity and inclusive workplaces.

Her path may not look traditional, but that's the exciting part—she's helping to shape the future of the industry.

TRADES

Cabinetmaker



What you need to know

A Cabinetmaker will create, assemble and repair furniture and cabinetry, for example in kitchens or office fit outs.

A Cabinetmaker is a skilled tradesperson who specialises in designing, constructing, and installing custom cabinetry, furniture, and other woodwork. Unlike Carpenters, who often work on the larger structural elements of a build, Cabinetmakers focus on fine woodwork that requires precision, craftsmanship, and attention to detail.

Cabinetmakers usually examine or develop drawings, work orders and sample parts to be able to fulfill an order. They will mark out, cut and fit the materials together. They work on houses, commercial projects, boats, caravans and other projects. Some of them might work across lots of different areas, but some might choose to specialise in one space.

Some Cabinetmakers only focus on furniture, for example, and they design and develop incredibly intricate and innovative pieces. Others will work on full cabinetry development and come up with amazing products like hidden kitchen cupboards and self-closing drawers.

If you're really good with detail, and your hands, and you think you'd be able to come up with some cool and innovative ideas, then maybe you're meant to be a Cabinetmaker!

Average income:
$64,625*

Training:
4 years

What should you be good at?

- Working with your hands
- Working with intricate designs
- Technical design
- Following detailed plans and drawings
- Maths
- Strong hand-eye coordination and manual dexterity

What should you enjoy?

- Being attentive to details
- Using tools and machinery
- Seeing a project through
- Developing new ideas
- Thinking creatively

Relevant qualifications

- Certificate III in Cabinet Making and Timber Technology (MSF30322)
- Apprenticeship

What subjects are helpful to do at school?

- General maths
- Design
- English
- Business studies
- Industrial technology
- Design and technologies

How a career pathway can look

Some Cabinetmakers work as sole traders or for small businesses, while others go on to join a larger woodworking business. Some will specialise, for example in custom furniture making, antique restoration, high-end cabinetry or woodworking design.

Some may take on project manager roles in larger businesses or move into design roles to work directly with clients on their needs.

It is a versatile trade that can take people into lots of different parts of the building and construction industry.

For more information on becoming a Cabinetmaker, contact the **Master Builders office in your state/territory.**

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TRADES

Plumber

What you need to know

A Plumber will install, repair and maintain water, gas and drainage systems.

Plumbers are licensed and highly skilled tradespeople. They usually qualify as gasfitters and drainers too so they can work across all three areas, although it is possible just to qualify in a single area.

Plumbers ensure the proper functioning of piping systems, fixtures, and appliances, focusing on safety and compliance with local regulations and standards.

They work on builds across the residential, civil and commercial sectors. A Plumber in the residential sector might be working on a bathroom/kitchen/laundry renovation one day, and running the plumbing and gas lines for a new housing development the next. Some Plumbers like to do maintenance plumbing where they repair issues in existing systems, and others like to be installing all new plumbing or gas systems. Plumbers also maintain drainage systems like stormwater and sewer lines, roof plumbing (like installing gutters or roof plumbing systems), or install and test backflow prevention devices. Other Plumbers work in the commercial space, maintaining and repairing existing commercial plumbing and gas facilities, or working on new commercial builds like shopping centres and schools.

And then there are those that work on projects like the Snowy Hydro or other civil infrastructure projects to make sure that communities have access to water, stormwater and sewer facilities. It's a diverse trade with huge potential for career progression.

If you're interested in all things water, science and problem solving, and you want a career that can offer you lots of choice, then maybe you'd be a great Plumber!

Average income:
$88,517*

Training:
4 years

What should you be good at?

- Maths
- Basic science like physics
- Working with your hands, outside or in tight spaces
- Communicating
- Reading and implementing plans

What should you enjoy?

- Working with water and complex systems
- Working with a team
- Being outside
- Problem solving
- Seeing a project through

Relevant qualifications

- Certificate II in Drainage (CPC20712)
- Certificate III in Plumbing (CPC32420)
- Certificate III in Roof Plumbing (CPC32620)
- Certificate III in Gas Fitting (CPC32720)
- Certificate IV in Plumbing and Services (CPC40920)
- Apprenticeship

What subjects are helpful to do at school?

- General maths
- Science
- Design
- English
- Business studies
- Industrial technology

How a career pathway can look

Plumbing is a licensed trade, which means that to practise as a sole trader, run a business or obtain further qualifications (like a kitchen, bathroom and laundry renovation licence) the Plumber must have a licence.

In most states and territories this will require a Certificate IV in Plumbing and Services (CPC40920) as well as work experience. You would also have to do ongoing professional development studies throughout your career to keep your licence current.

A lot of Plumbers work as sole traders or go on to run their own larger businesses. There is also huge demand in larger companies for skilled Plumbers.

Plumbers can choose to qualify and work across plumbing, draining, gasfitting or roof plumbing, or they can specialise in one or two of these areas and focus their attention there.

Plumbers are needed in the residential, civil and commercial space. They might work on residential builds or renovations, in maintenance repairing existing systems like hot water heaters or clearing blocked drains and sewer lines. Or maybe they will work on commercial builds running the pipework for schools or shopping centres. Or maintaining that plumbing work in the commercial space. Or maybe they are working on big civil projects like dams or hydro systems.

There is so much opportunity for Plumbers in Australia to move around, upskill and work in different areas across their careers.

For more information you can contact the **Master Plumbers Association in your state/territory here.**

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Phillip Foster

Plumber and Business Owner

O'Brien Plumbing Tuggeranong

Want to check out what Phil and his team is up to?
Follow them here

What is a Plumber?

A Plumber is a super handy person to know!

There are many specialities within plumbing but as a general guide, a Plumber is a skilled tradesperson that installs, repairs or maintains water systems. Personally, I work mostly in residential plumbing which means people's homes, rather than commercial buildings.

What do you do on an average day?

I own my own plumbing business so I spend a lot of the time on the phone to my customers, my staff and suppliers. I organise jobs, plan what materials we will need for jobs, order the materials and drive from site to site supervising, managing and completing work. I do a lot of different things but the majority of my work includes renovating bathrooms, repairing plumbing fixtures such as taps and showers, unblocking drains and installing hot water systems.

What do you like about your job?

I love helping people. A lot of the work I do is diagnosing issues when something isn't working as it should. I get real satisfaction out of finding a solution to a problem.

What was your career pathway to where you are now?

I grew up in England. When I finished school I didn't know what to do. I attempted university but it was not for me. I had been working as a labourer for a plumbing company and they offered me a plumbing apprenticeship so I took it. I completed the apprenticeship and continued on with the company as a qualified plumber.

At 26 years old I decided to move to Australia and worked as a plumber on a Skilled Migrant Visa. After a few years I was then able to get my own Australian plumbing licence. In 2015 I started my own plumbing business in Canberra and have been growing my business since then.

What advice would you give to someone at school considering becoming a Plumber?

In the beginning, completing a trade might feel cumbersome. You'll spend a lot of time being dirty and working hard without earning much money.

It might not seem like a worthwhile investment, especially when you see some of your friends earning lots more money just sitting at a desk!

But trust me when I tell you to stick with it because in the long run, it will absolutely be worth every blister, scratch and stinky shirt.

There is the potential to earn big money and you obtain extremely valuable skills that:

1. will help you, your family and friends with your own homes throughout life,
2. will always be needed, so you will always be able to find a job, and
3. will keep you engaged - there are so many different specialties within plumbing, you'll never have to get stuck and bored doing the same thing!

What advice would you give to a parent/ guardian whose daughter is considering a career in building and construction?

There has been no better time for women to enter the construction industry than now.

Google "Women in Construction" – there are amazing support groups and advocates to tap into. There is absolutely no reason why your daughter cannot thrive and lead in the building and construction industry. I have two daughters myself and when they leave school I will be encouraging them to join my wife and I in plumbing or another trade of their choice.

TRADES

Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning Plumber

What you need to know

A Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) Plumber will install, maintain, and repair the plumbing components of HVAC systems.

While general Plumbers handle a wide range of tasks related to water, drainage, and gas systems, HVAC Plumbers focus specifically on the plumbing components related to heating, cooling, and ventilation systems. They need different skills and knowledge beyond general plumbing to be able to do this work.

They're also referred to as Mechanical Plumbers.
HVAC Plumbers need a deep understanding of mechanical systems, gas appliances, and in some cases, refrigeration, in addition to traditional plumbing skills.

HVAC Plumbers can do work in the residential sector, for example installing systems like hydronic underfloor heating or air conditioning systems that require water connections. But they are more often found working on large-scale heating and cooling systems, including installing and maintaining cooling towers, boilers, and industrial-grade air conditioning systems.

If you're fascinated by plumbing, but want to be a bit more specialised, and work on big commercial projects, maybe you should consider HVAC Plumbing!

Average income:
$92,127*

Training:
4 years

What should you be good at?

- Maths
- Basic science like physics
- Working with your hands, outside or in tight spaces
- Communicating
- Reading and implementing plans

What should you enjoy?

- Working with complex systems
- Working with a team
- Being outside
- Problem solving
- Seeing a project through

Relevant qualifications

- Certificate III in Plumbing (CPC32420)
- Certificate IV in Plumbing and Services (CPC40920)
- Apprenticeship in HVAC plumbing sector

What subjects are helpful to do at school?

- General maths
- Science
- Design
- English
- Business studies
- Industrial technology

How a career pathway can look

Plumbing is a licensed trade, which means that to practise as a sole trader, run a business or obtain further qualifications the Plumber must have a licence. To be an HVAC Plumber, you need special licensing depending on which state or territory you are in.

HVAC Plumbers can work for large commercial organisations undertaking construction and maintenance work on all kinds of commercial jobs like schools, shopping centres and hospitals. They can also run their own businesses or work as sole traders who sub-contract to other companies. Doing this usually means they could be working on multiple projects at any one time.

HVAC Plumbers are in high demand in Australia because their work is so specialised.

To maintain licensing, HVAC Plumbers must continue to undertake professional development throughout their career.

For more information you can contact the **Air Conditioning and Mechanical Contractors Association of Australia (AMCA) here.**

You can also contact the **Master Plumbers Association in your state/territory here.**

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Luke Andrew

Service Manager
CCS Group

Want to check out what Luke and his team are up to?
Follow them here

What is your job and what do you do on an average day?
I am the Service Manager at CCS Group. My average day consists of, assisting technicians when they need a hand, reviewing jobs, organising works, providing quotes for identified repairs, meeting with clients, meeting with technicians, reviewing process and improving systems. I also plan and run the apprentice training sessions. We have quite a few apprentices working for us, including a school-based apprentice.

What do you like about your job?
My job, while it can be challenging, is very rewarding.

Being able to resolve/rectify issues and the satisfaction that comes from completing complex assignments and resolving demanding challenges is something I really enjoy.

In air conditioning there are multiple ways to achieve the same outcome. Being able to work on different types of systems keeps me interested in the trade as there is always a new challenge.

What was your career pathway to where you are now?
I started my electrical apprenticeship after a gap year after year 12. Originally, I didn't know air conditioning was a trade, but I was fortunate enough that the company I started my electrical apprenticeship also had an air-conditioning department.

Air-conditioning has multiple aspects to it which I was drawn to. I started my HVAC apprenticeship after finishing my electrical apprenticeship. I finished that and worked as the DLP account supervisor maintaining sites after they have completed construction. I then took on a full-time office role as Service Manager where I manage the service department.

What advice would you give to someone at school a career as an HVAC Plumber?
While my qualification is in heating ventilation and air conditioning. HVAC (Mechanical) plumbing is a big part of the HVAC trade.

In commercial buildings, to heat and cool the air the main medium used is water. The mechanical plumber builds the pipe work required to complete this.

Mechanical plumbers are required to be able to read construction drawings, have mathematical ability, have hands on experience, be able to visualise a finished project beforehand. Mechanical plumbing would be a rewarding career to get into. Being able to see the end result of your work is very satisfying.

Mechanical plumbers can move into multiple roles as their careers progress. Such as:
- Dual trades roles
- Supervisors and manager roles
- Project Management
- Even roles outside the industry like property management and teachers are sought after.

Other parts of the HVAC trade are:
- Controls (Electrician) - These technicians install and maintain the controls system which make the system operate as designed.
- Gas technicians (Type A & B Gas Technician) - These technicians work on the gas fired heating hot water plant which heats the water that heats the building.
- HVAC (HVAC Technician) - These technicians install and maintain the air-conditioning systems and make sure they are operating at their most efficient.
- Specialised technicians - Within HVAC technicians you can find specialised technicians which work on specific equipment like chillers that play a very important role in keeping the building cool.

TRADES

Electrician

What you need to know

An Electrician will install, repair and maintain electrical wiring and equipment.

Electricians are licensed and highly skilled tradespeople. They are responsible for installing, maintaining, and repairing electrical systems in homes, commercial buildings, and industrial facilities. They ensure that electrical wiring, equipment, and systems operate safely and efficiently.

The work of an Electrician is high-risk and complex. The training required, average income and professional pathways reflect this.

Electricians will install electrical wiring systems in new projects and renovations across the residential, commercial or civil spaces. They will troubleshoot and repair electrical systems, test and inspect existing or new systems and ensure safety and compliance with regulation.

Electricians are particularly needed in the industry right now as Australia is transitioning to a goal of net zero emissions by 2050. This means electrical power is becoming more important and relied upon than ever before. Electricians have a really strong demand across the country and will have for the foreseeable future.

If you're keen on a highly sought after role in a crucial industry, and you want to be busy and make great money, then maybe you're meant to be an Electrician!

What should you be good at?

- Maths
- Science
- Working with your hands, outside or in tight spaces
- Communicating
- Reading and implementing plans
- Following regulations

Average income:
$110,086*

Training:
4 years

What should you enjoy?

- Working with complex systems
- Maintaining a high standard of safety
- Working with a team
- Problem solving
- Seeing a project through
- Electrotechnology and how it works

Relevant qualifications

- Certificate III in Electrotechnology Electrician (UEE30820)
- Certificate IV in Electrotechnology - Systems Electrician (UEE40620)
- Certificate IV in Electrotechnology - Electrical Contracting (UEE42120)
- Diploma of Electrical Engineering (UEE50420)
- Diploma of Electrical Systems Engineering (UEE53020)
- Advanced Diploma of Electrical – Engineering (UEE62220)
- Apprenticeship

What subjects are helpful to do at school?

- General maths
- Science
- English
- Business studies
- Industrial technology

How a career pathway can look

There are a number of different specialisations when it comes to Electricians.

- **Residential Electricians** focus on electrical systems in homes, such as lighting, wiring, power outlets, and electrical safety.
- **Commercial Electricians** work on buildings like hospitals and offices and usually work with large electrical loads.
- Industrial Electricians work with heavy machinery and complex electrical systems in factories, manufacturing plants, and mines.
- **Maintenance Electricians** maintain and repair electrical systems in buildings, ensuring continuous and safe operation.
- **Solar Electricians** install and maintain solar panel systems, including solar power inverters, batteries, and grid connections.
- **Telecommunications Electricians** install and maintain telecommunications infrastructure, such as internet cables, phone systems, and NBN connections.

There are so many roles in the industry for qualified Electricians and lots of different specialisations to consider. For that reason there are also lots of different training packages offered by RTOs.

If you are thinking of pursuing a career as an Electrician, but you are not sure where to start or which kind of Electrician you are interested in becoming, some organisations that could help are:

Master Electricians Australia
National Electrician and Communications Association

To maintain licensing, Electricians must continue to undertake professional development.

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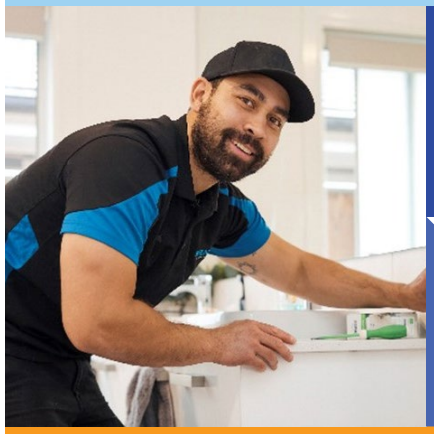
Oliver Saunders

Electrician and Business Owner

Saunders Electrical Group



Want to see what Oliver is up to?
Follow him here

What is an electrician and what do you do on an average day?

An electrician installs and maintains electrical systems and equipment in houses and other buildings. The electrical industry is vast and there are many avenues you can go down to learn and work in different sectors of our industry.

What do you do on an average day?

I am a residential electrician. This consists of working with builders and other trades on site to build new homes or undertake home renovations. We also upgrade lighting fixtures, install power point sockets and ceiling fans amongst other things in people's homes.

We get to meet and interact with lots of new people regularly, and this is great for building your communication and interpersonal skills.

What do you like about your job?

Getting to work in different places every day and meeting new people all the time. It's great to see our client's reactions once we've finished their project.

We do a great job and its awesome to see how happy our clients get!

What was your career pathway to where you are now?

Growing up my neighbour was an electrician and convinced me to start an electrical apprenticeship as I didn't know what I wanted to do after school.

I completed my apprenticeship with a company doing residential construction then moved to another company installing solar panels. After that I moved overseas for a couple of years to play rugby then when I came back to Australia I got a job working on automatic doors and roller shutters. This is where I learnt how to quote and communicate with building managers and other business-related skills like sales. I then decided to start my own electrical company and here we are seven years later!

What advice would you give to someone at school considering a career as an Electrician?

Give it a go, see if you like it. If not try the next thing, you're still young and have plenty of time to try a whole bunch of different things to find what you like and enjoy!

What advice would you give to a parent whose daughter wants a career in building and construction?

Encourage them to give it a go, there are lots of opportunities for a career in building and construction. You may start and gain a bunch of useful skills which will serve you well if you decide to change careers later on – it helped me!

TRADES

Electrical Linesperson

What you need to know

An Electrical Linesperson will install and maintain electrical sub-transmission and distribution systems.

Electrical Linespersons are responsible for the installation, maintenance, and repair of electrical power distribution and transmission networks. They handle overhead and underground power lines that deliver electricity from power stations to homes, businesses, and other facilities. It is their job to make sure the electricity that runs to your home, school, local shopping centre or office is all working as it should be.

Electrical Linespersons are the people who work tirelessly after storms or outages to make sure your power comes on as quickly as possible.

They install powerlines overhead and underground, they maintain and repair the lines and they inspect the infrastructure to make sure it is working properly and safely. They install and maintain substations and put up power poles and utility towers.

It is complex and high-risk work, so it is a licensed and highly regulated trade.

If you enjoy complex work that is specialised and highly sought after, then perhaps you're meant to be an Electrical Linesperson!

Average income:
$131,416*

Training:
4 years

What should you be good at?

- Maths
- Science
- Working with your hands, outside or in tight spaces
- Communicating
- Reading and implementing plans
- Following regulations

What should you enjoy?

- Working outside, and at heights
- Working with complex systems
- Maintaining a high standard of safety
- Working with a team
- Problem solving
- Seeing a project through
- Electrotechnology and how it works

Relevant qualifications

- Certificate III in ESI - Distribution Overhead (UET30621)
- Certificate III in ESI - Transmission Overhead (UET30521)
- Certificate III in ESI - Distribution Underground (UET30821)
- Certificate IV in ESI - Substations (UET40522)
- Advanced Diploma of ESI - Power Systems (UET60222)
- Apprenticeship

What subjects are helpful to do at school?

- General maths
- Science
- English
- Business studies
- Industrial technology

How a career pathway can look

Electrical Linespersons need to be licensed. Licences are issued by each state or territory regulator so you would need to contact them to find out if you qualify for and can obtain a licence. To maintain licensing, Electrical Linespersons must continue to undertake professional development.

Once qualified and licensed, Electrical Linespersons may choose to specialise in areas such as high-voltage systems, renewable energy installations, or telecommunications.

As Australia moves towards its goal of net zero emissions by 2050, the role of an Electrical Linesperson will continue to grow in demand and businesses in this space will become more prevalent and important than ever.

Most Electrical Linespersons work for larger organisations, which are either government run or contract their services to government. This means there is quite a bit of room to move in your career and progress up the ladder if you want to.

If you are thinking of pursuing a career as an Electrical Linesworker, you could contact the **National Electrician and Communications Association here.**

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TRADES

Brick and Block Layer

What you need to know

Bricklayers and Block Layers construct, repair and maintain structures made from bricks, blocks and stone.

Brick and Block Layers help to construct various types of buildings, walls, pavements, and other structures. They use different materials depending on the project, such as bricks, concrete blocks, and stones.

They work with other trades to determine what is needed on each project, and then prepare their site accordingly. This might include working on scaffolding, sealing foundations, spreading layers of mortar to create a base, laying bricks, blocks (like masonry building blocks) or stones.

Brick and Block Layers build walls for houses, fences and buildings. They create archways and driveways, pavements, chimneys and stone facades.

As there is a shortage of Brick and Block Layers in the industry right now, a lot of the work they are contracted to do is becoming quite unique and artisan. There is strong demand for Brick and Block Layers for the foreseeable future.

If you love Lego, being outside and staying fit then perhaps Brick and Block Laying is for you!

Average income:
$69,476*

Training:
3 years

What should you be good at?

- Working with your hands
- Basic maths, especially measuring spaces
- Working in a physically demanding job
- Communicating
- Reading and implementing plans
- Following instructions

What should you enjoy?

- Working outside, and at heights
- Staying fit
- Working with people and as part of a team
- Time management

Relevant qualifications

- Certificate III in Bricklaying and Blocklaying (CPC33020)
- Apprenticeship

What subjects are helpful to do at school?

- General maths
- Health and physical education
- Industrial design

How a career pathway can look

Brick and Block Laying is a crucial trade in the building industry, but the number of people doing apprenticeships is not as high as demand for this role needs it to be. This means Brick and Block Layers are experiencing high volumes of work and will be for the foreseeable future as Australia is trying to build more houses over the next few years than ever before.

Brick and Block Layers are needed across the residential and commercial parts of the industry so there is lots of scope to work on diverse projects.

Lots of Brick and Block Layers work as sole traders – and in most states and territories don't need to be licensed. They run their own businesses or subcontract to builders so they could be on multiple projects at any one time. They need to be good at managing their time.

Some choose to specialise in masonry or decorative brickwork and there is a lot of demand for that at the moment.

Brick and Block Layers can also upskill to become site supervisors and trainers.

If you are interested in a brick or block laying career and would like more information, you can contact **Brick and Block Careers or check out their website.**

**Please know that if they look a little lower than you expected, that's because they include everyone in those jobs! Full-time, part-time, apprentice, trainee, graduate, manager, early career or ready to retire, it doesn't matter! They're all included to come to an average and that's the number we have used.*

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Garry Watherston

Bricklayer and Business Owner

Brickie Bros

Want to keep in touch with Brickie Bros? Check them out here

You can also check out this video of Garry doing his thing here on YouTube

What is a Bricklayer?

For me a bricklayer is an artist. We make a less than perfect product almost perfect by laying it level and plumb and jointing the brick to finish it off. Be prepared to get dirty and the work can be hard as a bricklayer but it's great!

What does your average day look like?

An average day would be me setting up profiles, gauging, bonding the wall we are going to build, cutting bricks, moving bricks and mixing mortar (mud).

What do you like about your job?

I love knowing the wall could potentially be there forever. When people give you feedback on how great the brickwork looks and how fast they think it went up it's awesome, because you know you've done a great job for someone.

What was your career pathway to where you are now?

I did four years of my apprenticeship and then did night school for a builders licence. I ended up applying instead for a supervisor licence for bricklaying.

I had already bought most of my tools as an apprentice so when I started on my own I didn't need to buy much which made it easier.

I started Bricky Bros in South Australia and the rest is history!

What advice would you give to someone at school considering a career as a Bricklayer?

It is a great trade, and there is so much potential for people with these skills.

You could do fly in fly out work like my brother, commercial or residential or start your own business like me. There is always plenty of work around and if you enjoy being outside what's not to like about it?

What advice would you give to someone whose daughter is considering a career in building and construction?

There's a growing interest among women in pursuing trade careers. I believe this is a positive development. In today's workplace hard work, dedication, and consistent effort are the key factors that determine success, regardless of gender.

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TRADES

Stonemason

What you need to know

Stonemasons construct and renovate stone structures and monument masonry.

Stonemasons work with stone to create, shape, and finish a variety of structures and decorative features. They work with hard and soft stone blocks and masonry slabs to create new features. They also renovate existing features like monuments and decorative flourishes in existing buildings – things like amazing archways and historical buildings.

They work with natural stone like granite, marble, limestone and sandstone and they use tools like chisels, saws and grinders.

It can be noisy work and proper protections from things like silica dust are vital.

Stonemasons also prepare, cut and install stone countertops, fireplaces, paving and sculptures. They prepare stone by polishing, honing or applying sealants.

If you have an eye for design, love working with your hands and have an interest in the world of stone, maybe becoming a Stonemason is your career calling!

Average income:
$66,135*

Training:
3 years

What should you be good at?

- Working with your hands
- Basic maths
- Working in a physical job (stone is heavy!)
- Problem solving
- Design and attention to detail

What should you enjoy?

- Working outside
- Coming up with new designs
- Working with your hands
- Working with people on site

Relevant qualifications

- Certificate III in Stonemasonry (CPC32320)
- Apprenticeship

What subjects are helpful to do at school?

- General maths
- Physical education
- Industrial design
- Business studies
- Design and technologies

How a career pathway can look

Stonemasons often work on construction sites, which may be outdoors or in workshops. They may be involved in both residential and commercial projects, working on new builds, renovations, or historical restorations.

Lots of Stonemasons work as sole traders – and in most states and territories don't need to be licensed. They run their own businesses or subcontract to builders so they could be working on multiple projects at any one time. They need to be good at managing their time.

Some choose to specialise in sculpture or highly decorative work, while others focus on more practical things like stone benchtop or fireplace installation. There is a lot of demand for Stonemasons at the moment and for the foreseeable future.

Stonemasons can also upskill to become site supervisors and trainers.

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Marko Zarak

Stonemason and Construction Audit Manager

What is a Stonemason?

A Stonemason is a skilled craftsperson who works with natural stone and masonry products to create structures, buildings, or decorative features. Their work may involve gilding, sculpting, cutting, polishing shaping, forming, manufacturing and installing to construct or repair elements like walls, buildings, monuments, and sculptures.

Stonemasonry requires physical strength, technical skill, attention to detail, and a deep understanding of products and materials

It's a trade that blends craftsmanship with artistry.

What do you do on an average day?

Not all days are the same but on most days as a Stonemason I would:

- Meet new people like clients and people I would be working alongside on site
- Consult with designers and builders provide insight to the job and what skills will be required
- Plan out the day, this usually starts way before commencing the physical work and includes things like ordering materials, ensuring the job is set up for the day, weeks, months or even years ahead
- Work out on the site or in the workshop, including setting it up to make sure the work will go smoothly, efficiently and safely
- Be cleaning up! This is one of the most important things I have learnt over the years and it is good practice to be viewed as professional cleaning up after yourself is a major part of the role, it's always the last thing you do that leaves an impression.

What do you like about your job?

The creativity, freedom to express my opinions and share what I do with others. Building something for someone gives great satisfaction. You can stand back and watch people's appreciation of your work ….. and get paid for it as well!!

What was your career pathway to where you are now?

At high school I was very active and couldn't sit still. So I lost interest in classroom learning very fast. I played lots of sports and I had an appreciation for art and design. I finished year 12 and dedicated my time to my chosen sports and continued with art and design.

When I was 15 I was working as a labourer on school holidays and this led me into opportunities to learn the art of masonry.

By the time I got to the end of year 12 I was contracting for myself (at the age of 18) and not really knowing what I was doing.

I embarked on a pathway focusing on masonry as my main role and I was engaged with learning the trade as I went. After a few years I wanted to learn how to run my own business so I went back to school to study business computing. Training through VET gave me a different perspective on education than what it was like for me at school. I found it was easier to focus on studies directly related to my personal goals.

Still being focused on art and design I went further with my studies and completed a Diploma in Graphic Design. My work provided me with the flexibility to balance study and other sporting interests quite well for many years and I was achieving my goals as I went.

Some of these achievements included:

- Completing a degree in industrial design (product engineering)
- Completing building/construction/management qualifications
- VET training qualifications
- National representation in sport

Now my role has changed significantly. I have become a full-time building auditor/inspector/investigator and a part-time educator/teacher/trainer and consultant. Although I still dabble in the art of masonry mainly custom work specialising in stonemasonry.

What advice would you give to someone at school considering a career as a Stonemason?

It's hard work but really rewarding. It is not every day you get to create something that is there for a very long time, and being used and appreciated by people every day.

If you love to build stuff, work with your hands and have a creative outlook it could be such a great career choice for you.

What advice would you give to a parent/ guardian whose daughter is considering a career in building and construction?

Opportunities can come from anywhere at any time in any industry – and it's usually from the least expected one!

I never knew what I wanted to do for a 'career', and I certainly didn't expect to be where I am now but all I can say is provide support to the idea of learning and experiencing new adventures and if your daughter is passionate about the building industry, then she will go far.

I look back at my successes over the years and I can say the most important thing I take away from my own story is enjoying the journey to get to where I am now and I'm really looking forward to my next adventure.

TRADES

Tiler

What you need to know

Tilers can be wall and floor tilers, or roof tilers – they cover walls, floors or roofs to keep structures waterproof.

Roof Tilers use tiles, sheets and shingles to form a waterproof surface on the roof. Floor and Wall Tilers will usually prepare a site – like laying screed – and then lay ceramic, clay, slate, marble or glass tiles on external and internal walls. They'll then grout and seal so the project is ready to go.

Floor and Wall Tilers can be quite artistic in their work and need a good eye for spaces and design.

Tilers will need to study plans and drawings and advise builders and clients on the best products and methods to use. Many of them, especially Roof Tilers, will work at heights and sometimes in small spaces so it is not for the faint hearted. It helps to be physically fit and creative.

If you're creative in your thinking, but enjoy logical and specific tasks, you don't mind working inside or outside, and you think it would be cool to work across multiple projects at one time, then maybe your future is as a Tiler!

Average income:
$59,738*

Training:
3 years

What should you be good at?

- Working with your hands
- Basic maths, especially measuring spaces
- Working in a physical job
- Problem solving
- Design and attention to detail

What should you enjoy?

- Being both inside and outside
- Coming up with new designs
- Working with your hands
- Working with people on site
- Working across a few projects at any one time, so you'll need to be good with time management

Relevant qualifications

- Certificate III in Roof Tiling (CPC30820)
- Certificate III in Wall and Floor Tiling (CPC31320)
- Apprenticeship

What subjects are helpful to do at school?

- General maths, mostly being able to calculate surface area
- Health and physical education
- Industrial technology
- Business studies

How a career pathway can look

Floor and Wall Tilers are different to Roof Tilers so you would need to decide which one appeals to you most. Tilers can choose to run their own businesses, or work for organisations, large and small. They work on residential and commercial projects.

A lot of Tilers will work as sole traders, who run their own businesses and sub-contract to builders and larger projects. Some of them will sub-contract to multiple builders at once and have lots of projects running at the same time. If you wanted to run your business like this, you would need to be good at time management, and make sure you are remembering to keep track of time, money, invoicing and projects.

Other Tilers will work as employees for bigger companies like building companies that build homes in large volumes, or renovation companies that focus on kitchens, bathrooms and laundries.

Tilers can also upskill to become site supervisors and trainers.

If you need more information on becoming a Roof Tiler, contact the **Australian Roof Tiling Association here.**

You can also contact the **Australian Tile Council here.**

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Huw Jones

Tiler and General Manager/Co-Owner

Beaumont Tiles Canberra

Check out what the team at Beaumont Tiles Canberra is up to on their website here

What is a Tiler?

A Tiler by definition is someone who has done Ceramic Floor and Wall Tiling as a Certificate IV.

But in reality a Tiler is so much more than that! As a tiler you get to learn about lot of different trades during your qualification and out on the job. You'll need to know about waterproofing, carpentry, plastering, concreting, brick laying, painting and lots more if you want to be an effective Tiler.

What does your average day look like in your role?

When I was actually working as a Tiler my day would consist of organising what tools I would need for the day of work, picking up the materials I needed for the job, organising who is going to be on site and when (this was employees, tradesworkers and builders). Then I'd need to work with builders and project managers on what needed to be completed that day and how. Then it would be lots of site clean up and end the day with paperwork like invoicing, quoting and preparing for upcoming jobs.

Now my days look pretty different as I run Beaumont Tiles Canberra!

What do you like about your job?

I like being able to take something old and make it new again. It's really satisfying work. I also like being able to set my own hours of work.

It was also great to have the opportunity to become my own boss and have a great income doing something I enjoy. I get real satisfaction doing something different every day.

What was your career pathway to where you are now?

I did my apprenticeship in the early 2000s in what was then called "Bathroom Craft". I was the World Skills Regional Gold Medallist 2002 and the National Medallist that same year.

Then in 2003 I started my own business called Diamond Cut Tiling, which was basically me straight out of my apprenticeship. Then from 2012 I became General Manager and Co-Owner of Beaumont Tiles Mitchell and Fyshwick in Canberra and I made it into the Beaumont Hall of Fame in 2023!

What advice would you give to someone at school considering a career as a Tiler?

Tiling is a very satisfying trade to learn but any trade is a skill for life. And it's an added bonus that you get paid to learn, then once you're qualified you practically have a licence to print money!

Trust me, if you choose to pursue a trade career as a Tiler you will never be without work or money.

What advice would you give to someone whose daughter is considering a role in building and construction?

Building and construction trades are for anyone who doesn't want to work inside the same four walls for their working life. You get a real ability to take pride in your work every day and choose your own destiny and what your future can hold.

Every day you get a sense of accomplishment with what you have done.

Who wouldn't want that for their daughter?

TRADES

Plasterer

What you need to know

Plasterers are responsible for making sure walls, ceilings and other surfaces are smooth and ready for finishing.

A Plasterer will apply plaster to walls, ceilings, and other surfaces to create a smooth or decorative finish. They work with a variety of materials like gypsum, lime, cement, and acrylics. They are essential in both residential and commercial construction projects, playing a key role in preparing surfaces for painting or finishing.

Plastering work can be both structural and decorative. It can involve patching holes, making walls or ceilings, or preparing for paintwork. Or it could be forming and installing decorative architraves, cornices, ceiling roses, and textured finishes.

Depending on the type of plastering you're interested in, you could be working on commercial or residential projects.

If you like working with your hands, using different materials and working on multiple jobs at once, then maybe plastering is for you!

Average income:
$67,515*

Training:
3 years

What should you be good at?

- Working with your hands
- Basic maths, especially measuring spaces
- Working in a physical job
- Problem solving
- Design and attention to detail
- Communicating

What should you enjoy?

- Working with people on site
- Working across a few projects at any one time, so you'll need to be good with time management
- Using and mixing different materials for the job
- Being attentive to detail to make sure the project is ready for the next tradesperson

Relevant qualifications

- Certificate III in Solid Plastering (CPC31020)
- Certificate III in Wall and Ceiling Lining (CPC31220)
- Apprenticeship

What subjects are helpful to do at school?

- General maths, mostly being able to calculate surface area
- Health and physical education
- Industrial design
- Business studies
- Design and technologies

How a career pathway can look

Plasterers can work across different projects and they're needed in the residential and commercial space. They might be doing internal work, decorative work, or even rendering external walls.

Some Plasterers will work as sole traders, who run their own businesses and sub-contract to builders. Some of them will sub-contract to multiple builders at once and have lots of projects running at the same time. If you wanted to run your business like this, you would need to be good at time management, and make sure you are remembering to keep track of time, money, invoicing and projects.

Other Plasterers will work as employees for bigger companies like building companies that build homes in large volumes, or renovation companies.

Plasterers are needed in the commercial building space too, so you might find you like working for a larger organisation that, for example, takes on government contracts and builds things like schools and hospitals.

Plasterers can also upskill to become site supervisors and trainers.

If you need more information, check out the **Australian Wall and Ceiling Industries website here.**

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Jayden Allan

Plastering Apprentice
Master Builders Newcastle GTO

What is your job and what do you do on an average day?
My job is an Apprentice Plasterer. On an average day I get to do various jobs on lots of different projects. One day I can be framing out a wall or ceiling and the next I could be sheeting or setting and getting the job ready for completion.

What do you like about your job?
I like my job because it's very hands on and I'm never doing the same thing repeatedly. There is always something different to be doing and learning so it never gets boring. I'm always on my feet getting projects done and moving on to the next!

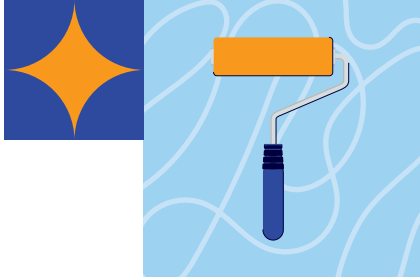
What was your career pathway to where you are now?
I started when I was 15 doing some work in a pizza shop for a while until I could save up for my first car. Then after I got my licence I started looking for more pathways into careers, rather than just having a job.

I started doing some labouring work for a plastering company three days a week then from there I knew what I wanted to do. After I finished that job I found employment through Newcastle Master Builders and started my Plastering Apprenticeship – which is where I am now!

What advice would you give to someone at school considering becoming a Plasterer?
If you're in school and thinking of being a Plasterer, don't be afraid to ask questions, especially when you are new on a job site. It's the best way to learn and you will be taught a lot of different skills. Every tradesperson has their own skills and knowledge that they'll pass on in their own way so you need to be ready to learn!

TRADES

Painter



What you need to know

Painters protect and decorate surfaces – many of them are quite creative and have a great eye for detail and design.

Painters apply paint, varnish, stains, and other finishes to buildings, walls, furniture, and other surfaces to protect them and improve their appearance. Painters work in both residential and commercial construction, and their expertise is important for both interior and exterior finishing of buildings.

Painters can also work on large-scale industrial projects, such as painting bridges or machinery.

Their skills are important in the finishing trades to make sure that buildings and structures are protected, but also so they look great.

Painters also work on furniture and can work closely with interior designers on snazzy builds to make structures look and feel amazing.

Painters are usually quite artistic and have excellent hand-eye coordination and attention to detail. They work inside and outside and usually can have multiple jobs going at any one time so they need to be good with time management.

If you're artistic, have a steady hand, and loving working on your feet, then the Painting trade could be for you!

Average income:
$58,195*

Training:
3 years

What should you be good at?

- Painting!
- Working with your hands
- Working in a physical job
- Design and attention to detail
- Communicating

What should you enjoy?

- Working with people on site
- Working across a few projects at any one time, so you'll need to be good with time management
- Painting!
- Creating new designs

Relevant qualifications

- Certificate III in Painting and Decorating (CPC30620)
- Apprenticeship

What subjects are helpful to do at school?

- Art
- Design and technologies
- Industrial design
- Business studies

How a career pathway can look

Painters can work across lots of different projects. They might be doing internal work, decorative work, or painting external walls. Painters can specialise in certain areas like internal, external, furniture, civil infrastructure, commercial builds, decorative painting or even cross-qualify to work as an Interior Decorator.

Most of the time Painters will work as sole traders, who run their own businesses and sub-contract to builders. Some of them will sub-contract to multiple builders at once and have lots of projects running at the same time. If you wanted to run a business like this, you would need to be good at time management, and make sure you are good at keeping track of time, money, invoicing and projects.

Other Painters will work as employees for bigger outfits like building companies that build homes in large volumes, or renovation companies.

Painters are needed in the commercial and civil building spaces too, so you might find that you like working for a larger organisation that, for example, takes on government contracts and builds things like bridges, schools and shopping malls.

Growth in eco-friendly and sustainable painting practices, such as using low-VOC or environmentally friendly materials, is also opening new avenues for Painters who want to specialise in green building practices.

Painters can also upskill to become site supervisors and trainers.

For more information on becoming a Painter, check out the **Master Painters Australia website here.**

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Karly Gaffy

Painter

Want to keep in touch with Karly and see what she's up to?
Follow her here

What is your job and what do you do on an average day?

I'm a fully qualified painter and decorator. Doesn't matter if you're in commercial or domestic there's always something to prep. I do believe preparation is key in our field and if you don't do it there's not much point putting a brush in paint.

So I spend a lot of my time preparing the job before I start. Prep consists of things like sanding, filling, gapping/caulking, stripping paint, taping and covering anything that we don't want to get paint on.

Once all the prep is done, we start putting the paint on. We do brush finish, roller finish, spray finish and decorative finishes.

My workday starts at 7am and finishes at around 3:30pm and the work we do day in and day out will always have variety and there's always something different to do. This means you're not getting bored doing the same stuff over and over.

What do you like about being a painter?

There are many things I like about being a painter. I love interacting with the clients and making their home or space beautiful with honestly just my skills and some colour.

There's always something different to do and learn. I think the thing I most like about being a painter though and why I fell in love with painting is that I always get to transform something to make it look so much better than it was before. The satisfaction I get from that and from the clients being so happy with what I've done is something I'll always love.

What was your career pathway to where you are now?

I never really knew what I wanted to be or do. I left school once I finished year 11, and I had just turned 18 and got my first job at Bunnings.

Honestly that's when I met a few female tradies and wondered if I could give it a go too. I started a two-week trial in painting and decorating when I was 19 and fell in love with it.

I'm now 28 and nine years in the trade and I wouldn't change it for the world. I was lucky enough to find what I love to do at 19 years of age and nearly 10 years later I'm still doing it and still love it just as much as I did when I started.

What advice would you give to someone at school a career as a painter?

As someone who wishes I had all this when I was at high school just give it ago and see where it could take you.

Don't get me wrong I know it can be nerve wracking and scary starting something you don't know anything about but from someone who started as an apprentice and is now fully qualified, doing a trade has made me a stronger and more independent person and has taught me that gender has no bearings in my work abilities.

Also remember that "you'll only get out of something what you put into it." Don't give up on an idea before you have given it a go first. You're never too young or old to start.

Find something you love and are passionate about and watch it turn into an amazing career.

What advice would you give to a parent/guardian whose daughter is considering a trade career?

My number one piece of advice would be just to support your daughter through all of it. If your daughter is interested in a trade, help her learn more about it, get involved with it.

Try to help her see that whatever she wants to be or do in life she can because honestly that's what my dad and mum did for me, and it helped in more ways than they know.

TRADES

Floor Finisher

What you need to know

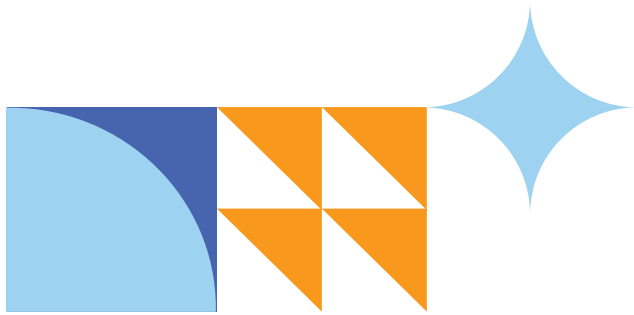
Floor Finishers install and finish floor coverings like polished hardwood, or concrete.

A Floor Finisher will install, sand, polish, stain and apply protective finishes to lots of different kinds of flooring materials like hardwood, concrete, vinyl, laminate, and tile. Their work is crucial in enhancing the appearance and durability of floors in residential, commercial, and industrial settings.

Floor finishing can be really cool work, especially as more green building practices emerge and people are looking to more sustainable flooring options for their builds.

Floor Finishers need to have an excellent eye for detail, and be good at maths to be able to calculate surface areas to determine how much product they'll need and how long projects will take them.

If you like working inside, but on your feet, have a great eye for detail and you're good at problem solving, then maybe you should be a Floor Finisher!



Average income:
$64,275*

Training:
3 years

What should you be good at?

- Working with your hands
- Working in a physical job
- Design and attention to detail
- Communicating
- Problem solving

What should you enjoy?

- Working with people on site
- Working across a few projects at any one time, so you'll need to be good with time management
- Creating new designs

Relevant qualifications

- Certificate III in Flooring Technology (MSF30822)
- Apprenticeship

What subjects are helpful to do at school?

- General maths
- Design and technologies
- Industrial design
- Business studies
- Health and physical education

How a career pathway can look

Floor Finishers can work across lots of different projects at any one time, including moving from residential projects to commercial projects. You might be installing polished concrete flooring in a multi-million-dollar home in the city one day, and be installing in a car show room in the suburbs the next. Most of the time Floor Finishers will specialise in certain types of flooring or projects, but this does not always have to be the case.

Some Floor Finishers will work as sole traders, who run their own businesses and sub-contract to builders. Some of them will sub-contract to multiple builders at once and have lots of projects running at the same time. If you wanted to run your business like this, you would need to be good at time management, and make sure you are good at keeping track of time, money, invoicing and projects.

Other Floor Finishers will work for small or medium sized businesses that specialise in installing a particular type of product or working on particular projects.

Then there are those who work as employees for big outfits like building companies that build homes in large volumes, or do lots of commercial work.

Floor finishers have lots of job mobility across projects and different parts of the industry. They can also upskill to become supervisors and project managers.

For more information, check out the website of the **Floor Covering Institute of Australia here.**

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Dani Bartolini

Chief Executive Officer
Rock Up Group

Want to see what the Rock Up Group are doing? Follow them here

What is your role and can you tell us a bit about your organisation?
My role is CEO of Rock Up Group. I look after strategic direction, growth and management across the company. Rock Up Group provides independent training and support to concrete polishers worldwide.

Rock Up Group also continues to deliver high-end polished concrete in the commercial and residential markets on a select project basis.

Polished concrete is a very niche section of floor finishing, we have built our business to focus solely on this product.

How did you get into the building and construction industry?
I was asked to come into the business six years ago when my partner identified that the skills I was using in my previous roles in other industries could assist the growth of our own business.

What do you like about working in floor finishing?
I love that polished concrete is manufactured. It is not applied or installed as such, it is manufactured with the concrete provided. The concrete is always different so the skill lies in understanding the concrete that is there and applying the knowledge of how to manipulate that specific concrete with the tools and machinery at hand.

I also love the element of client service and communication that comes into play, understanding what a client needs the floor to do (functionality) and how they want the floor to look (aesthetic).

It's an art meets science situation.

What is your advice for someone thinking about starting an apprenticeship in floor finishing?
There will always be floors!

There are multiple types of finishes to explore. In a floor finishing apprenticeship there is opportunity to be exposed to a wide range of finishes. This gives you the opportunity to understand if you like, or are better suited, to one particular specialty and then niche down if that is your preference.

After you are finished, there is opportunity to work with companies of all different sizes or work as a sole trader. You can choose the path that suits you. Talk to people that are in the industry. Talk to people that do the work that you're interested in doing. See if you can watch it in action in your local area or even get some work experience. Don't be shy to approach people who do the job you are interested in.

What advice would you give to parents/guardians whose daughters are thinking about doing an apprenticeship in the building industry?
An apprenticeship is the beginning, not the end. Structured learning, commitment and opportunity for feedback and assessment is a valuable process to have behind you in the industry.

Your daughter may end up wanting to take on more education or professional development opportunities within the industry as she progresses.

The potential for growth and development is endless and highly varied. I encourage anyone wanting to support their daughter in considering the industry to reach out to industry experts, attend industry events and to talk to both women and men in these roles.

TRADES

Glazier

What you need to know

Glaziers measure and fit glass and mirrors.

A Glazier installs, repairs, and replaces glass in windows, doors, skylights, storefronts, and other structures. Glaziers work with lots of different types of glass, including architectural, decorative, and safety glass, and they are skilled in handling other related materials such as plastics and metals for frames.

Their work is essential in both residential and commercial buildings, as well as in specialised projects like curtain walls, glass facades, bathroom screenings and custom glass installations.

Glaziers are in demand in the industry right now, and especially those who specialise in double and triple glazing windows because they will form a big part of sustainable building practices in future.

If you like working with your hands, but you are measured in your movements and able to work with fragile materials, maybe you should be a Glazier!

Average income:
$71,436*

Training:
3 years

What should you be good at?

- Working with your hands
- Working in a physical job
- Design and attention to detail
- Working with delicate materials
- Communicating
- Problem solving

What should you enjoy?

- Working with people on site
- Working across a few projects at any one time, so you'll need to be good with time management
- Creating new designs

Relevant qualifications

- Certificate III in Glass and Glazing (MSF30422)
- Apprenticeship

What subjects are helpful to do at school?

- General maths
- Design and technologies
- Industrial design
- Business studies
- Health and physical education

How a career pathway can look

Glaziers can work across different projects at any one time, including moving from residential projects to commercial projects. You might be installing windows in a home one day, and in a school the next.

Many Glaziers work in specialised areas, like bathroom shower screens, residential windows, high-rise windows and walls, skylights, shopfronts, or large curtain walls (which are exterior glass facades on buildings).

Glaziers usually work at heights, and the materials they use can be very fragile so a lot of care is needed.

Some Glaziers will work as sole traders, who run their own businesses and sub-contract to builders. Some of them will sub-contract to multiple builders at once and have lots of projects running at the same time. This is usually in the residential space. If you wanted to run your business like this, you would need to be good at time management, and make sure you are good at keeping track of time, money, invoicing and projects.

Other Glaziers though will work for small or medium sized businesses that specialise in installing a particular type of product. This might be bathroom glass screening or double-glazed windows for example.

Then there are those who work as employees for big outfits like building companies that build homes in large volumes or do lots of commercial work.

Glaziers have lots of job mobility across projects and different parts of the industry. They can also upskill to become supervisors and project managers.

For more information you can check out the website of the **Australian Glass and Window Association here.**

**Please know that if they look a little lower than you expected, that's because they include everyone in those jobs! Full-time, part-time, apprentice, trainee, graduate, manager, early career or ready to retire, it doesn't matter! They're all included to come to an average and that's the number we have used.*

Caleb Gray

Glazier
2024 AGWA National Apprentice of the Year

What is a Glazier?
A Glazier is a skilled tradesperson who specialises in working with glass. They install, repair, and remove glass in windows, doors, skylights, and other structures. Glaziers work with various types of glass, including safety glass, decorative glass, and insulated glass, for both residential and commercial buildings. Their work often involves cutting, measuring, and fitting glass, as well as ensuring safety and insulation standards are met.

What do you like about your job?
What I love the most about glazing is that every day brings something new. Whether it's a new environment, a new challenge to overcome or just a new person I get to meet. I love getting to work with my hands and standing back at the end of a job and seeing my hard work pay off.

What was your career pathway to where you are now?
When I started glazing it was just something I took on because I needed work, I didn't think I'd still be doing it now and I also didn't think I'd fall in love with the trade the way I have.

It went from just being another job to me winning a state award and then national award, thanks in no small part to the the teachers who dedicate themselves to their students and truly care.

Glazing has become a big part of my life and I don't see myself in another career.

What advice would you give to someone at school considering becoming a Glazier?
If glazing is something you might be interested in then I'd say that it's an excellent path for anyone that enjoys working with their hands.

It's an environment that is quite fun and it also requires a lot of critical thinking, has a bit of an element of high risk and also helps keep your body and mind sharp.
If these are things you look for in a career then becoming a Glazier is definitely for you.

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TRADES

Boilermaker

What you need to know

Boilermakers use lots of different techniques to create metal products.

The boiler making trade is made up mostly of Welders and Fabricators, and Boilermakers is used as a bit of a catch all term for them.

A Welder will work with metal to construct or repair various structures, components and equipment. Welders will use heat to melt and fuse metal pieces together, while Fabricators cut, shape, and assemble metal parts to create a final product. A Welder basically takes the product the Fabricator makes and welds the components of it together. Some people are Welders, while others are Fabricators who also do welding.

There are different kinds of Welders in the industry. For example, a Pressure Welder will assemble, weld and repair pressure vessels and pipes, and a Fitter-Welder will fabricate production machines and other equipment. In building and construction, Welders and Fabricators work on jobs like the construction of steel frameworks for buildings, bridges, towers, and other structures. They weld beams, columns, and other structural components to create the skeleton of a building or infrastructure. Welders are also responsible for joining sections of pipeline that will transport oil, gas, water, and other materials across vast distances. This type of welding can take place in remote locations or on offshore platforms.

Welders also work on reinforcing steel used in concrete structures like bridges, highways, tunnels, and dams to provide strength and durability.

If you like metalwork and you're interested in working on high-value projects, or across different industries, then maybe Boilermaking is your trade!

Average income:
$78,416*

Training:
3 years

What should you be good at?

- Working with your hands
- Working in a physical job
- Design and attention to detail
- Working with delicate materials
- Communicating
- Problem solving

What should you enjoy?

- Working with people on site
- Working across a few projects at any one time, so you'll need to be good with time management
- Creating new designs

Relevant qualifications

- Certificate III in Engineering - Casting and Moulding Trade (MEM31719)
- Apprenticeship

What subjects are helpful to do at school?

- General maths
- Design and technologies
- Industrial design
- Business studies

How a career pathway can look

Boilermakers have the benefit of being able to work not just in the construction industry, but also in industries like mining, shipbuilding, manufacturing automotive and aerospace. There is lots of career progression not just in the building and construction industry and demand is strong.

Welders and Fabricators are increasingly using advanced welder training technology like augmented and virtual reality training to learn their skills in a safer and more controlled environment.

Welders and Fabricators can work as sole traders who sub-contract to other builders or companies, or they can work as employees for companies. They can also specialise in particular parts of the trade. Welders/Fabricators may also be employees for large building and infrastructure companies, including government organisations.

There's lots of scope for Welders and Fabricators to work across the residential, commercial and civil areas. They could be working on steel-framed houses or building bridges or oil rigs – the world is their oyster!

Pressure Welders have a higher average income than general Welders, sitting at $103,211 annually.

For more information, check out the website of **Weld Australia here.**

**Please know that if they look a little lower than you expected, that's because they include everyone in those jobs! Full-time, part-time, apprentice, trainee, graduate, manager, early career or ready to retire, it doesn't matter! They're all included to come to an average and that's the number we have used.*

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Roger Blanch

Director/Manager
Adoram Steel

Want to see what Adoram Steel does?
Check them out here

What is your job?
A Boilermaker is someone who is an expert in operating welding equipment to join, repair and create metal fabrications. The type of fabrication they do will depend on the employers/clients. This can range from large mining structures, ships or fabricating beams and columns for smaller housing jobs. The boilermaking trade also includes architectural fabrication which can be very rewarding.

Boilermakers will interpret design plans, operate hand tools and create steel structures.

What do you do on an average day?
I start my day by holding a tool box talk with the other workers to discuss what is happening for the day and who is responsible for each job we are doing.

Then I head to the office to check and reply to emails and work through current jobs, quotes and plan my day.

Then I try and get out of the office and visit work sites to see how the crew is travelling and check on progress. I can also help resolve any issues.

Usually try to be back in the office by mid-afternoon, which allows time to finish quotes, order steel and get a few drawings done for future jobs. Some days I spend the whole day on site though erecting structural steel. Usually I'm done for the day around 4pm.

What do you like about your job?
I love designing and installing new steel work jobs.

No two projects are the same and the view at job sites changes everyday. I enjoy working in a team environment and helping customers achieve a great result to their personal project.

I continually strive to learn new skills and sharpen my existing ones. The construction industry and a trade had never crossed my mind when I was younger but here I am enjoying working with great builders for nearly 24 years.

What was your career pathway to where you are now?
I ended up getting into metal work by accident. I was working in a role (nothing to do with construction) when a chance came along for a temporary/part time role in Adoram Steel.

With in a few months I was really enjoying my role and fast forward seven years and I became the company estimator. I was in charge of all price estimating and ordering as well as in-house drafting and detailing.

Fast forward another seven years and I was in a position to own and run the company with my wife. Since 2015 we have been running a successful fabrication shop with long time employees some who have been with us for over 15 years.

What advice would you give to someone at school considering Boilermaking?
If you love a challenge, don't mind getting dirty, enjoy hands on work and don't mind working hard then give it a go. You will learn new skills that can assist you throughout your life.

What advice would you give to a parent/ guardian whose daughter is considering a career in building and construction?
Give it a go - as mentioned above at least your daughter will learn lifelong skills, even if it's not something she sticks with forever. The trade can also lead to lots of other different roles throughout the construction industry.

TRADES

Concreter

What you need to know

Concreters prepare, mix and pour concrete for surfaces, products and structures – they lay the foundations for buildings.

Concreters prepare, mix, lay, spread, level and finish concrete to create structures like foundations, driveways, floors, walls, roads, and other architectural elements. First, they will get a set of drawings, look at the plans for a building foundation or slab and understand how the concrete will need to be formed to meet the project requirements.

Concreters need to understand the composition of the ground under the proposed building site and how it will impact on the foundations of the building. They need to be able to make sure that ground is properly prepared to make the structure that will go on top of it safe and sound.

Concreters need to have some carpentry skills too so they can put together what is called formwork – that is, building the form that the concrete will be poured into.

Concreters mostly work outside and usually they're among the first tradies to set foot on a job site. They're vital because the foundations of a building site need to be perfect – everything else rests on them. Literally! Concreters need to be strong, capable and process driven. They need to follow protocols because so much of the building flow on effect rests with them.

Concreting is very weather dependent, so concreters need to be flexible and ready to change plans quickly as things around them change.

Concreters need to have an understanding of civil works, mixing the right concretes and using the right materials, digging the right foundations and laying carpentry formwork before they can even start pouring!

Average income:
$76,087*

Training:
3 years

If you're strong, physically fit and love being outside, but you're also great at following processes and getting the job done right, then why not consider Concreting?

What should you be good at?

- Working with your hands
- Working in a physical job
- Communicating
- Problem solving
- Being part of a team
- Seeing projects through to the end and not cutting corners

What should you enjoy?

- Being outside and getting up early
- Working with people on site
- Being flexible about working arrangement and ready to be on site when you're needed
- Working with machinery like cement mixers and pourers

Relevant qualifications

- Certificate III in Concreting (CPC30320)
- Apprenticeship

What subjects are helpful to do at school?

- General maths
- Health and physical education
- Industrial design
- Business studies

How a career pathway can look

Concreters literally lay the foundations of building and structures.

They are needed in all parts of the industry – commercial, civil and residential. And as the industry is moving more towards modern methods of construction, pre-fabricated building components and pre-cast concrete components are becoming more prevalent. This means Concreters aren't just outside on-site prepping, pouring and finishing concrete anymore. They're needed in factories and warehouses across the country and they are playing a huge part in the future of the industry.

Concreters can work across all sectors of the industry – so one day you might be laying a residential slab and the next you might be laying the foundations for a brand spanking new hospital!

There's lots of choice and you can either work as a sole trader and sub-contract your services to lots of companies and projects, or you can work for a bigger company as an employee. You might want to only work on public infrastructure and work on building roads and bridges and tunnels. Or you might want to focus your attention on building high-rises in the city. Or maybe you're keen on pre-cast concreting and you'd like to be in a factory. It's up to you!

Concreters are in high demand so there's lots of work around. They can upskill to become site managers and project managers too.

For more information you can check out the websites of the **Concrete Institute of Australia** or **Cement Concrete and Aggregates Australia.**

**Please know that if they look a little lower than you expected, that's because they include everyone in those jobs! Full-time, part-time, apprentice, trainee, graduate, manager, early career or ready to retire, it doesn't matter! They're all included to come to an average and that's the number we have used.*

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Peter Di Prinzio

Owner and Managing Director

Di Prinzio Concreting

Want to keep up with the team at Di Prinzio Concreting?
Check them out here

What is a Concreter?

A Concreter will put down all of the foundations for a building or structure that the drawings and plans require. They prepare the site by digging out the structure – maybe with a Civil Earthworks Machine Operator – and marking out where the formwork will go. They then build the formwork and lay any foundations needed. They then prepare for an inspector to come in and confirm everything is good to go. Then they can get to pouring (we call it 'pour day') where the concrete pump comes on site and the Concreter can lay the slab.

What do you do on an average day?

As the business owner, my day looks a bit different these days than it used to when I was on the tools!

I spend most of my time now behind my computer preparing tenders, estimating jobs and sending quotes to clients. We do lots of commercial work so it's a lot of preparation to get the jobs on the books and plan the work out.

Once we have won the job, I negotiate with the client – which could be a builder or an owner or even government – and then pass the details on to the project manager (who in our team is usually a former Concreter). They will then organise all the materials required for the job and get it underway.

I step in to help along the way with problem solving – like if a machine breaks down or we need more materials for a job. And I also head out every day into the workshop at our office and see how everything is going with the team.

What do you like about your job?

I love seeing something start from a piece of dirt and turn into an amazing building. We are a big part of that and of building the main structure. We put down the bones of the building so it all starts with us.

I think it helps me that I started in this trade straight out of school and I have so much practical experience as a Concreter myself. It's given me a real appreciation for the work we do.

I also like that it's never boring. Every day has something different – different site, different job, different town. One day we might be up in the Hunter Valley working on a vineyard and the next we are down by the beach laying the slab for a multi-million dollar mansion. It's never dull!

What was your career pathway to where you are now?

My dad started the business in 1963 in Newcastle with a partner. Dad wasn't a Concreter, he used to work as a labourer for BHP. But then a good friend of his was working as a Concreter and had his own small businesses so dad started doing some work for him and learning the ropes. Dad went out on his own and got an opportunity to lay the foundations for a building sub-division. He partnered up with another friend who ran his own concreting business and Di Prinzio Concreting was born (it was called Di Prinzio and Cossettini Concreting then though)!

I finished school and did my Building Certificate. When I started, there was no such thing as a concreting trade so I learned most of my skills on site from those around me.

From there I started to learn more about the business side of the operation and moved into more of a manager role rather than working on the tools so much. And now I run the business and I'm always in the office and never on the tools!

What advice would you give to someone at school considering a career as a Concreter?

Firstly, it's not easy. It's hard work but it's good work.

But to succeed it's really important to start with a trade. Being able to do the work, rather than just project manage others will help you so much down the track and be a real asset to your career.

There's a great future in this trade and so many opportunities to move around the industry and up the ladder. And so many opportunities to start your own business too – which lots of people who have come through my business have done.

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What advice would you give to a parent/guardian whose daughter is considering a career as a Concreter?

A friend of mine asked me this recently! I told them that yes, it is a male dominated field, but if your daughter is keen to learn and passionate about the trade, then she will have so many pathways into and around the industry.

It's a great trade to get under her belt so if you can help her navigate the apprenticeship process, and find her a great employer to work with, she will love it.

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TRADES

Data and Telecommunications Cabler

What you need to know

Cablers install, maintain and repair data and communication cables used in different systems like telephone networks, internet, and local area networks (LAN).

Data and Telecommunications Cablers install internal telecommunications and data cabling, equipment and peripherals for computer networks, telephones, TV, internet, monitored security and fire alarms.

They work with copper cables, fibre optic cables, and other types of communication wiring to ensure that telecommunications systems are functioning efficiently and reliably in residential, commercial, and industrial settings.

Put it this way – without Data and Telecommunications Cablers, you don't have any internet!

Similar roles include telecommunications cable jointers who join, terminate and repair copper and fibre optic telecommunications in underground pipes, trenches and in overhead systems. Telecommunications Linesworkers install, maintain and repair external telecommunication equipment like aerial lines, conduits and underground cables, radio and mobile phone antennae. Their average salary is $88,674.

There are also Electrical Linesworkers who have an average income of $131,416 for this highly specialised work.

If you like technology and you're interested in how it works, but you also love to be outside and work with your hands, perhaps you should consider being a Data and Telecommunications Cabler!

Average income:
$76,087*

Training:
3 years

What should you be good at?

- Working with your hands
- Working in a physical job
- Communicating
- Problem solving
- Being part of a team

What should you enjoy?

- Technology
- Working outside
- Working at heights or underground depending on your choice of role
- Working with different technological tools

Relevant qualifications

- Certificate III in Telecommunications Technology (ICT30519)
- Certificate III in Data and Voice Communications (UEE30420)
- Certificate III in ESI – Distribution Underground (UET30821)
- Apprenticeship

What subjects are helpful to do at school?

- General maths
- Science – especially physics
- Industrial design
- Design and technologies
- Software design and development

How a career pathway can look

As Australia moves to net zero emissions by 2050, roles like Data and Telecommunications Cablers and Jointers are becoming more important than ever. More Australians will be accessing electrical devices and appliances and electricity will need to move from wind and solar farms to the people and communities that use it.

Data and Telecommunications Cabler roles have a strong future demand and suit people who are interested in electrical and telecommunications work.

Cablers are required to obtain a Cabling Registration from the Australian Communications and Media Authority. There are different types of cabling licences, such as Open Registration, Restricted Registration, and Specialised Registration depending on the types of systems being installed (e.g., domestic vs. commercial systems).

Some Cablers specialise in specific areas like fibre optic cabling or data cabling for corporate networks. Specialisation often comes with additional training and certifications, and it can lead to more advanced projects, such as setting up data centres or high-speed internet infrastructure.

Fibre Optic Specialists, for example, might work on large infrastructure projects like the National Broadband Network (NBN) or other high-capacity internet systems.

Some Cablers may choose to pursue further education in networking or telecommunications, transitioning into roles such as network engineers, where they design, install, and manage complex data networks for businesses or telecom companies.

For more information, check out the **NECA website here.**

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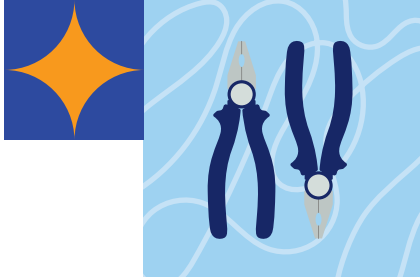
TRADES

Fire Protection Equipment Technician



What you need to know

Fire Protection Equipment Technicians install, maintain and repair systems that protect people and properties from fire damage.

Fire Protection Equipment Technicians install, maintain, inspect, and repair fire protection systems and equipment. These are things like fire alarms, sprinklers, fire extinguishers, smoke detectors, emergency lighting, and other fire suppression systems designed to prevent and control fire hazards in residential, commercial, and industrial settings.

Fire Protection Equipment Technicians make sure that fire protection systems are functional and reliable in the event of an emergency. They're vital in making sure everyone is safe and buildings are emergency-ready.

They work closely to the codes, standards and regulations that govern the building industry to make sure everything they do is absolutely correct and safe. Because we all know if a fire safety system is not installed or maintained properly, it won't save lives.

To do this kind of work you need a great attention to detail and you need to be able to understand and apply regulation. So you'll need to be happy to study and fully understand the regulations and laws you need to work within, as well as being good with your hands and working on the job.

Are you good with laws and regulations, but also love working with your hands and on site, and the idea of keeping people safe? Looks like Fire Protection Equipment Technician might be for you. No pressure!

Average income:
$93,864*

Training:
3-4 years

What should you be good at?

- Working with your hands
- Understanding and applying rules and regulations
- Communicating
- Problem solving
- Being part of a team

What should you enjoy?

- Troubleshooting
- Working inside and outside alike
- Working with different technological tools
- Working within processes and protocols

Relevant qualifications

- Certificate III in Fire Protection (UEE31020)
- Certificate III in Fire Protection Inspection and Testing (CPP30821)
- Apprenticeship

What subjects are helpful to do at school?

- General maths
- Science – especially physics
- Industrial design
- Design and technologies

How a career pathway can look

In most states and territories, Fire Protection Equipment Technicians need to be licensed, especially if they are working on specific systems (like sprinkler systems or fire detection systems). Certification is also needed to inspect and maintain fire protection systems. For some kinds of fire protection work, like working on electrical fire alarms, technicians may also need to hold an electrical license or qualifications.

Work can involve testing chemicals and fire prevention techniques, analysing risk and coming up with safeguarding solutions to protect people, buildings and infrastructure.

The Australian climate is sometimes unpredictable and bushfire risk is top of mind for many, especially in regional and suburban communities. Fire protection equipment technicians will need to continually upskill throughout their career to make sure they're up to date on their skills, regulation and laws.

Fire Protection Equipment Technicians can work across the residential, civil and commercial parts of the industry and they can choose to specialise in certain components of protection, or the industry if they want to. They can work as sole traders, but many work for larger organisations, and government as employees or subcontractors.

For more information, check out the **Fire Protection Association website here.**

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Adrian Sutherland

Director – General Manager Commercial and Accredited Fire Safety Assessor – F049528A

Coastal Fire Services

Want to see what the team at Coastal Fire Services is up to? Follow them here

Adrian is a career Fire Fighter with over 30 years fire experience.

Throughout his time with FRNSW he has been instrumental in overseeing and managing critical fire and rescue operations.

In addition to his role as Station Commander, he has established himself as an Accredited Fire Safety Practitioner, and has a thorough understanding of the multifaceted aspects of fire safety, as well as a commitment to implementing proactive measures to mitigate potential risks and safeguard public safety, with an emphasis on the critical importance of preparedness and proactive risk management.

What is a Fire Protection Equipment Technician?

A Fire Servicing Technician will conduct fire safety testing on a range of fire safety measures and products within a lot of different types of buildings including industrial, commercial, and residential.

They service equipment like fire panels, exit and emergency lighting, fire extinguishers, fire blankets, hose reels, doors and smoke alarms.

What do you like about your job?

The variety! Every day is different, and I get to visit lots of different locations and interact with multiple clients, tenants and residents.

What was your career pathway to where you are now?

I am a Fire Fighter with NSW Fire and Rescue and conduct fire safety testing during my time off each week. There are also lots of plumbers and electricians that need to be engaged as Fire Servicing Technicians too.

What advice would you give to someone at school considering a career as a Fire Servicing Technician?

If you love hands on work and you are great with people, then fire servicing could be for you.

You will need to gain your Certificate II in Fire Servicing Test and Inspect and there are plenty of avenues for growth within the fire servicing industry.

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TRADES

Landscape Gardener

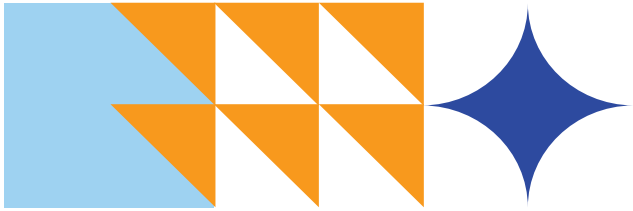
What you need to know

Landscape Gardeners will plan and construct gardens and other aspects of landscaping in the residential, commercial and industrial sectors.

Hope you like being outdoors! Landscape Gardeners will design, plan and construct gardens and other elements of landscaping like patios and play areas for residential, commercial and industrial sites.

They work on hardscape and softscape structures and need to have a keen eye for detail. They work closely with Landscape Architects to make sure they choose the right designs and products for the area, climate, soil structure and drainage for example.

They build pergolas, ponds, barbeques, fire pits, playgrounds and outdoor furniture. Do you love the outdoors and being in the garden, but you're also keen on building amazing spaces? Maybe you're a Landscape Gardener in waiting!



Average income:
$55,050*

Training:
3 years

What should you be good at?

- Working with your hands
- Understanding and applying rules and regulations
- Communicating
- Problem solving
- Being part of a team

What should you enjoy?

- Troubleshooting
- Working outside
- Designing innovative spaces
- Gardening!

Relevant qualifications

- Certificate III in Landscape Construction (AHC30921)
- Certificate IV in Landscape Construction Management (AHC42021)
- Diploma of Landscape Construction Management (AHC52021)
- Apprenticeship
- Traineeship

What subjects are helpful to do at school?

- Maths
- Science
- Industrial design
- Design and technologies

How a career pathway can look

In some states and territories, Landscape Gardeners need to be licensed, especially if they are building structures like verandas or pergolas.

Landscape Gardeners work closely with Landscape Architects and they need to have a good understanding of the impacts of climate, soil quality, water run-off and how to read plans to ensure their structures are properly planned and constructed.

Landscape Gardeners can work as sole traders who contract their services to Builders and other Project Managers. They can work on new builds or landscape renovation projects, or on commercial builds like parklands, shopping centres, playgrounds and waterfronts.

They might also build and maintain gardens in office complexes or industrial areas. They could work on water fronts and wetlands to preserve natural habitats and build more sustainable natural areas.

As the country focusses more on sustainable building practices, people are looking more towards Landscape Gardeners to provide unique solutions to things like increased heat in cities. For example, building vertical gardens on the side of high-rise complexes to keep them cooler in summer and warmer in winter.

There's lots of scope to work across the whole industry in this role and to make your career what you want it to be! You can check out the website of the **Landscape Association here** for more information.

**Please know that if they look a little lower than you expected, that's because they include everyone in those jobs! Full-time, part-time, apprentice, trainee, graduate, manager, early career or ready to retire, it doesn't matter! They're all included to come to an average and that's the number we have used.*

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David McPhan

Landscape Design and Construction, and Business Owner

Pink Diamond Design

Want to keep in touch with David and Pink Diamond Design?
Follow them here

What is a Landscaper?

A Landscaper is someone who primarily works outside of houses and commercial properties, creating paths, walls, structures, water features, and installing garden beds and plants, whether it be at a brand new site or demolishing and remodelling an existing site to a newer more desired landscape.

What do you do on an average day?

On an average day I could be planting plants, installing paving or walls, irrigating gardens or installing garden lights and more. I also run my business so I need to spend time on administration work too.

What do you like about your job?

For me, Landscaping is one of the most creative, versatile and broad trades there is.

The variety of work can vary from job to job and what a Landscaper can do is a massive mix of civil construction and building. There is a real gratitude and sense of accomplishment being a Landscaper, as you turn what is just dirt or a plain yard, into a functional, usable space, which allows people to enjoy their house, adding value to the property and the owner's lifestyle.

What was your career pathway to where you are now?

I started my journey 20 years ago in commercial landscaping, starting a trade with a Certificate III in Landscape Horticulture. I've generally liked being outdoors and working on family farms and I didn't think office work was going to be for me.

I worked my way up to running half million-dollar projects as a third-year apprentice, and working on iconic sites such as the Australian War Memorial, Australian Parliament House and more.

Fast forward and I've run over $40 million of commercial landscapes and $7 million in residential projects.

Several projects I worked on as a tradesperson and Project Manager won Master Builders Awards in the commercial space.

My own business Pink Diamond Design has been a Master Builders Award finalist in the residential space too.

Having my trade and career experience allowed me to easily find work when I moved to Perth to play football in the West Australian Football League and through working with lots of people I've grown lasting friendships.
I moved into the designing and planning side over the last year and having the landscaping foundation is allowing me to branch out into some other trades through prior learning to broaden my skills.

What advice would you give to someone at school considering career as a Landscaper?

If you love the outdoors, you enjoy being creative, and you want a career which is very rewarding, then I would definitely consider landscaping.

The skills you learn cover carpentry, concreting, building outdoor structures and walls, and this means you can also hone in on the specific areas of landscaping you enjoy. You can focus more on a career within the trade such as concreting or planting and garden installation/ maintenance.

It is one of the more physical jobs and you will get stronger and fitter along the way. No need for a gym membership!

What advice would you give to someone whose daughter is considering a career in building and construction?

If your daughter is considering a career in building and construction I would definitely say yes.

The trade world has reformed over the last 20 years. When I started I don't even think I can recall many women at all, now they work shoulder to shoulder with men in nearly every trade.

There are several firms out there with female directors and there are great career pathways both in the more physical trades and also office-based roles, project management and more.

Master Builders has a great support network for young women making that transition into the trade world and the diversity of roles allows them to find a career which suits their personality, physicality and satisfaction in their work.

The ability to transition to different roles gives the certainty that a young woman can start at an entry level and make it to the top or an organisation, in an even playing field.

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Construction Labourer and Scaffolder Roles

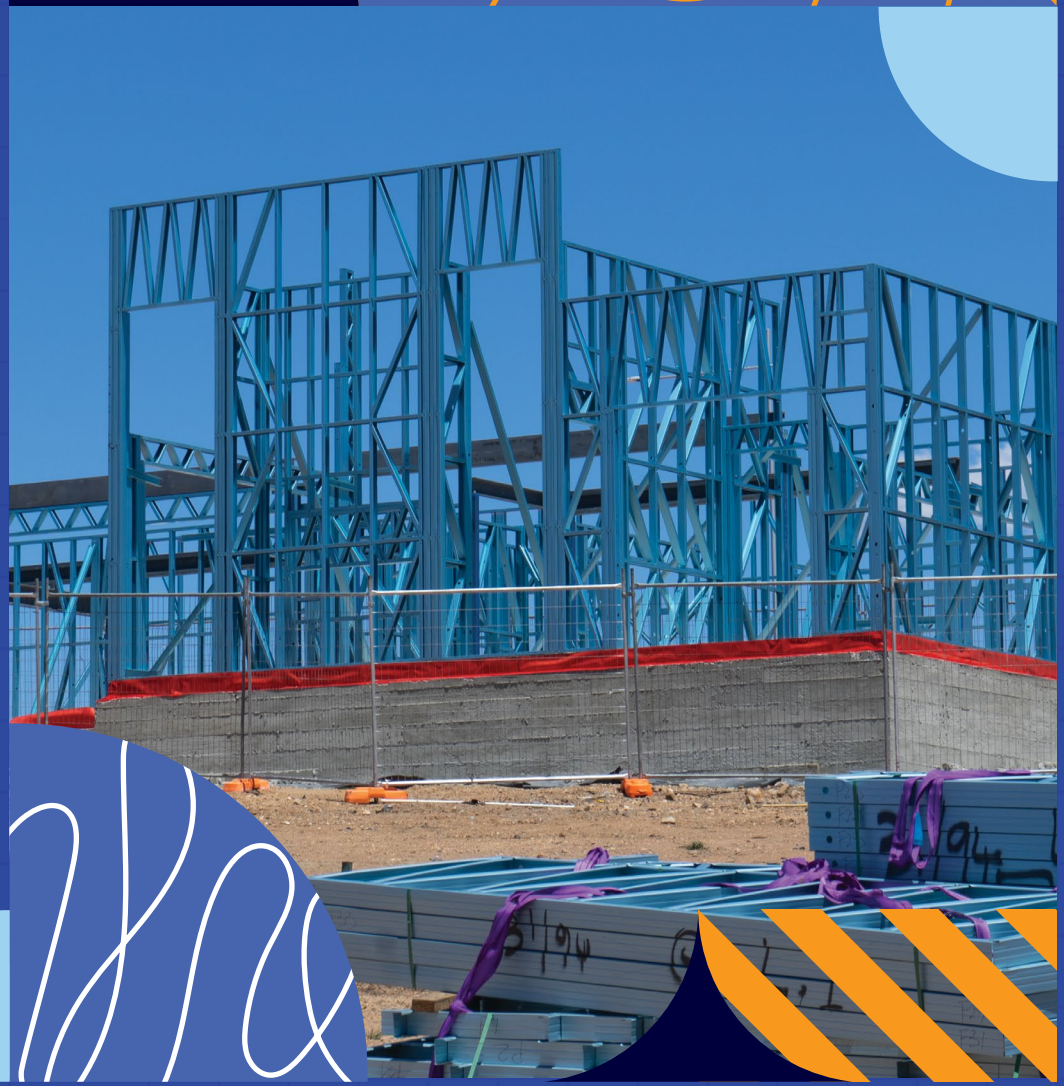
Construction Labourers keep the industry moving. They're the ones making sure materials get to where they need to go, that sites are ready and safe and providing invaluable support to tradespeople in the process.

It's tough work and you need to be physically fit to be a Construction Labourer. You also need to be really safety conscious to make sure you don't hurt yourself or anyone else on site.

The same goes for Scaffolders. Their job is to ensure people can work safely at heights so they need to be extra vigilant about their safety protocols and processes.

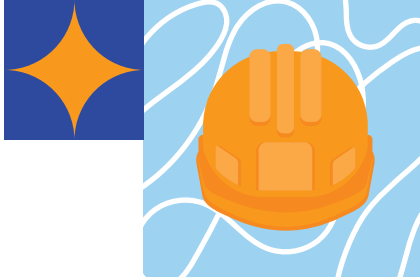
Working in these roles isn't for the faint hearted – but these are some of the roles in the industry that AI can never replace, so the future outlook for demand remains strong.

If you think you've got what it takes to be a Construction Labourer or Scaffolder, read on!



CONSTRUCTION LABOURER AND SCAFFOLDER ROLES

Labourer



What you need to know

Labourers construct and repair structures either on site or in a factory or warehouse setting.

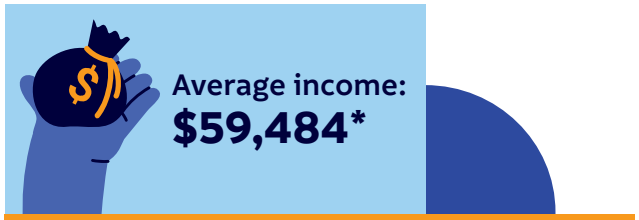
Labourers will do a number of tasks to help tradespeople on site or in factory or warehouse settings. There is an increasing demand for labourers in the pre-fabricated building space as the industry begins to construct parts of structures in warehouses for transport to sites, rather than build them from scratch on site.

There are lots of different kinds of Labourers like Plumbing Labourers, Building Labourers, Brickie's Labourers, Drainage Specialist Labourers, Stormwater Labourers, Earthmoving Labourers, Demolition Labourers, Fencing Labourers, Insulation Labourers and Renovation Labourers.

Depending on the type of specialisation, the Labourer might need different certifications or qualifications. For example, to do demolition work, they would likely need to hold a Certificate III in Demolition. Or to do Plumbing Labouring they may need a Certificate II in Plumbing.

Let's not beat around the bush here though. Labouring work is tough. You need to be strong and physically fit. You need to be able to work smart and be safe. If you don't like being on your feet and working outside, then this definitely isn't the job for you.

But if you like working on lots of different jobs, lending a hand and being a team player, while you keep fit and strong, then maybe you should think about Labouring!



Training: between a few weeks or 3 years depending on qualification and training

What should you be good at?

- Working with your hands
- Communicating
- Keeping fit
- Being part of a team

What should you enjoy?

- Working outside
- Staying fit
- Working within rules and regulations
- Working on site in a manually demanding job

Relevant qualifications

- Certificate I in Construction (CPC10120)
- Certificate II in Construction (CPC20220)
- Certificate II in Construction Pathways (CPC20220)
- Certificate II in Drainage (CPC20720)
- Certificate III in Plumbing (CPC32420)
- Certificate III in Demolition (CPC30420)
- Certificate IV in Demolition (CPC41020)
- Traineeship

What subjects are helpful to do at school?

- Health and physical education
- Industrial design
- Design and technologies

How a career pathway can look

Labourers are needed across all parts of the building and construction industry – residential, civil and commercial.

Labourers can choose to specialise in certain areas like becoming Plumbing Labourers, Building Labourers, Brickie's Labourers, Drainage Specialist Labourers, Stormwater Labourers, Earthmoving Labourers, Demolition Labourers, Fencing Labourers, Insulation Labourers and Renovation Labourers. Alternatively, they can work across different projects and different parts of the industry. There's lots of scope to work across the industry in this role and to make your career what you want it to be!

Labourers are needed on job sites but also in factories and warehouses that make pre-fabricated building products. This is a big part of the future of construction and called a modern method of construction. It will become more prevalent in coming years as the industry turns to making materials in factories and workshops to then assemble on site. This means there is lots of job demand in the pipeline.

Sometimes people will start off in the industry as Labourers and then decide they want to start an apprenticeship to get a trade, or pursue another path in the industry. Labouring is a good way for people to get a taste of what kind of role they like before they choose.

Don't be fooled by the money though! Yes, you might earn more as a Labourer than you do as an apprentice in a trade, but keep an eye on the long game and remember how much you can start earning once you finish your apprenticeship and qualify in your trade.

Labourers can also go on to become site and safety managers if they are willing to go back to vocational training and upskill. Or they can keep enjoying the variety that Labouring provides throughout their career. For more information on becoming a Labourer, contact the **Master Builders office in your state/territory.**

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CONSTRUCTION LABOURER AND SCAFFOLDER ROLES

Scaffolder

What you need to know

Scaffolders will erect and dismantle scaffolding that is used to ensure people on site can work safely at heights.

Scaffolders build, maintain and then disassemble the scaffolding that people on site use to get around and work at heights safely. Scaffolding will usually be erected on the outside of a structure so tradespeople can build higher structures. Scaffolding has platforms and staircases. Scaffolders can also work on temporary structures like stages and seating at festivals or events.

Scaffolders need to follow strict safety protocols because it is their job to make sure the scaffolding is safe for everyone else who needs to use it.

Related jobs include being a Steelfixer (who secures steel bars and mesh to reinforce concrete structures), a Structural Steel Erector (who puts up steel frames for buildings) or a Construction Rigger (who installs rigging gear for cranes and hoists).

Technically to be a Scaffolder you don't need any formal qualification, but Certificates are good to have for an understanding of the role and for career progression.

Love being on site and working at heights? Time to consider becoming a Scaffolder!

Average income:
$85,687*

Training: a few months depending on qualification and training

What should you be good at?

- Working at heights
- Communicating
- Being part of a team

What should you enjoy?

- Working outside
- Staying fit
- Working within rules and regulations
- Working on site in a manually demanding job

Relevant qualifications

- Certificate III in Scaffolding (CPC30920)
- Certificate III in Rigging (CPC30720)
- Certificate III in Steelfixing (CPC31120)
- Traineeship

What subjects are helpful to do at school?

- Health and physical education
- Industrial design
- Design and technologies

How a career pathway can look

Scaffolders are needed across all parts of the building and construction industry – residential, civil and commercial.

Scaffolders can choose to work just in the residential, commercial or civil space, or they can work across different projects and different parts of the industry.

There's lots of scope to work across the industry in this role and to make your career what you want it to be!

Scaffolders can go on to get qualifications to become Crane, Hoist and Lift Operators if they so choose, or to become safety or site managers. It depends on how much study they want to do as their career progresses.

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Josh Prior

Scaffolder and Manager
Anderson's Scaffolding

Want to follow Josh and his team? Find them online here

What is your job?
I used to be a Scaffolder but now my job is to manage a scaffolding company. We employ 24 people and manage scaffolding for high rise commercial buildings, residential projects and everything in between!

What do you do on an average day?
An average day for me now is running the team and getting them out on site to the right projects, at the right time and with the right materials. I have to make sure the site supervisors and estimators are all doing what they need to be doing, getting the materials to the right spot at the right time and making sure all the back-end work in the office is under control.

I spend probably half my time on site and half of it in the office. When I'm on site, I'm measuring up potential jobs for quotes and preparing materials, or I'm checking in on the progress of jobs already under way. Everyone in the organisation reports to me so I need to be good at managing from afar and while I'm on the go.

It's definitely a phone-based job for me!

What do you like about your job?
What I liked most about it was when I was a Scaffolder on site, was that we got to move around a lot and do lots of different jobs. I could be working anywhere around the country or the world – underground mines to high rise commercial or offshore. The opportunities were endless and I got to see so much.

Nowadays I really enjoy the management side of things and overseeing the team. Having a background in the work helps me really understand what needs to be done and when.

What was your career pathway to where you are now?
When I finished school, my sister was working in the office of a scaffolding company and I started working in the yard with materials – getting them ready and loading them on trucks for transfer to site. Then I went into a role as a scaffolder, then leading hand, site supervisor, estimator and now manager.

I've worked across three different companies and seen lots of different kinds of projects in my time.

I always knew I wanted to work hard and make it into a management position so that's what I did! And I started early.

What advice would you give to someone at school considering a career in scaffolding?
I would say work hard, learn a lot and set your sights high. If you're willing to learn, happy to do a really hands on job, and you're fit and strong with a good work ethic then the scaffolding business can really take you anywhere you want to go in building and construction.

What advice would you give to a parent/guardian whose daughter is considering a career in building and construction?
Find an employer for your daughter who is going to keep her safe and will put her with a mentor or supervisor who will show her the ropes. That's what we do for all our new starters.

The building industry is willing to give anyone a go who comes along with the right work ethic – male or female – so don't deter your daughter if this is a career path she wants to follow.

In scaffolding, it helps to be fit and strong enough to do the work – but most importantly they just have to be willing to give it a crack.

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Machine Operator Roles

Machine operators will operate heavy machinery and equipment that is used in manufacturing and industrial building.

Maybe you've driven past Earthmoving Operators while they've been working on building new roads, or widening existing ones? Or seen them clearing land for new housing developments. Or maybe you've seen them working on mining sites or quarries.

They use bulldozers, excavators, loaders, graders, and backhoes to dig, lift, and transport earth and materials.

Or maybe you've wondered whose job it is to dig the foundations for a skyscraper, or obtain soil and sediment samples to help determine if a build should go ahead? Drillers! They use lots of different machinery depending on the job at hand. Sometimes they will need to collect core samples for geological testing, or to assess soil quality. They might be there to prepare a site or they might be drilling anchors into the ground or drilling a bore for explosives so a site can be cleared.

Or maybe you've always thought it would be cool to operate one of those multi-storey cranes you see working on new apartment builds? Those are Crane, Hoist and Lift Operators, who work with Crane Chasers to make sure materials can be moved around site safely and placed where they need to be.

If you've always loved excavators, digging trenches, crushing rocks or watching trucks do their thing on site, then maybe being a Machine Operator is your calling!

MACHINE OPERATOR ROLES

Concrete Production Machine and Plant Operator

What you need to know

Concrete Production Machine and Plant Operators look after and operate the machines that manufacture concrete products.

Concrete Production Machine and Plant Operators are responsible for operating and maintaining the machines that are used to mix, pour, mould and shape concrete and concrete products.

They can work in different areas of the construction industry, like on site, in a manufacturing plant or in a factory or warehouse that creates pre-cast concrete products. Pre-cast products play a large role in the building industry and they are going to be important in the future of sustainable building practices. More and more the industry is using things like pre-made walls and structures which are made in factories and warehouses and transported to site, instead of building everything from scratch actually on the job site.

This means there is a lot of demand for Concrete Production Machine and Plant Operators both in traditional on-site roles and in more technology-based manufacturing roles.

Typically, they will be responsible for operating the machines that mix and pour concrete on site, and they'll need to make sure the concrete is the right consistency, quality and quantity. They'll need to keep an eye on temperature, pressure and material flow and if something goes wrong, they'll have to know how to troubleshoot and repair the machinery.

They work closely with concreters on site and there is usually an element of physical labour involved so it helps to be fit and enjoy working outside, while also being tech-savvy and good with machines.

Average income: $84,268*

Training: 2-3 years

Do you like technology and machinery, want a job that has lots of future potential in the sustainable building space, but also love to be outside, on-site getting into the thick of it with the rest of the team? Maybe consider becoming a Concrete Production Machine and Plant Operator!

What should you be good at?

- Working with machines and/or technology
- Working with your hands
- Being part of a team
- Keeping fit

What should you enjoy?

- Troubleshooting
- Working inside and outside alike
- Working with different technological tools
- Working within processes and protocols
- Machinery and problem solving when things go wrong

Relevant qualifications

- Certificate III in Manufactured Mineral Products (MSM30318)
- Certificate III in Concreting (CPC30320)
- Certificate II in Prefabricated Concrete Element Installation (CPC20822)
- Traineeship

What subjects are helpful to do at school?

- General maths
- Science – especially physics
- Industrial design
- Design and technologies

How a career pathway can look

Concrete Production Machine and Plant Operators need to be really good with trouble shooting and problem solving. They need to be ready to act when (not if!) things go wrong with their machinery to make sure that the project doesn't get behind schedule.

This means they need to make sure they keep their skills relevant by upskilling throughout their career. It helps to have some engineering knowledge too if possible, and some operators can go on to further study in that space. Demand for Operators is high in the construction industry, but also in manufacturing and infrastructure development so there is a lot of room to move. And as construction becomes more reliant on pre-fabricated materials like pre-cast walls, floors and structures, Concrete Production Machine and Plant Operators will be in even higher demand.

For more information, you can check out the **Concrete Pumping Association of Australia website here.**

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MACHINE OPERATOR ROLES

Driller

What you need to know

Drillers will operate drilling rigs to extract ore, liquids and gasses from the earth.

Drillers operate and maintain the drilling machinery and equipment that is used on construction sites to create holes in surfaces like soil, rock, and concrete for a wide range of purposes.

Some of the work drillers will do includes preparing sites for foundations to be laid, piling, mining, tunnel construction and geothermal energy installations. They use lots of different machinery depending on the job at hand. Sometimes they will need to collect core samples for geological testing, or to assess soil quality. They might be there to prepare a site or they might be drilling anchors into the ground or drilling a bore for explosives so a site can be cleared.

Some drillers will also operate pumps to extract air, water or other waste from sites.

This can be complex and high-risk work so there are lots of regulatory requirements you'll need to be on top of, and you will have to be incredibly safety conscious. The work of a driller is important and dangerous and not to be taken lightly.

Do you love machines and all they can do? Keen on getting into the nitty gritty of preparing a job site – and maybe even working with explosives? Maybe you're made to be a Driller!

Average income:

$130,991*

for a Drilling Plant Operator

$108,464*

for a Driller's Assistant

Training: **3-4 years** depending on qualification

What should you be good at?

- Working with machines and/or technology
- Working with your hands
- Being part of a team
- Keeping fit
- Working within set processes and procedures

What should you enjoy?

- Troubleshooting
- Working inside and outside alike
- Working with different technological tools
- Working within processes and protocols
- Machinery and problem solving when things go wrong

Relevant qualifications

- Certificate III in Drilling Operations (RII31820)
- Certificate IV in Drilling Operations (RII40920)
- Advanced Diploma of Drilling Management (RII60415)
- Diploma of Drilling Oil & Gas (Onshore) (RII50820)
- Certificate IV in Drilling Oil & Gas (Onshore) (RII41120)
- Diploma of Drilling Operations (RII50620)
- Traineeship

What subjects are helpful to do at school?

- Maths
- Science – physics or chemistry
- Industrial design
- Design and technologies

How a career pathway can look

This is a highly complex and high-risk role. Drillers need to be continually upskilling and the more complex the work, the higher the qualification they will need. As you can see above, Diplomas and Advanced Diplomas might be needed depending on the type of work you want to do.

If you want to be working on oil rigs off-shore, or mostly doing geological drilling work, you will need to look at the additional qualifications you'll need to obtain.

Drillers are needed in the construction industry, but also in mining and infrastructure so there is a lot of possible career options and mobility.

Drillers can also specialise in fields like oil and gas drilling, geotechnical drilling, or directional drilling, each of which offers opportunities for further career advancement and higher earning potential. They need different qualifications though so you might find yourself back to studying if you want to go down that path.

if you'd like to learn about becoming a trainee Driller, you could start with the **Australian Drilling Industry Association.**

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MACHINE OPERATOR ROLES

Earthmoving Operator (General)

What you need to know

Earthmoving Operators use and maintain different earthmoving machinery on projects like roads, rail, water supply facilities, dams, treatment plants and agricultural earthworks.

Earthmoving Operators operate, maintain and repair heavy machinery that is used to move large quantities of earth, soil, rock, or other materials.

Maybe you've driven past Earthmoving Operators while they've been working on building new roads, or widening existing ones? Or seen them clearing land for new housing developments? Or maybe you've seen them working on mining sites or quarries?

Earthmoving Operators work on projects like road construction, excavation, land grading, mining, and large infrastructure developments. Their role is to prepare sites for construction and other heavy civil works.
They use bulldozers, excavators, loaders, graders, and backhoes, to dig, lift, and transport earth and materials. They work closely with engineers and need to be able to follow plans and blueprints to know where and how much material needs to be moved or excavated.

They're an important part of the building and construction industry and they need to follow strict safety procedures. The machinery they operate, maintain and repair is complex, large and usually sight lines can be really difficult. Operators need to have a keen sense of awareness of what's going on around them on site and be extra vigilant when it comes to safety.

Do you love machines and all they can do? Do you fancy being part of the team that essentially lays the foundations of sites and helps build huge infrastructure projects?

Average income:

$101,245*
for a Bulldozer Operator

$84,938*
for a Excavator Operator

$89,637*
for a Grader Operator

Training: 3-4 years

Maybe you should consider becoming an Earthmoving Operator!

What should you be good at?

- Working with machines and/or technology
- Being part of a team
- Keeping fit
- Working within set processes and procedures and taking safety really seriously

What should you enjoy?

- Troubleshooting
- Working with different machines
- Working within processes and protocols
- Problem solving

Relevant qualifications

- Certificate II in Civil Construction (RII20720)
- Certificate III in Civil Construction (RII30920)
- Certificate IV in Civil Construction (RII40720)
- Diploma of Civil Construction Management (RII50420)
- Advanced Diploma of Civil Construction (RII60620)
- Traineeship

What subjects are helpful to do at school?

- Maths
- Science – physics or chemistry
- Industrial design
- Design and technologies
- Health and physical education

How a career pathway can look

This is a busy and relatively high-risk role. It is not for the faint hearted and sometimes can involve long hours. Because you would be one of the first ones on a site, prepping and getting it ready for the build, or clearing the way for other trades or professionals, it usually means you need to be good with time management so the project stays on track.

Safety is also a really important component of this role, so you need to be good at working within regulations and protocols.

Earthmoving Operators may choose to specialise in a particular type of equipment (e.g. operating only excavators or bulldozers). Specialising allows them to become experts in a specific type of machinery, increasing their value and project pipeline for projects like mining, large-scale infrastructure, or land reclamation.

Most Earthmoving Operators will work for larger organisations or government as employees. Some will sub-contract to sites and work as sole traders too.

For more information on this occupation, check out the website of the **Civil Contractors Federation here.**

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Dallas Ruhan

Excavator Operator
Cord Civil

Want to keep up with the Cord Civil team? Check them out here

What is your job and what do you do on an average day?
I'm an Excavator Operator.

Each day is different, so what I will be doing really just depends on what the project requires. I could start the day with some general digging and excavation, then progress to lifting and moving heavy materials, finishing off with grading and levelling or even some demolition. It's totally dependent on the project!

What do you like about your job?
I like the whole civil industry.
I showed an interest in it from a young age as my dad was a foreman for a civil company and when I finished high school he strongly encouraged me to pursue a career in civil construction. I did and I'm still here today and I still love it.

What was your career pathway to where you are now?
I started out as a general construction worker doing some labouring when I finished school and then progressed up to plant and machinery operations. I found that I really enjoyed working in big excavators and have stuck with it ever since.

What advice would you give to someone at school considering a career in your occupation?
If you enjoy working outdoors, don't mind getting dirty and you are interested in learning a wide variety of handy skills, then civil construction might be a great fit for you.

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MACHINE OPERATOR ROLES

Crane, Hoist and Lift Operator

What you need to know

Crane, Hoist and Lift Operators move materials and equipment around job sites.

Crane, Hoist and Lift Operators use, maintain and repair the machinery that is used on site to move materials and equipment around. They use stationary and mobile cranes. They will hoist, lift and winch materials to get it to where they need to be.

They are instrumental on high-rise builds and large-scale infrastructure projects, and they are used to bring in and move pre-fabricated materials around site.

Crane, Hoist and Lift Operators can work on residential sites, large-scale builds, commercial builds and infrastructure development. They are there to build apartments and office blocks in cities, and to lay pipework for tunnels and mines. They work on factories, manufacturing, sawmills, wharves and shipyards.

Crane, Hoist and Lift Operators work with Crane Chasers (which are separate occupations, although we haven't listed them separately). Crane Chasers stay on the ground and guide the Operator to where they need to be. Crane Chasers need special training and have to be especially safety conscious. Usually they're the only ones in the line of sight of the Operator and will help them direct the load when it's out of their view.

Do you like working at heights and with heavy, complex machinery? Are you keen to be part of big builds and infrastructure development? Crane, Hoist and Lift Operator roles might be for you then!

Average income:

$118,627*
for a Crane Operator

$106,188*
for a Crane Chaser

Training: **can take up to 3 years**

What should you be good at?

- Working at heights
- Working with machines and/or technology
- Being part of a team
- Keeping fit
- Working within set processes and procedures and taking safety really seriously

What should you enjoy?

- Troubleshooting
- Working with different machines
- Working within processes and protocols
- Problem solving

Relevant qualifications

- Certificate III in Construction Crane Operations (CPC32920)
- Certificate III in Mobile Crane Operations (TLI30122)
- Certificate IV in Mobile Crane Operations (TLI40724)
- Traineeship

What subjects are helpful to do at school?

- Maths
- Industrial design
- Design and technologies
- Health and physical education

How a career pathway can look

This is a busy and relatively high-risk role. It is not for the faint hearted and sometimes can involve long hours working at heights.

Crane, Hoist and Lift Operators need to be good with maths too because it can be complex to calculate the weight of materials, items and products to make sure they are not over- or under-loading and that they're compliant with standards, laws and regulations.

This is really important because it is such high-risk work that can have an impact on everyone else on site.
Most Crane, Hoist and Lift Operators will work for larger organisations or government as employees. Some will sub-contract to sites and work as sole traders too.

They need to have particular certifications to make sure they keep themselves and others safe. They need high-risk work licences, work at heights accreditations, intermediate rigging accreditation and a dogging licence that comes from Safe Work Australia. They also need Heavy Combination and Heavy Rigid truck licences. This is all on top of their Certificate III or IV.

For more information on this occupation, check out the website of the **Civil Contractors Federation here.**

**Please know that if they look a little lower than you expected, that's because they include everyone in those jobs! Full-time, part-time, apprentice, trainee, graduate, manager, early career or ready to retire, it doesn't matter! They're all included to come to an average and that's the number we have used.*

Brodie Ridley

Director, STOLR Pty Ltd
High Risk Manager, Master Builders ACT
Crane, Hoist and Lift Operator
Scaffolder

What is a Crane, Hoist or Lift Operator?

A Crane, Hoist or Lift Operator will operate heavy plant machinery for personnel or materials handling. With cranes and rigging (or lifting) we work with all trades to move their materials around to install or bring materials closer to the work area.

What do you do on an average day?

Because the jobs I do assist every trade in the industry my days vary a lot.

I start at 5am most days, and I'm usually out on site maintaining, organising and setting up equipment so the team is ready to go for the project of the day. Throughout the day I will be relocating equipment from site to site, managing the projects, monitoring safety and compliance and making sure everything is going to plan.

I work across lots of different areas – I might be in the city one day working on a commercial build, setting up the scaffolding for a residential build the next, or out on a mine the next.

I also need to do lots of administration work like site inductions, quoting, maintaining safe work procedures and monitoring compliance. This work is really high-risk, so we need to be very organised and prepared for anything.

At Master Builders I conduct training and education on high-risk areas of the workplace and help people obtain their high-risk work licensing. I'm at Master Builders every day doing that and I also run my own business at the same time.

It's a lot of work and a bit of a juggle but I love it!

What do you like about your job?

I like it all! It's flexible, I get to work with every kind of trade and there's always something different happening. You never know what projects are coming down the pipeline so you get to go to some really cool places and work on some amazing structures.

What was your career pathway to where you are now?

Out of school I came to Canberra from country NSW to play NRL for the Raiders.

I decided to start doing some work in scaffolding and rigging. It was a job that I always thought would be exciting and it was a good way to juggle training responsibilities and work at the same time.
When I finished up playing footy, my job grew into taking on a lot more work and then I started to get really interested in the training side of things.

I started doing some teaching at Master Builders and that then grew into a full-time job too!

I started my own business about five years ago and that helps me stay completely industry-relevant when it comes to the training I deliver.

What advice would you give to someone at school considering becoming a Crane, Hoist or Lift Operator or a Scaffolder?

Life's too short to be unhappy with what you're doing. Try your best to find something you enjoy doing!

If you like to work hard, have different challenges every day and work with lots of big pieces of machinery then this is a great job for you. It's a good stepping stone to be able to start your own business and have lots of contacts across the industry.

Because we have high-risk licensing in this space you need to be 18 or older to be able to get a licence so you can't do much by way of work experience on the tools, but I'd recommend in the meantime you focus on your maths and find ways to learn more about the industry.

What advice would you give to a parent/guardian whose daughter is considering a career in building and construction?

Just do it!

It's the most wonderful job there is and I really don't see any reason women couldn't or shouldn't do this kind of work. It's actually pretty well suited to women because it requires so much precision and planning – something I think women are really good at!

We are seeing lots more women coming through the training system too, and the industry is changing a lot.

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MACHINE OPERATOR ROLES

Civil Construction Operator

What you need to know

Civil Construction Operators use, maintain and repair the machines used in civil construction.

Civil construction is the creation of infrastructure that is not housing or buildings. It includes building roads, waterways, rail lines and airport runways for example. The civil construction industry needs lots of different machinery operators.

These include Concrete Pump Operators (who operate plants to pump, cast and mould concrete), Sand Blasters (who operate sandblasting machines to clean and grind metal products and other surfaces), Linemakers (who apply the markings to roads and other surfaces), Paving Plant Operators (who spread and level hot bitumen and concrete) and Road Roller Operators (who prepare the surfaces of roads, runways and carparks).

Civil Construction Operators work across large-scale builds, infrastructure developments and in both cities and regional areas. They might be laying the foundations in cities one day, helping to create a harbour, or building a brand-new bridge. They work on factories, manufacturing, sawmills, wharves, shipyards and more.

Do you like working with heavy, complex machinery? Are you keen to be part of infrastructure development in building the facilities for development and transport? Civil Construction Operator roles might be for you then!

Average income:
$133,263*

Training:
around 3 years

What should you be good at?

- Working with machines and/or technology
- Being part of a team
- Keeping fit
- Working within set processes and procedures and taking safety really seriously

What should you enjoy?

- Troubleshooting
- Working with different machines
- Working within processes and protocols
- Problem solving

Relevant qualifications

- Certificate III in Civil Construction (RII30920)
- Certificate III in Civil Construction Plant Operations (RII30820)
- Certificate IV in Civil Construction (RII40720)
- Traineeship

What subjects are helpful to do at school?

- Maths
- Industrial design
- Design and technologies
- Health and physical education

How a career pathway can look

This is a busy and relatively high-risk role. It is not for the faint hearted and sometimes can involve long hours. Because you would be one of the first ones on a site, prepping and getting it ready, or clearing the way for other trades or professionals, it usually means you need to be good with time management so the project stays on track.

Safety is also a really important component of this role, so you need to be good at working within regulations and protocols. You would also need to work with engineers and be able to read and implement plans and blueprints.

Civil Construction Operators may choose to specialise in a particular type of equipment (e.g. concrete pump operators or paving plant operators). Specialising allows them to become experts in a specific type of machinery, increasing their value and project pipeline for projects like mining, large-scale infrastructure, or land reclamation.

Civil Construction Operators will work for larger organisations or government as employees. Some will sub-contract to sites and work as sole traders too.

For more information you can reach out to the Civil Contractors Federation branch in your state or territory (you can find them **online here** by clicking the 'select brand' tab:).

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Mitch White

Site Supervisor
Cord Civil

Want to see what the Cord Civil team is up to? Check them out here

What is your job and what do you do on an average day?
I am a Civil Supervisor at Cord Civil. We offer a complete range of civil contracting services, including to the ACT Government.

My role is to run, coordinate and manage the building of projects, ensuring everything runs as smoothly and efficiently as possible.

What do you like about your job?
I really like the camaraderie amongst the workers.
A big part of my job satisfaction is being on the project from start to finish, then being able to stand back at the end of the project and see what we have built together. It's an amazing feeling.

Coming into a project half-way through or being pulled off part way through and not seeing it from start to finish for me means there is minimal job satisfaction so it's a big-ticket item for me.

What was your career pathway to where you are now?
School wasn't for me, I didn't really want to do any further education (like university). Even though I was smart enough in terms of keeping up with bookwork, and doing enough to get through, growing up I was almost always on a farm and I really enjoyed working there on the machines and helping out with the landscaping. So civil construction seemed like a natural progression to the 16 year old me. It was a bit of a win-win with my love of machinery and landscaping, just on a much larger scale.

What advice would you give to someone at school considering a career in your occupation?
Give it a go, 100%. It's one of those jobs where people don't really know what the true ins and outs of it actually are.

You drive past and see typical road workers and think it's pretty easy but there really is a lot more that's involved. I would encourage people to actually have a go. It's a skill you can learn while you're on the job. For example, with sparkies you need a bit of knowledge before you step foot on site, whilst in civil you can kind of go "here's a shovel, this is how we clean up" or "this is a roller, this is how you operate it – now have a go".

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Architecture and Design Roles

Architects and Designers plan and design the way buildings will look and feel inside and out.

Architects will design new buildings, or plan renovations in the residential and commercial sectors. They are university educated and have to be good communicators who work with both Builders and clients.

Landscape Architects are also university-educated and they plan and design projects like open space networks, parks, schools aged care homes, roads and external areas for all kinds of buildings.

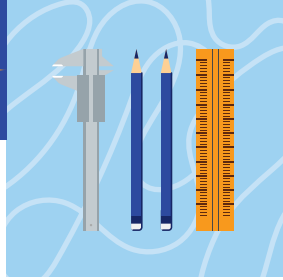
Interior Designers focus on the internal structure in commercial, industrial, retail and residential spaces. Their aim is to create an environment tailored to the purpose of the space.

Interior Decorators are similar to Interior Designers, but they will do decorating work such as painting, moulding or having lighting installed. They even work with furnishings and finishings like tapware or railings.

Got an eye for detail and design? Headed down the university path but keen to be in building and construction? Read on!

ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN ROLES

Architect



What you need to know

Architects will design new buildings, or plan renovations in the residential and commercial sectors.

Architects will design new buildings, or plan renovations in the residential and commercial sectors. They are university educated and have to be good communicators to be able to work with both Builders and clients.

Architects will work closely with their clients to understand the purpose of the space and the needs of the clients. They will come up with plans for the type of project, the size and the fit out. This will include drawing sketches, preparing blueprints and specifications. They will also work with Engineers to ensure the structure is safe and sound.

Architects need to visit sites to check on progress and help with any troubleshooting.

They need to have a great eye for detail and design and know how to work with all kinds of spaces.
Do you have an eye for design, an affinity for maths and a love of building and construction? Perhaps you're an Architect in waiting!

Average income: $113,635*

Training: up to 4 years

What should you be good at?

- Design and drawing
- Coming up with innovative ideas
- Problem solving
- Working with people

What should you enjoy?

- Art and design
- Working with builders and tradespeople
- Working with clients

Relevant qualifications

- Bachelor of Architecture

What subjects are helpful to do at school?

- Maths
- Industrial design
- Design and technologies

How a career pathway can look

Architects work across residential and commercial building projects. They might choose to specialise for example in residential builds, office fit outs, retail fit outs or educational institutions. There are so many specialisations to choose from!

Architects can work for themselves as sole traders who contract out their skills, or they can work for larger organisations as employees.

They need to be good with technology and keeping up to date on the different programs they can use to come up with innovative designs.

They also need to be able to communicate both with clients and people across the building industry like tradespeople.

Architects need to go to university and need to be registered.

You can use the **Universities Admissions Centre (UAC) website** to look up which universities offer the relevant degree in this space.

If you're not sure which one is right for you, it's best to reach out to the universities you are considering and ask them to help you figure out which pathway is best for your needs.

For more information on becoming an Architect and becoming registered, check the website of the **Architects Accreditation Council of Australia.**

You could also check out the website of the **Australian Institute of Architects here.**

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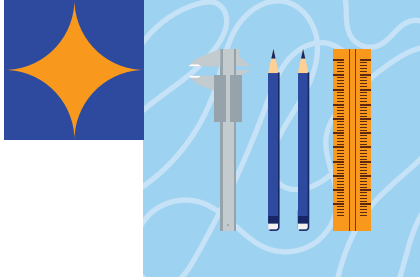
ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN ROLES

Building Designer



What you need to know

A Building Designer will design new buildings, or plan renovations in the residential and commercial sectors.

Building Designers will design new buildings, or plan renovations in the residential and commercial sectors. They will work on designing homes, commercial spaces, and small industrial structures. They work on the structural, aesthetic, and functional aspects of buildings, focusing on creating safe, sustainable, and aesthetically pleasing designs that meet the needs and budget of their clients.

Building Designers also prepare all the documents for planning approvals and can manage development applications for homeowners and builders. This requires an excellent attention to detail, along with the ability to read and make sense of complex rules.

Building Designers, unlike Architects, do not need to be university educated and can instead go through the vocational education system. They do need to be good communicators though to be able to work with both Builders and clients.

Building Designers will work closely with their clients to understand the purpose of the space and the needs of the clients. They will come up with plans for the type of project, the size and the fit out. This will include drawing sketches, preparing blueprints and specifications.

Building Designers need to visit sites to check on progress and help with any troubleshooting. They also need to be across all of the building regulation like the Construction Code to make sure their designs meet the requirements. They need to have a great eye for detail and design and know how to work with all kinds of spaces.

Average income:
$83,000*

Training:
18 months

Do you have an eye for design and building, and love the idea of putting it to work as a Building Designer? Read on!

What should you be good at?

- Design and drawing
- Coming up with innovative ideas
- Problem solving
- Working with people

What should you enjoy?

- Art and design
- Working with builders and tradespeople
- Working with clients

Relevant qualifications

- Certificate IV in Residential Drafting (CPP40121)
- Diploma of Building Design (CPP50911)

What subjects are helpful to do at school?

- Maths
- Industrial design
- Design and technologies

How a career pathway can look

In most states and territories, Building Designers work across residential and commercial building projects. They might choose to specialise for example in residential builds, office fit outs, retail fit outs or educational institutions. There are so many specialisations to choose from!

Building Designers tend to work for themselves as sole traders who contract out their skills to builders and clients, or they can work for larger organisations as employees.

They need to be good with technology (because they will draw their designs using software) and keeping up to date on the different programs they can use to come up with innovative designs.

They also need to be able to communicate both with clients and people across the building industry like tradespeople.

Building Designers need to be registered in most states and territories and have additional experience on top of their qualifications to be able to register.

Some Building Designers will start off as Draftspersons and will continue on to further study to become Architects. Others will specialise in particular kinds of projects and have long and happy careers as Building Designer.

For more information, check out the website of the **Building Design Association of Australia here.**

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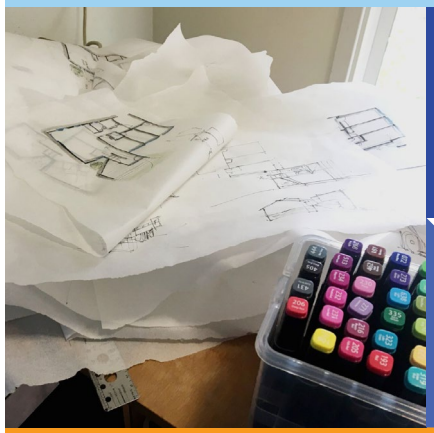
Andrew Remely

Building Designer and Business Owner

Andrew Remely Building Design



To follow Andrew's work, check out his Instagram here

What is your job and what do you do on an average day?

I'm a Building Designer. I help homeowners with the design of their renovations, extensions or new homes. My typical day involves designing and drafting using Computer Aided Drafting (CAD) software along with preparing documentation for planning and construction approvals. I also spend time talking with clients, builders and certifiers. Some days I'm out of the office meeting with new clients or visiting construction sites to see the progress on my designs.

Because I run my own business I also need to work on marketing and admin.

Building design is a great role for people who are artistic and want to be in building and construction, but maybe do not want to work on the tools, or be able to.

What do you like about your job?

I like running my own business. I enjoy collaborating with builders, engineers, certifiers, and other construction professionals.

Most of all, I get immense satisfaction helping homeowners build their dream homes.

What was your career pathway to where you are now?

I came to the construction industry after a long and varied career. In the 90s I studied a degree in product design and had a stint at art school making furniture. I then worked as a project manager and web strategist for the Open University in the UK and the National Museum of Australia.

For around ten years I was an assistant director helping run the Services Australia website. About five years ago I decided I needed a career change and enrolled to study building design part-time. After graduating I started taking on small drafting jobs. This grew and I left the public service to run my own business.

What advice would you give to someone at school considering becoming a Building Designer?

CAD is a core skill you'll need as a building designer. My advice is get stuck in right now and teach yourself drafting! If you're into gaming have a go at 3D modelling, animation and visualization; the skills are easily transferable to CAD.

Revit is probably the most commonly used drafting software and a student version can be downloaded for free from Autodesk. The great news is there are endless excellent free tutorials on YouTube. For learning Revit have a look out for the Balkan Architect.

Once you're familiar with CAD you should try to get work experience with a drafting, building design or architecture firm. The real-world experience and professional contacts will be invaluable. You may find these to be as important as a formal qualification in building design.

I would also recommend studying some art or design. It's fun and will help develop your visual and creative skills. Finally, studying building design is an excellent alternative pathway to architecture. It's faster, cheaper and focused on the practical skills employers need.

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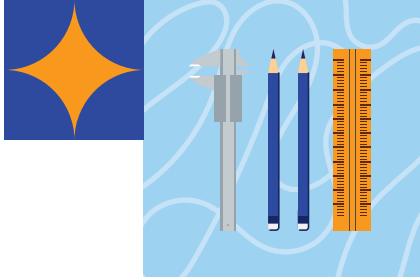
ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN ROLES

Landscape Architect



What you need to know

Landscape Architects plan and design projects like open space networks, parks, schools and playgrounds, streetscapes, civic plazas and squares, gardens and external areas to buildings across residential and commercial sectors.

Most Landscape Architects are university-educated through an Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA) accredited program, however there are options to undertake vocational education and training and have this recognised towards a university degree. Alternatively, if your vocational training leads to you working as a landscape architect for a sustained period of eight years or more, you might be eligible for Senior Entry to AILA.

Landscape Architects use natural systems such as topography, planting, and water to design, plan and manage new and existing spaces. They actively design for improved sustainability outcomes to combat the effects of human-induced climate change.

As a Landscape Architect you need to be a good communicator as you will work across lots of different areas. In the residential and commercial sectors, you will spend time working closely with Architects, Builders, Planners, Clients, Engineers, stakeholders, and even Landscape Gardeners and Landscape Construction teams who will build and manage your design.

Civic, Structural and Water Engineers are sometimes engaged as subconsultants to ensure any small structures (like pergolas), water restoration works, or streets and roads are safe and sound.

Average income: $85,132*

Training: takes 4 years or more depending on what level of degree you want (Bachelor or Master)

Landscape Architects work closely with their clients to develop a project brief that responds to the space and clients' needs. They develop plans from concept design through to construction documentation and specification to enable your project to be built. A wide range of drawings from hand sketches to computer-aided designed drawings will support you in creating your project.

Landscape Architects spend lots of time outdoors visiting project sites and checking in on the construction progress, which may require help with any troubleshooting. They also prepare design reports, masterplans and environmental impact statements for local and state government projects.

Because of this, they need to have a great eye for detail and design and know how to work with all kinds of spaces at a range of scales.

Do you have an eye for design, an affinity for science and maths, care deeply for the environment, love of the outdoors, and want to dare to change the future? Perhaps you're a Landscape Architect in waiting!

What should you be good at?

- Design and drawing
- Being a creative problem solver
- Being environmentally conscious
- Working with people from varying professional backgrounds

What should you enjoy?

- Working across a diverse range of project types and scales
- Flexible working environments which include getting outdoors
- Having a broad knowledge skill set and working on lots of different projects

Relevant qualifications

- Bachelor of Landscape Architecture (Honours)
- Bachelor of Design
- Master of Landscape Architecture (AQF9)
- Diploma of Landscape Design

What subjects are helpful to do at school?

- Environment and Society
- Geography
- Design and technologies
- Art
- Maths
- Sciences

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How a career pathway can look

Landscape Architects work across all areas from residential and commercial building projects right up to city-making projects based around infrastructure and the renewal of industrial areas.

They work closely with a wide range of professionals and they need to have a good understanding of the impacts of climate, soil quality, water runoff and how to draw plans to ensure their structures are properly planned and constructed.

Landscape Architects can work as sole traders who contract their services to Landscape Gardeners, Builders and other Project Managers.

They can work on new builds or landscape renovation projects, or on commercial builds like parklands, shopping centres, playgrounds and waterfronts. They might also masterplan whole precincts and design specific outdoor spaces and gardens in office complexes or industrial areas. They could work on reinventing previously industrialised waterfronts and creating constructed wetlands to enhance natural habitats and build more sustainable natural areas that adapt to climate change.

As the country focusses more on sustainable building practices, people are looking more towards the professional expertise that Landscape Architects offer to provide unique solutions to support improve health and wellbeing of communities.

There's lots of scope to work across the whole industry for people in Landscape Architect roles so you can really make your career what you want it to be!

Landscape Architects need to be good with technology and keeping up to date on the different programs they can use to come up with innovative designs. Software plays a huge part in the design and development of plans!
To be a Registered Landscape Architect you need to have university qualifications or a recognised degree from the vocational system coupled with extensive experience within the landscape architecture profession.

You can use the **Universities Admissions Centre (UAC) website** to look up which universities offer the relevant degree in this space.

You can even find more information about becoming a **Landscape Architect here.**

Elke Haege Thorvaldson

AILA FRLA, MAIH

Landscape Architect and Business Owner

Elke Landscape Architect and Consulting Arborist

What is your job?

I work full time as a landscape architect and consulting arborist. I am also a horticulturist and co-author of "Soils for Landscape Development; Selection, Specification and Validation".

What do you do on an average day?

I typically work on development projects as either a landscape architect, consulting arborist, or both. I also get to assist landscape architectural firms as a sub-consultant in soils, horticulture and arboriculture.

An average day could be attending site to assess trees, designing, drawing plans, coming up with design solutions and options, writing reports, fee proposals, and talking with construction project team members.

What do you like about your job?

I love the variety that the profession of landscape architecture expands into. Project types, locations and sites can be very different. Projects could include the landscape components of a new coastal cycleway, or a residential apartment complex, a new streetscape landscape, or landscape upgrades on an industrial estate, carpark, or a riparian landscape in conjunction with a stormwater engineer.

Landscape architecture can be very creative and artistic, but what I really love is designing for the revitalisation of landscapes (especially on degraded and disturbed sites) and re-introducing living ecosystems (including soil ecosystems) in urban settings with people in mind.

I strongly believe this type of landscape regeneration is vitally important for wellbeing and liveability and is a part of our moral responsibilities on earth.

What was your career pathway to where you are now?

I took a year off after school to work, and to check I still wanted to study Bachelor of Landscape Architecture at UNSW, which I did. I was awarded a scholarship to attend a Summer Student Program in Denver, Colorado and then work in London, UK (through EDAW, a large landscape architecture firm). I also worked for landscape architectural firms in Sydney during and after university.

About ten years later, I decided I wanted to learn more about soils, horticulture and consulting arboriculture. I studied under some very talented, dedicated and well-respected teachers at TAFE NSW Ryde, School of Horticulture. At the same time (in 2009), I started my own practice as a sole trader.

I also released the Soil Volume Simulator which is a freely available online simulation tool for estimating soil volumes for trees in limited spaces (such as street trees in urbanised areas).

In 2014, I teamed up with soil scientist, Simon Leake from SESL Australia and out of a shared passion and desire to improve the industry in landscape soil, we co-authored the book; Soils for Landscape Development, Selection, Specification and Validation through CSIRO Publishing. Ten years later in 2024, we have just re-written, improved, and will be re-releasing the 2nd edition which I am really excited about.

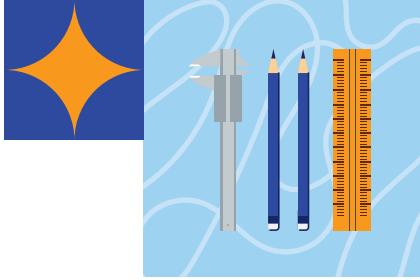
And, 25 years on, I still get to design landscapes for clients and assess trees to inform project outcomes and talk to clients about saving and reusing site soil. I have recently studied 'Soil Biology and Health' at Western Sydney University, concerning plant-soil-microbial relationships.

What advice would you give to someone at school considering becoming a Landscape Architect?

If you like drawing or graphics, you value natural ecosystems, you are creative, and have a practical mind, then landscape architecture could be the perfect fit for you too.

ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN ROLES

Interior Designer



What you need to know

Interior Designers focus on the internal structure of commercial, industrial, retail and residential spaces.

The aim of an Interior Designer is to create an environment tailored to the purpose of the space. They plan, design and manage the aesthetic and functional aspects of interior spaces, ensuring they are both visually appealing and practical. They work on a variety of projects, including homes, commercial buildings, offices, hotels, and retail spaces.

Their goal is to create environments that meet the client's needs, align with the intended style, and comply with building codes and safety regulations.

Interior Designers can have vocational and/or university qualifications. They need to have a very keen eye for design, materials, products and spaces. They also need to be great communicators to work with both clients and tradespeople.

Interior Designers will work closely with their clients to understand the purpose of the space and the needs of the client. They will come up with plans to suit the type of project, the size and the fit out. This will include drawing sketches, preparing designs, diagrams, illustrations and specifications. They will also have supplies of materials like fabric swatches and paint samples to help clients make decisions.

Interior Designers will visit sites to check on progress and help with any troubleshooting when directing the construction of interior elements of a build.

Average income:
$74,605*

Training:
2-4 years

Do you have an eye for design and the knack for working with people? Perhaps you're made to be an Interior Designer!

What should you be good at?

- Design and drawing
- Coming up with innovative ideas
- Problem solving
- Working with people

What should you enjoy?

- Art and design
- Working with builders and tradespeople
- Working with clients

Relevant qualifications

- Diploma of Interior Design (MFS50222)
- Advanced Diploma of Interior Design (MSF60122)
- Bachelor of Design (Interior Design)

What subjects are helpful to do at school?

- Maths
- Industrial design
- Design and technologies
- Art

How a career pathway can look

Interior Designers work across residential and commercial building projects. They need to have an excellent eye for design, but also be able to work with lots of different people across the industry including Builders, tradespeople, clients and suppliers.

Some Interior Designers choose to specialise in a particular part of the industry such as residential design, hospitality design, retail design, office design, or sustainable design. There's lots of scope to work across the whole industry in this role and to make your career what you want it to be!

Interior Designers can work for themselves as sole traders who contract out their skills, but they do also work for larger organisations as employees.

Interior Designers can start in the vocational education and training system and then go on to university if they want to continue their education.

You can use the **Universities Admissions Centre (UAC) website** to look up which universities offer the relevant degree in this space.

If you're not sure which one is right for you, it's best to reach out to the universities you are considering and ask them to help you figure out which pathway is best for your needs.

For more information on becoming an Interior Designer, you can check out the **Design Institute of Australia website.**

**Please know that if they look a little lower than you expected, that's because they include everyone in those jobs! Full-time, part-time, apprentice, trainee, graduate, manager, early career or ready to retire, it doesn't matter! They're all included to come to an average and that's the number we have used.*

Maria Cerne

Interior Designer and Business Owner

Studio Black Interiors

Want to check out Maria's work?
Follow her here

What is your job and what do you do on an average day?

As an Interior Designer, every day can be quite different, so my job is never boring! The main activities include: Meeting with clients: I spend time with clients, understanding how they want their new homes to look and feel. For instance, a client might want their home to feel cozy, modern, or elegant, and my job is to bring that vision to life.

Creating designs: I use computer software to design each space including kitchens, laundries and bathrooms as well showing where furniture should go. I need to think about colour, lighting, materials, and the overall feel of the space. Selecting materials: A big part of my job is selecting all the fixtures and finishes that are needed in a home, and this is often over 200 items!

Working with other professionals: As an interior designer I work with architects, builders and trades people to make sure everything comes together perfectly. I often visit the job site to check on progress and ensure that things look as planned.

Problem-solving: Sometimes, things don't go as planned! As an Interior Designer problem-solving is very important. Being flexible and creative is essential.

What do you like about your job?

It's a career where no two days are ever quite the same, which is why I love it. I get to blend creativity with problem-solving, help people feel good in their homes, and make a lasting difference in people's lives. A well-designed space can improve a person's mood, productivity and overall wellbeing. There's a lot of satisfaction in knowing that you have created a space where people feel happy and relaxed – whether you decide to pursue a career in residential design or a career in designing fun spaces like restaurants, hotels, offices or retail shops. The spaces interior designers create are often enjoyed for years, sometimes even generations. Knowing that your work has a lasting impact is very satisfying.

What was your career pathway to where you are now?

When, I left school I went to university and completed a degree in Advertising and Marketing and worked in this field for around 15 years.

When I was older, and had a young family, I decided to change careers so I could open my own business. I went back to school to study at the Canberra Institute of Technology to gain a Diploma in Interior Design and Decoration. I have been operating my business for the last nine years. It is hard work being a small business owner, but it is very rewarding.

What advice would you give to someone at school considering becoming an Interior Designer and business owner in building and construction?

Interior design lets you be creative every day, blending art with practical problem-solving. You'll design spaces that are not only beautiful but also functional, making people's lives better. To be a great designer, you need to be a lifelong learner and stay up to date on what's new in the industry. This variety makes the work challenging and rewarding, as you use a wide range of skills. If you want to run your own design business, you'll need skills in budgeting, project management, marketing, and client relations. These are as important as your design skills in building a successful business.

The best designers bring their unique style and perspective to each project. Take time to figure out what you love most about design, and don't be afraid to show it in your work. Becoming an Interior Designer or business owner in building and construction opens a field full of possibility, where each project is a chance to create something special and lasting!

ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN ROLES

Interior Decorator

What you need to know

Interior Decorators focus on the internal structure of commercial, industrial, retail and residential spaces.

Their aim is to create an environment tailored to the purpose of the space. Interior Decorators will undertake, or arrange for decorating work to be done, such as painting, moulding or having lighting installed. They even work with furnishings and finishings like tapware or railings.

Interior Decorators select and arrange furniture, decor, colour schemes, textiles, and accessories. Unlike Interior Designers, Interior Decorators are not involved in structural changes or space planning; their primary responsibility is to create visually pleasing environments that reflect a client's style and preferences.

Interior Decorators work on a variety of projects, including residential homes, commercial buildings, offices, hotels, and retail spaces.

Interior Decorators need to have vocational qualifications. They also need a very keen eye for design, materials, products and spaces. They must be great communicators who are able to work with both clients, suppliers and tradespeople.

Interior Decorators will work closely with their clients to understand the purpose of the space and the needs of the client. They can then provide sketches, designs, diagrams, illustrations and specifications. They will also have supplies of materials like fabric swatches and paint samples to help clients make decisions.

Average income: $63,362*

Training: up to 2 years

Do you have an eye for design and the knack for working with people? Perhaps you're made to be an Interior Decorator!

What should you be good at?

- Design and drawing
- Coming up with innovative ideas
- Problem solving
- Working with people

What should you enjoy?

- Art and design
- Working with builders and tradespeople
- Working with clients

Relevant qualifications

- Certificate III in Interior Design Retail Services (MSF31018)
- Certificate III in Painting and Decorating (CPC30620)
- Certificate IV in Interior Decoration (MFS40122)

What subjects are helpful to do at school?

- Art
- Industrial design
- Design and technologies

How a career pathway can look

Interior Decorators work across residential and commercial building projects. They need to have an excellent eye for design, but also be able to work with lots of different people across the industry including Builders, tradespeople, clients and suppliers.

Some Interior Decorators choose to specialise in a particular part of the industry such as residential, hospitality, retail, offices or restaurants. Some also specialise in areas like home staging (preparing homes for sale), event decoration (weddings, parties) or seasonal decoration.

There's lots of scope to work across the whole industry in this role and to make your career what you want it to be! Interior Decorators usually tend to work for themselves as sole traders who contract out their skills, but they do also work for larger organisations as employees.

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Engineering Roles

Engineering is a professional discipline in the building and construction industry. It covers the design, planning, construction and management of structures like houses and office buildings as well as infrastructure like roads, tunnels, bridges, airports, railroads, dams, utilities and other projects.

There are different types of Engineers in the building and construction industry including Civil Engineers, Structural Engineers, Transport Engineers and Engineering Mangers. They're all a bit different.

For example, Civil Engineering is a field that deals more with the practical aspects of construction projects. Civil Engineers have some cross over with Structural Engineers but their jobs are quite different.

Civil Engineers tend to focus on the design and preparation of the structure while Construction Engineers tend to focus more on the actual building and construction process – the procedures, methods, costs, schedules and personnel management. Construction Engineers are more involved with ensuring the project is fulfilled on time, on budget and to scope, while Civil Engineers are more critical at the bookends of the project.

Construction Engineering students take more construction management courses, and fewer design courses, while Civil Engineers tend more towards design and less towards construction management.

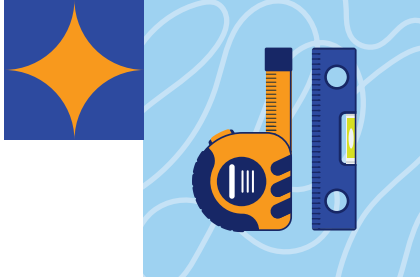
Engineering roles require a university degree, not an apprenticeship.
You can use the **Universities Admissions Centre (UAC)** website to look up which universities offer the relevant degree in this space.

If you're not sure which one is right for you, it's best to reach out to the universities you are considering and ask them to help you figure out which pathway is best for your needs.

If you want to be in the building and construction industry, but you're keen to go to university and be a part of the planning, execution and management journey of building, then maybe you need to read on!

ENGINEERING ROLES

Engineering Manager



What you need to know

Engineering Managers keep projects and operations on track, troubleshoot issues and oversee all aspects of the project to make sure they're delivered to scope.

An Engineering Manager in construction will oversee the engineering aspects of construction projects, including the design, planning, and execution of work. They manage the engineering team to ensure that technical aspects of projects are executed to meet standards, and they work closely with others on site like the construction or site manager, the foreperson, the architects and the contractors to ensure successful project completion. They need to be good with engineering processes and protocols as well as great managers and leaders.

Engineering Managers coordinate the design of projects, ensuring that plans meet technical specifications, safety standards, and regulatory requirements. They review blueprints, engineering reports, and drawings.

They are called upon to solve complex technical problems, including those related to construction techniques, materials, or structural integrity. So they need to be great problem solvers, troubleshooters and communicators. They need to have the right mix of practical skills, theoretical knowledge and managerial skills to be successful in their role.

It takes a lot of study and experience to become an Engineering Manager.

Are you good with people, keen to go to university and work in a leadership role on construction sites? You'll need to be good with maths, science and technology. If that sounds like you, perhaps you're destined to be an Engineering Manager!

Average income: $187,120*

Training: An engineering degree takes at least 4 years, depending on how you structure it, plus post-graduate study

What should you be good at?

- Classroom learning and independent study
- Leading and managing a team
- Communicating with clients and team members
- Maths (calculus), science (physics) and technology

What should you enjoy?

- Troubleshooting and problem solving
- Coming up with innovative ideas
- Managing time and all aspects of a project
- Seeing projects through to the end
- Working in high pressure situations

Relevant qualifications

- Bachelor of Engineering
- Postgraduate qualifications are commonly pursued

What subjects are helpful to do at school?

- Maths (calculus)
- Science (physics)
- Business studies
- English

How a career pathway can look

The ATAR needed to study a Bachelor of Engineering depends on the specialisation, and the institution you choose. They range from around 72 through to the high 90s.

Engineering Managers need to be great with calculus, trigonometry and physics and really good with all aspects of time and project management. They're usually at the front line dealing with contractors and tradespeople, as well as with clients so they need to be able to work with all different kinds of stakeholders.

Engineering Managers need to start off as Engineers and learn the ropes. They learn about planning, design and execution of projects and then with experience they can work towards more senior team leader roles.
After gaining enough experience (and usually a postgraduate qualification), Engineers can become Engineering Managers who oversee the entire engineering team for a construction project or multiple projects, handling all technical aspects from planning through to completion.

This can be a tough job with a lot of pressure, so it is really suited to someone who is an excellent leader, manager and communicator, on top of being an excellent Engineer. Getting to that position takes time and hard work – but it's worth it!

Some experienced Engineering Managers choose to start their own construction or engineering consulting firms, where they can apply their technical and managerial expertise to lead their own business ventures.

Engineers need to be registered to practice with **Engineers Australia.** **Engineers Australia** has information on their website for anyone considering becoming an Engineer.

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ENGINEERING ROLES

Civil Engineer

What you need to know

A Civil Engineer will plan, design, construct and oversee the build of essential infrastructure like roads, bridges and railroads.

A Civil Engineer designs, plans, manages and oversees infrastructure projects such as roads, bridges, buildings, dams, and other large-scale structures. Civil Engineers ensure that projects are completed safely, efficiently, and to the required standards. They work closely with Architects, tradespeople, and other Engineers, focusing on the structural integrity, durability, and environmental impact of the project.

Civil Engineers are a big part of the initial design of infrastructure projects. They use computer-aided design software to come up with really detailed plans and blueprints. Then they essentially step into a Project Manager role to make sure the construction process stays on track and remains true to the plans and project outcomes. They will do regular site assessments as part of this, so they need to be good communicators both with clients and those working on site.

They are called upon to solve complex technical problems, including those related to construction techniques, materials, or structural integrity. So they need to be great problem solvers, troubleshooters and communicators. They need to have the right mix of practical skills, theoretical knowledge and managerial skills to be successful in their role.

Are you good with people, keen to go to university and work in a leadership role on construction sites? You'll need to be good with maths, science and technology. If that sounds like you, perhaps you're destined to be a Civil Engineer!

Average income: $105,738*

Training: An engineering degree takes at least 4 years, depending on how you structure it, plus post-graduate study

What should you be good at?

- Maths (calculus), science (physics) and technology
- Classroom learning and independent study
- Working with a team
- Communicating with clients and tradespeople

What should you enjoy?

- Troubleshooting and problem solving
- Coming up with innovative ideas
- Managing time and all aspects of a project
- Seeing projects through to the end
- Working in high pressure situations

Relevant qualifications

- Bachelor of Engineering (Civil)
- Postgraduate qualifications are commonly pursued

What subjects are helpful to do at school?

- Maths (calculus)
- Business studies
- English

How a career pathway can look

The ATAR needed to study a Bachelor of Engineering depends on the specialisation, and the institution you choose. They range from around 72 through to the high 90s.

Civil Engineers need to be great with calculus, trigonometry and physics and really good with all aspects of project management. They're usually at the front line dealing with contractors and tradespeople, as well as with the client so they need to be able to work with all different kinds of stakeholders.

After gaining enough experience (and usually a postgraduate qualification), Civil Engineers can become Engineering Managers who oversee the entire engineering team for a construction project or multiple projects at once, handling all technical aspects from planning through to completion.

Civil Engineers can choose to work for large organisations, government or smaller enterprises.

Some experienced Civil Engineers choose to start their own construction or engineering consulting firms, where they can apply their technical and managerial expertise to lead their own business ventures.

This can be a tough job with a lot of pressure, so it is really suited to someone who is excellent with project management and communication, on top of being an excellent engineer. Getting to that position takes time and hard work.

Engineers need to be registered to practice with **Engineers Australia.** **Engineers Australia** has information on their website for anyone considering becoming an Engineer.

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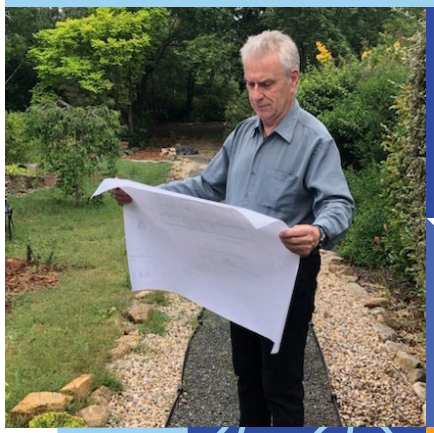
John Algie

B.E. M.I.E. C.P. Eng

Engineer and Business Owner

A&R Engineering Design



What is your job and what do you do on an average day?

I am a qualified Civil, Structural, and Hydrological Engineer.

On an average day I can do any or a combination of the following; design foundation systems for residential and industrial structures, plan/design steel and timber beams for structures, and drainage for both industrial and residential dwellings, or design roads and drainage for subdivisions.

What do you like about your job?

I like that I'm not confined to a desk eight hours a day, five days a week. And every job is unique which leads to a more stimulating workplace.

What was your career pathway to where you are now?

I worked in local government as a trainee Engineer while attending university. I continued working for several local councils as a qualified engineer for several years until I branched out to private practice. Eventually I commenced my own business where I am now.

What advice would you give to someone at school a career as an Engineer?

Anyone studying as an Engineer will have several career pathways open to them. Most people I graduated with are now running their own small to medium enterprises (SME). Many also migrated from design to management eventually.

There are several software packages available today that facilitate specialisation should that be their choice.

It is important though that it does involve a qualified Engineer being responsible and signing off projects. I think design and innovation is an important direction for many aspiring engineers in the future.

We have yet to see though what benefits if any that AI will provide as an aid for the future.

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ENGINEERING ROLES

Structural Engineer

What you need to know

A Structural Engineer will design and assess structures to test the behaviour and durability of the materials used in their construction.

A Structural Engineer will design and supervise the construction of lots of different kinds of structures like roads, bridges, tunnels, buildings, dams, towers and airports. They make sure they are designed safely and with materials that will ensure their continued safety and longevity. Structural Engineers effectively make sure buildings, bridges and other structures don't collapse!

They need to be really good with maths and physics because they focus on the integrity of each structural element, for example, foundations, beams, floors and columns. They also seek to improve the integrity of existing structures. They will use scientific and mathematical calculations to help determine the strength of a structure.

Structural Engineering is a speciality of Civil Engineering and can be a challenging job that requires ongoing training and a range of skills. The difference though is that Civil Engineers focus on design, while Structural Engineers inspect the materials used in construction to ensure they can support the plan.

They are called upon to solve complex technical problems, including those related to construction techniques, materials, or structural integrity. So they need to be great problem solvers, troubleshooters and communicators.

They need to have the right mix of practical skills, theoretical knowledge and managerial skills to be successful in their role.

Are you good with people, keen to go to university and work in a leadership role on construction sites? You'll need to be good with maths, science and technology. If that sounds like you, perhaps you should think about becoming a Structural Engineer!

Average income: $120,277*

Training: An engineering degree takes at least 4 years, depending on how you structure it, plus post-graduate study

What should you be good at?

- Maths (calculus), science (physics) and technology
- Classroom learning and independent study
- Working with a team
- Communicating with clients and tradespeople

What should you enjoy?

- Troubleshooting and problem solving
- Coming up with innovative ideas
- Managing time and all aspects of a project
- Seeing projects through to the end
- Working in high pressure situations

Relevant qualifications

- Bachelor of Engineering (Civil)
- Postgraduate qualifications are commonly pursued

What subjects are helpful to do at school?

- Maths (calculus)
- Science (physics)
- Business studies
- English

How a career pathway can look

The Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) needed to study a Bachelor of Engineering depends on the specialisation, and the institution you choose. They range from around 72 through to the high 90s.

Structural Engineers need to be great with calculus and physics and really good with all aspects of time and project management. They're usually at the front line dealing with contractors and trades, as well as with the client so they need to be able to work with all different kinds of stakeholders.

Structural Engineers can choose to work for large organisations, government or smaller enterprises. They can also specialise on certain types of constructions like residential building, commercial building or infrastructure builds. Some experienced Structural engineers choose to start their own construction or engineering consulting firms, where they can apply their technical and managerial expertise to lead their own business ventures.

After gaining enough experience (and usually a postgraduate qualification), Structural Engineers can become Engineering Managers who oversee the entire engineering team for a construction project or multiple projects, handling all technical aspects from planning through to completion.

This can be a tough job with a lot of pressure, so it is really suited to someone who is excellent with project management and communication, on top of being an excellent engineer. Getting to that position takes time and hard work.

Engineers need to be registered to practice with **Engineers Australia.** **Engineers Australia** has information on their website for anyone considering becoming an Engineer.

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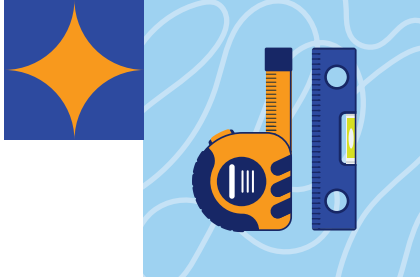
ENGINEERING ROLES

Transport Engineer



What you need to know

A Transport Engineer will design and develop transport structures like roads, highways, railroads, harbours and airports.

Transport Engineers plan, design and implement transportation systems such as roads, highways, railways, airports, bridges, tunnels, and public transit systems. They apply engineering principles to solve transportation-related challenges, improve infrastructure, and support the development of smart, modern cities.

They need to be really good with maths and physics because they focus on the integrity of the infrastructure. They will use scientific and mathematical calculations to help determine the strength of a structure. When working on roads for example, a Transport Engineer will analyse current and projected traffic flows to optimise road networks, reduce congestion, and enhance the safety and efficiency of transportation systems.

They are called upon to solve complex technical problems, including those related to construction techniques, materials, or structural integrity. So, they need to be great problem solvers, troubleshooters and communicators. They need to have the right mix of practical skills, theoretical knowledge and managerial skills to be successful in their role.

Are you good with people, keen to go to university and work in a leadership role on transport construction sites? You'll need to be good with maths, science and technology. If that sounds like you, maybe you should consider becoming a Transport Engineer!

Average income: $127,769*

Training: An engineering degree takes at least 4 years, depending on how you structure it, plus post-graduate study

What should you be good at?

- Maths (calculus), science (physics) and technology
- Classroom learning and independent study
- Working with a team
- Communicating with clients and tradespeople

What should you enjoy?

- Troubleshooting and problem solving
- Working with transport and in the transport industry
- Coming up with innovative ideas
- Managing time and all aspects of a project
- Seeing projects through to the end
- Working in high pressure situations

Relevant qualifications

- Bachelor of Engineering (Civil)
- Postgraduate qualifications are commonly pursued

What subjects are helpful to do at school?

- Maths (calculus)
- Science (physics)
- Business studies
- English

How a career pathway can look

The ATAR needed to study a Bachelor of Engineering depends on the specialisation, and the institution you choose. They range from around 72 through to the high 90s.

Transport Engineers need to be great with calculus, trigonometry and physics and really good with all aspects of time and project management. They're usually at the front line dealing with contractors and trades, as well as with the client so they need to be able to work across different kinds of stakeholders. It also helps to have a keen interest in town planning, transport and logistics.

Transport Engineers can choose to work for large organisations, government or smaller enterprises. They can also specialise on certain types of transport construction like road, rail, air or sea. Some experienced Transport Engineers choose to start their own construction or engineering consulting firms, where they can apply their technical and managerial expertise to lead their own business ventures.

After gaining enough experience (and usually a postgraduate qualification), Transport Engineers can become Engineering Managers who oversee the entire engineering team for a transport construction project or multiple projects, handling all technical aspects from planning through to completion.

This can be a tough job with a lot of pressure, so it is really suited to someone who is excellent with project management and communication, on top of being an excellent engineer. Getting to that position takes time and hard work.

Engineers need to be registered to practice with **Engineers Australia.** **Engineers Australia** has information on their website for anyone considering becoming an Engineer.

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ENGINEERING ROLES

Engineering Technician

What you need to know

A Civil Engineering Technician will test construction materials and prepare sketches and tabulations, and assist in estimating costs alongside Civil Engineers.

An Electrical Engineering Technician will test electrical materials and prepare sketches and tabulations, and assist in estimating costs alongside Electrical Engineers.

A Civil Engineering Technician works closely with Civil Engineers on planning, designing, and overseeing construction projects. They can work across lots of different projects, like roads, bridges, buildings, airports and waterways and they usually are usually tasked with technical work like drafting designs, conducting field surveys, testing materials, and monitoring project progress.

Civil Engineering Technicians focus on the practical and technical aspects of construction, working to ensure that plans are executed correctly and efficiently. They perform site inspections, test material quality and durability, collect data and undertake lots of monitoring and reporting.

Civil Engineering Technicians can qualify with a Certificate IV, or they can do a Diploma or Advanced Diploma.

An Electrical Engineering Technician is similar, but they work with Electrical Engineers on assembling, installing, testing, modifying and repairing electrical equipment to ensure it is fit for purpose and complies with relevant safety regulations and laws. They need to be really clued in when it comes to safety procedures and protocols and need to be good at complying with rules.

Average income: $97,207*

Training: An engineering degree takes at least 4 years, depending on how you structure it, plus post-graduate study

They will collect data and run tests and undertake analysis on electrical systems to help Electrical Engineers determine how systems could be used, or what troubleshooting might be needed.

An Electrician Engineering Technician needs to hold an Advanced Diploma of Electrical – Engineering and undertake a traineeship.

Are you interested in engineering, but not sure the university pathway is for you at the outset? Maybe you should think about becoming an Engineering Technician!

What should you be good at?

- Maths (calculus), science (physics) and technology
- Working with a team
- Problem solving
- Communicating with clients and tradespeople

What should you enjoy?

- Coming up with innovative ideas
- Managing time and all aspects of a project
- Seeing projects through to the end
- Working in high pressure situations
- Working on large-scale infrastructure projects

Relevant qualifications

- Certificate IV in Civil Construction Design (RII40820)
- Diploma of Civil Construction Design (RII50520)
- Advanced Diploma of Civil Construction (RII60620)
- Associate Degree of Engineering (Civil Construction)
- Advanced Diploma of Electrical – Engineering (UEE62211)
- Traineeship

What subjects are helpful to do at school?

- Maths (calculus)
- Science (physics)
- Business studies
- English

How a career pathway can look

Engineering Technicians work closely with Engineers and can work on different kinds of projects or choose to specialise in a particular area of infrastructure. They can choose to work for large organisations, government or smaller enterprises.

Engineering Technicians have pathways to become engineers if that is their plan, or they can start their own consulting businesses and subcontract to companies and Engineers as needed.

It is a useful career pathway for people who think they'd like to be Engineers but are not sure university is for them in the first instance, or who want to work in the industry for a while first. It is an equally great career choice for people who like engineering, but don't want to specifically work as an Engineer themselves.

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ENGINEERING ROLES

Engineering Draftsperson

What you need to know

A Civil Engineering Draftsperson will prepare detailed drawings, plans and blueprints for civil engineering work.

An Electrical Engineering Draftsperson will prepare detailed drawings, plans and blueprints for electrical installations.

A Civil Engineering Draftsperson works closely with Civil Engineers in the planning, monitoring and review phases of construction projects. They can work across lots of different projects, like roads, bridges, buildings, airports and waterways and they are required to prepare detailed plans for projects, or to help with project reworks.

Civil Engineering Draftspersons focus on the practical and technical aspects of construction, working to ensure that plans are executed correctly and efficiently. The plans and blueprints they provide will form the basis of the projects and they are involved in monitoring the progress and ensuring the plans remain fit for purpose in the event of problems arising.

Civil Engineering Draftspersons can qualify with a Certificate IV, or they can do a Diploma or Advanced Diploma. They also do a traineeship.

An Electrical Engineering Draftsperson works with Electrical Engineers to prepare plans of electrical installations and circuitry. This could be on big commercial or residential builds, or it could even be for things like streetlights or the electrical grid in new housing developments. They need to be great with maths and science and have a good ability to troubleshoot if things don't go as planned.

Average income: $88,703*

Training: 4 years

Are you interested in engineering, but not sure the university pathway is for you? Do you love drawing plans and blueprints and coming up with innovative ideas? Maybe you should think about becoming an Engineering Draftsperson!

What should you be good at?

- Maths (calculus), science (physics) and technology
- Working with a team
- Problem solving
- Communicating with clients and tradespeople

What should you enjoy?

- Coming up with innovative ideas
- Managing time and all aspects of a project
- Seeing projects through to the end
- Working in high pressure situations
- Working on large-scale infrastructure projects

Relevant qualifications

- Certificate IV in Civil Construction Design (RII40820)
- Diploma of Civil Construction Design (RII50520)
- Advanced Diploma of Engineering Technology (Civil Engineering Design)
- Traineeship

What subjects are helpful to do at school?

- Maths (calculus)
- Science (physics)
- Business studies
- English
- Design and technology

How a career pathway can look

Engineering Draftspersons work closely with Civil Engineers and can work on different kinds of projects or choose to specialise in a particular area of infrastructure. They can choose to work for large organisations, government or smaller enterprises.

Engineering Draftspersons have pathways to become Engineers if that is their plan, or they can start their own consulting businesses and subcontract to companies and Engineers as needed.

It is a useful career pathway for people who think they'd like to be Engineers but are not sure university is for them in the first instance, or who want to work in the industry for a while first. It is an equally great career choice for people who like engineering, but don't want to specifically work as an Engineer themselves. Being an Engineering Draftsperson is well suited to people who enjoy coming up with innovative ideas, solving problems and drawing detailed plans, and who like to work on different kinds of projects throughout their career.

**Please know that if they look a little lower than you expected, that's because they include everyone in those jobs! Full-time, part-time, apprentice, trainee, graduate, manager, early career or ready to retire, it doesn't matter! They're all included to come to an average and that's the number we have used.*

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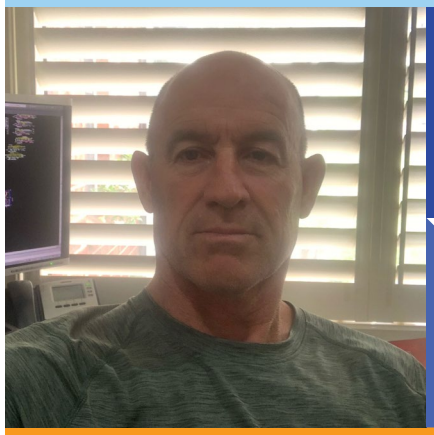
Lindsay Tapp

Draftsperson and Business Owner

Lindsay Tapp Contract Drafting



Check out Lindsay's work online here

What is a Draftsperson?

A Draftsperson assists the Engineer or Architect in preparing 2D and 3D construction plans for all kinds of different builds across the commercial and residential space.

What do you do on an average day?

I spend my days now running my own business from home doing architectural and structural drawings for residential projects like new builds, extensions, swimming pools and retaining walls. I work closely with lots of Engineers and Architects and a Structural Engineer will sometimes need to certify my drawings on certain projects.

What do you like about your job?

It's really flexible and I get to work from home. I also get to work across lots of different kinds of jobs.

What was your career pathway to where you are now?

I finished year 10 and went to TAFE to study my Diploma of Structural Engineering and Civil Engineering Drafting. I also did an apprenticeship with a Structural Engineer. After that, I started contracting to bigger organisations and other Engineers. Back then, I started out doing my drawings with an actual pen and paper, but pretty quickly moved to Computer Aided Design or CAD.

For the last 40 years I've been running my own business doing lots of work in the residential space which is great because I can work from home and choose my own projects.

What advice would you give to someone at school considering a career as a Draftsperson?

Aim to get employment in your chosen field then once you are Diploma-qualified there are so many options for what you can do and where you can go from there once you have the experience.

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Construction Management Roles

People in Construction Management roles oversee and manage construction projects from ‘go to whoa’. They are part of the planning, design, construction and finishing processes making sure everything is on track, happening when it needs to happen, sticking to budget and managing issues as they arise.

People in Construction Management roles need to be good managers and leaders because they’re the ones people will go to when things go wrong. They also have to be great communicators because they’re the ones at the front line dealing with the customer, the contractors and the trades.

They have to be great with time management and across all the regulation and rules that will apply on site – especially safety!

Construction Managers are either university or vocationally educated, depending on the type of role. Civil Construction Managers and Construction Managers usually go to university, while Builders and Builders Associates/Project Managers usually do an apprenticeship (although they might go on to university too). This is great because it means there are varied pathways into Construction Management roles.

If you want to be in the building and construction industry, but maybe you think you’re suited to a managerial role, or maybe you want to explore different vocational and university pathways, then you should read on!

Kirsty May

Zero Harm Advisor
Transport & Infrastructure
Downer

What is your job?
I am currently a Zero Harm Advisor with a civil infrastructure company.

What do you do on an average day
I aim to spend around 60% of my time on site interacting with the work crews understanding what is going on and helping them identify any safety concerns or where the system is not quite working and provide guidance before any potential issues arise.

I then spend part of my day ensuring the documentation side of what we are doing, how we are doing it or what has happened is correctly maintained. The documentation side is critical as the crews may not always have the time to undertake those tasks, but it can be incredibly important to have the records especially if a regulator asks questions.

I really get to have a diverse range of work and have the best of both worlds in applying my knowledge on site whilst also being able to undertake work that requires a high level of critical thinking and can contribute towards larger goals.

What do you like about being in the civil construction industry?
I enjoy the variety and the sense of accomplishment that comes with seeing projects progress from start to finish. The industry can be challenging, requiring problem-solving and quick thinking, which keeps things interesting. Working with a diverse team and learning from different experts is another aspect I appreciate, there is a large amount of interaction, and communication required so I like the people side of everything too.

The industry is always evolving, so there's always opportunity to grow my knowledge and skills or find new projects to work on.

Nothing is ever the same.

What was your career pathway to where you are now?
My pathway was unconventional.

I started as a casual traffic controller while completing my nursing degree. The flexibility of the job suited my schedule, but it also introduced me to the construction industry and sparked my interest. I transitioned to a junior site administration clerk position at Downer, where I learned more about project management and site operations. I built confidence in my skills, gained deeper industry knowledge, and became civil project manager before taking a slight turn again.

I was able to go back to my more nurturing side by taking up a safety role after seven years of project managing.

While I enjoyed being a project manager the change into safety has provided a new level of understanding and appreciation. Plus who knows, one day I may go back to a more operational management role which is the beauty of the industry in being able to change and move as I see fit.

What advice would you give to someone at school a career as a Civil Construction Manager?
Start with curiosity and be willing to take on entry-level roles to gain practical experience or undertake an apprenticeship where you will gain a qualification or attend university to gain a construction management or engineering degree, there are so many ways now days to be in the industry and to gain industry knowledge.

Be adaptable and maintain a positive, resilient attitude. The industry is fast-paced and often unpredictable, so the ability to adapt and stay constructive is essential. Most importantly, don't let fear hold you back. You won't know everything at the start, but confidence in your ability to learn and grow will lead you to success.

Attitude is everything so if you give everything a good go it will be noticed and don't forget to enjoy the journey.

What advice would you give to someone whose daughter is considering a career in building and construction?
I would tell them to encourage their daughter to explore the industry with an open mind. The construction field is incredibly diverse, with opportunities that can match various interests and skill sets. The industry has come a long way in the past 10 years and what once was unusual to see ladies on site is now commonplace.

CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT ROLES

Construction/Project Manager

What you need to know

A Construction/Project Manager oversees all kinds of projects including civil, residential and commercial. In the residential or civil space this could include the build of large-scale new homes and apartments or the construction of schools or hospitals.

In the case of a Civil Construction Manager, it could be infrastructure like roads, bridges, dams and rail lines.

Construction/Project Managers are needed on lots of different kinds of projects like houses, apartments, town houses, aged care homes, hospitals, schools, childcare centres, train stations, shopping malls – the list goes on. Civil Construction Managers specifically work on projects like roads, bridges, dams, tunnels, water systems, and large public works.

The role of a Construction/Project Manager involves ensuring that projects are completed on time, within budget, and according to design specifications, safety standards, and legal regulations. They work closely with engineers, architects, contractors, tradespeople and clients to deliver projects.

Construction/Project Managers need to be good managers and leaders because they're the ones people will go to when things go wrong. They also have to be great communicators because they're the ones at the front line dealing with the customer, the contractors and the tradespeople.

They have to be great with time management and ensuring they have project timelines that will work. They need to allocate certain trades to certain parts of the process, and they need to make sure everything is happening when it is supposed to so the timeline doesn't blow out.

Average income:
$113,342*

Training:
4 years

Construction/Project Managers also need to be across all the regulation and rules that will apply on site – especially safety!

Have you got what it takes to be a strong leader and great manager on site, problem solve, and keep clients informed throughout the journey? Time to think about becoming a Construction/Project Manager!

What should you be good at?

- Maths (calculus), science (physics) and technology
- Working with a team
- Problem solving
- Communicating with clients and tradespeople
- Time management
- Complying with rules and regulations
- Being organised

What should you enjoy?

- Planning and preparing for projects
- Managing time and all aspects of a project
- Seeing projects through to the end
- Working in high pressure situations
- Working with people

Relevant qualifications

- Diploma of Building and Construction (Management) (CPC50320)
- Diploma of Civil Construction Management (RII50420)
- Advanced Diploma of Building and Construction (Management) (CPC60220)
- Bachelor of Building and Construction Management
- Traineeship

What subjects are helpful to do at school?

- Maths
- Science
- Business studies
- English
- Industrial technology
- Design and technology

How a career pathway can look

Construction/Project Managers work closely with lots of different people across the construction industry and they can work on different kinds of projects or choose to specialise in a particular area. They might specialise in large-scale or volume residential building, high-density construction, commercial or civil.

Some Construction/Project Managers work as sole traders and subcontract their services to projects. Many of them though will work for businesses as an employee, including in large commercial businesses or government organisations.

Some Construction/Project Managers come to the roles as tradespeople, Engineers, Surveyors or Architects. Some choose to study Construction/Project Management further into their career because they're looking for a change from working on the tools. These people in particular bring lots of really valuable skills to the role. This is a space that is appealing to women who are looking for a career change.

Others will go straight from school into their Bachelor of Building and Construction Management. There are lots of pathways into and around the industry depending on what you're interested in. Some Constructions/Project Managers go on to obtain higher qualifications like a Master of Business Administration or a Master in Building and Construction Information Management.

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Gabbie Pierrehumbert

Junior Project Manager/ CAD Operator – Joinery

VOS Construction and Joinery

To see what the team at VOS Construction and Joinery is up to, follow them here

What is your job and what do you do on an average day?

I work as a Junior Project Manager for Vos Joinery. My tasks vary from day to day depending on what projects I have on at the time and what stage each project is up to. On an average day, you can find me doing site visits/site measures, ordering materials, co-ordinating programs for site installs, trouble-shooting issues both on site and in the factory as well as keeping track of all job costs, profit/loss reports, forecasting profit margin for ongoing jobs (WIP), liaising with clients and builders.

What do you like about your job?

There are many things I like about my job, but what stands out for me is getting to see the finished result at the end of the job. Joinery is almost the last trade onsite during a project, and once the joinery is installed it really transforms the site from an empty shell into a finished room.

I take pride in seeing the hard work myself and my team put in to bring these projects to life.

What was your career pathway to where you are now?

I started my career working in a reception role for a residential building/joinery company. After a year or so in reception, I progressed to project administration and then went on to complete a Certificate IV in Kitchen and Bathroom design which fuelled my passion for project management.

After six years in the industry, I thought it was time for something new, so I pursued a project management role at Vos and haven't looked back since.

What advice would you give to someone at school considering a career in Joinery?

You don't have to be a tradesperson to make a career in this industry. The building and construction industry is brimming with opportunities for both women and men. I myself started in an administration role, and whilst not having a trade background has been challenging at times, my determination to learn has prevailed.

There truly is a place for everyone in this industry and I'm proud to share my journey to encourage other young women and men to pursue a career here.

What advice would you give to a parent/ guardian whose daughter is thinking about a career in joinery?

The construction industry is becoming way more inclusive and safer for women. There are more flexible work options and mentorship programs to support women in their careers. Companies are also upping their game on safety measures and making sure sites have proper facilities for everyone. Diversity targets and training programs tailored for women are helping to break down barriers, making this industry a more welcoming place for all.

Joinery is a hands-on and super satisfying trade. Encourage your daughter to explore and immerse herself in learning opportunities—be it through formal education, apprenticeships, or hands-on projects. Persistence and a willingness to learn are just as crucial as technical skills and by nurturing her enthusiasm and determination, you'll help her build a fulfilling and impactful career, ensuring she will thrive and succeed in this industry.

CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT ROLES

Builder

What you need to know

Builders are probably the most well-known of all the roles in the building and construction industry, and they're often used as a catch-all job to cover lots of roles. But specifically, they oversee the building and renovation of structures, usually in the residential space.

Builders mostly work in the residential space. They're the ones who have oversight and responsibility for building houses, townhouses, smaller apartment complexes, hotels, and renovating the same. Some builders will work on commercial and larger projects too, but those are usually managed by a Construction Manager, rather than a Builder.

Builders have to be licensed in every state and territory in Australia and the licence they need depends on the type and scale of work they do. You'll need to contact your local licensing body when the time comes to get your licence, but usually builders need at least a Certificate IV in Building and Construction and a number of years work experience as a tradesperson before they can qualify.

Builders are responsible for working with their client to come up with designs and plans for the project (they'll bring in Engineers, Surveyors and Draftspersons for this part). Then they will project manage all of the timelines and budgets to get the right trades in at the right times. They will need to be really good at time management and organisation. They need to coordinate budgets and make sure everyone gets paid on time. They also need to be good communicators who can work with their clients. Most Builders will go through a trade apprenticeship, but you could also undertake a traineeship.

Have you got what it takes to be a strong leader and great manager on residential and smaller commercial sites, troubleshoot and problem solve, and keep clients informed throughout the journey? Time to think about becoming a Builder!

Average income: $101,957*

Training: 4 years

What should you be good at?

- Maths (calculus), science (physics) and technology
- Working with a team
- Problem solving
- Communicating with clients and tradespeople
- Time management
- Complying with rules and regulations
- Being organised

What should you enjoy?

- Planning and preparing for projects
- Managing time and all aspects of a project
- Seeing projects through to the end
- Working in high pressure situations
- Working with people

Relevant qualifications

- Certificate IV in Building and Construction (CPC40120)
- Diploma of Building and Construction (Building) (CPC50220)
- Traineeship
- Apprenticeship (via a trade, usually carpentry or similar)

What subjects are helpful to do at school?

- Maths
- Science
- Business studies
- Industrial design
- English
- Design and technology

How a career pathway can look

Builders usually start off as tradespeople who do an apprenticeship (although that doesn't have to be the case, they can do traineeships and not have a trade throughout their Certificate IV in Building and Construction).

Either way they choose to start off, they still end up running the projects as licensed Builders. Those who do apprenticeships will usually try to get out on the tools on some projects, while those who go the trainee route don't.

Builders can work as sole traders who contract and organise all the required trades and support for each project. Others run small to medium sized businesses that might employ a few key tradespeople and then they contract everything else they need depending on the project. The people they contract are called sub-contractors.

Some Builders go on to run large organisations that have a significant number of employees and create significant projects.

Other Builders work for these larger organisations to project manage for the company.

There is a lot of scope for a Builder to design their own career path in the direction they want to go. It truly is a role where your own passion, drive and business savvy will determine how your career looks. And business savvy is important! Builders take the legal and regulatory responsibility for their projects which means they need to be good with budgets, finance, communications, following laws and regulations and being extra vigilant with on-site safety. The buck stops with them so it's not a job for the faint hearted!

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Matt Barwick

Builder and Managing Director
Barwick Developments

Master Builders Australia Young Builder of the Year 2019

What is a Builder and what do you do on an average day?

A Builder is a highly skilled tradesperson at the heart of the construction industry, specialising in the construction and repair of buildings and structures.

My daily role is dynamic and varied, consisting of tasks like interpreting plans, collaborating with clients to bring their vision to life, and coordinating with tradespeople and suppliers to ensure seamless project execution. Every day is an opportunity to work as part of a dedicated team, driving projects forward from concept to completion.

What do you like about your job?

The most rewarding aspect of my work is the pride that comes from transforming raw materials into something tangible. We create finished structures that people can use and admire.

I thrive in the outdoor environment, staying active while applying my strong math skills to solve challenges. Collaboration is key, and I'm fortunate to work with a talented team where we learn from one another. Together, we rely on each other to deliver high-quality results, ensuring that every project is completed safely, on time, and to the highest standard.

What was your career pathway to where you are now?

As a child, I spent countless hours with my grandfather, a skilled Joiner, crafting everything from toy trucks to sandboards. Those early experiences sparked a lifelong passion for building, and pursuing a career in construction felt like the perfect path, drawing on all the skills he had taught me.

After finishing school at the end of Year 12, I was accepted into several university courses. However, I wasn't ready to return to the classroom, so I chose to defer my studies and instead entered the construction industry as a labourer. I quickly discovered my love for the hands-on work on site. After six months, I was fortunate to be offered an apprenticeship as a Carpenter and Joiner.

During my apprenticeship, I studied and completed my Certificate IV in Building and Construction, laying the groundwork for the future possibility of running my own business. After finishing my apprenticeship, I continued working with my employer for another year before registering as a Principal Contractor.

Fifteen years later, I've had the opportunity to lead and complete a diverse range of projects. Today, I employ 12 staff, including three apprentices, and continue to grow and evolve in the construction industry.

What advice would you give to someone at school considering a career as a Builder?

I would recommend taking hands-on classes like industrial design and woodworking, to get a feel for the industry. Focus on getting good at maths and problem-solving - I know maths may not seem overly important right now, but you really do use it in your everyday life, especially in a building career!

Working well with a team is also really important, so start practicing good teamwork skills now - things like communication, listening, and being reliable. Learn to share ideas, ask questions when you're unsure, and be ready to lend a hand when others need it.

What advice would you give to a parent/guardian whose daughter is considering a career as a Builder?

If your daughter is interested in construction, the best advice you can give her is to go for it. Equip her with the tools, education, and mindset to succeed, and remind her that the right employers will value her skills and determination above all else.

She's not just joining a male-dominated industry—she's joining a growing, dynamic field that needs more women to help shape its future.

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Advice from the Best in the WEST

It can be tricky to know where to start and what to do with all the information people throw at you when it comes to your potential career path.

We asked some of Western Australia's most prominent Builders for their advice.

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Peter Hunt

General Manager
Budo Group

To people thinking about a career in building, Peter says:

I believe the best Builders are ex-tradespeople. Do a pre-apprenticeship in a trade or multiple trades, like tasting things! Then when you find something you like or are good at or ideally both, do an apprenticeship in that trade. Continue your education to at least diploma level. Try to get employment as a supervisor, then move to management so you can pick up all the skills required. Pick up on other trades so you can understand what they do and appreciate them.

Just try to find a job that you enjoy. Don't worry too much about the money, it will take care of itself. If you enjoy what you do, you will do it well and spend time doing it, that's where the money comes in!

To the parents and guardians of daughters thinking about a career in building, Peter says:

All roles in construction are available for both men and women. I know plenty of women who work in construction, from trades to managers and self-employed builders. There are no limitations as far as I can see.

budogroup.com.au

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Glenn Smith

Managing Director/Business Owner/Founder

Q Group WA

2023 MBA WA Member of the Year (Regional and Metro)

To people thinking about a career in building, Glenn says:

You should do your best to try to plan your career path as best you can so you have something to work towards.

Try to find a trade you enjoy and stick to it for a while. You can then progress from site into an office (which is what I did). There are so many pathways to become a Builder and start your own business. I recommend doing your Diploma and moving up the ranks from there. A lot of people think that if they choose a trade they will be stuck on the tools for the rest of their lives. It's not the case – it's just the start.

Your career path will change as you go – and it might not look the same as you thought it would at 14, 16, 18 or even 48 – but do your best to find out what you actually enjoy and want to do with your life. The rest will follow.

To the parents and guardians of daughters thinking about a career in building, Glenn says:

Support your daughter! The industry is changing and adapting and getting better every day. We know that young people these days expect different things from their workplace than we did back when I got into the industry. And young men these days are getting access to education on respect at school so the culture coming through is different. It's a much better environment for women now.

It's a great career with great opportunities so do your best to help your daughter to find her place in the industry.

qgroupwa.com.au

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Paula West

Designer, Architectural Draftsperson, Contract Administrator, Operations Manager, Design Manager WA ABN Group

Dale Alcock Homes

To people thinking about a career in building, Paula says:

Go for it! You will be on a journey that has unlimited opportunities.

The building and construction industry can take you anywhere you want to go. You can start to grow and develop with so many jobs, roles and advancements. It is a wonderful journey of discovery, achievements, and fulfilment. It is an Industry filled with support and rewards for hard work.

You can build the career that works for you. You can be hands on, you can be creative, you can pick the hours that work for you, and if you want to, you can run your own business. It is an adventure that you can control.

To the parents and guardians of daughters thinking about a career in building, Paula says:

Support her journey. It is encouraging and a great sign of love when parents support your decision to enter into the building and construction industry. It is rewarding and provides a great sense of achievement and happiness as well as financial stability.

Due to all the work health and safety protocols and legislations, it's actually a much safer industry than you probably think.

It is an environment filled with support, comradeship and longtime friendships.

Provide encouragement, guidance, mentoring and support to your daughter on her chosen career in the industry as she starts her journey. Be proud of her choice.

dalealcock.com.au

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CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT ROLES

Building Associate/ Site Supervisor

What you need to know

Building Associates (also called Site Supervisors) assist with the technical side of projects – they work closely with Project Managers to make sure projects are planned, prepared for and go smoothly.

Building Associates are mostly found in the residential and commercial spaces, but they do also do civil work. They support Construction Managers and Project Managers in many of the technical aspects of projects. They will work closely with Engineers, Architects, Surveyors and Inspectors to make sure plans and blueprints are correct and then they will work with the Project Manager to make sure everything on site is going to plan.

They're usually the one who is on site when the trades are there, making sure everything is happening as it should, that everyone is meeting standards and regulatory requirements (like those in the National Construction Code), helping to troubleshoot any issues that arise, making sure materials are where they need to be when they need to be there and, importantly, that everyone is abiding by safety regulations and rules.

Are you organised, great with time and budget management, and a great communicator? Maybe you're destined to be a Building Associate or Site Supervisor!

Average income: $133,263*

Training: up to 4 years

What should you be good at?

- Working with a team
- Problem solving
- Communicating with clients and tradespeople
- Time management
- Complying with rules and regulations
- Being organised

What should you enjoy?

- Planning and preparing for projects
- Managing time and all aspects of a project
- Seeing projects through to the end
- Working in high pressure situations
- Working with people

Relevant qualifications

- Certificate IV in Building and Construction (CPC40120)
- Diploma of Building and Construction (Building) (CPC50220)
- Traineeship
- Apprenticeship (via a trade, usually carpentry or similar)

What subjects are helpful to do at school?

- Maths
- Science
- Business studies
- Industrial design
- English
- Design and technology

How a career pathway can look

Some Building Associates or Site Supervisors go through traineeships and do their Certificate IV in Building and Construction. Others will go through a trade apprenticeship and then upskill to become supervisors.

They need to be across all the rules and regulations that govern the building industry, like the Australian Standards and National Construction Code, as well as all the important safety and wellbeing requirements for sites. It helps to be detail-oriented and good with studying complex regulation if you want to be a Building Associate.

You also need to be good at communicating with people for when you need to troubleshoot or ask for work to be redone because it's not up to the required standard.

Building Associates and Site Supervisors can specialise and only work on certain projects if they like – like residential builds or in the commercial construction space. They can work as contractors and run their own consultancies, or they can be employees for building companies or government (the latter is more likely).

If they choose to, Building Associates and Site Supervisors can upskill throughout their careers to become Construction Managers.

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Josh Burey

Senior Site Manager
Mullane Construction Plumbing
H M Mullane and Sons

Want to check out what the Mullane team is up to? Follow them here

What is your job and what do you do on an average day?
I'm a licensed Plumber working with Mullane Plumbing as a Senior Site Manager. I mainly work on high rise construction builds. My average day starts out with a strategically pre-planned prestart which involves our whole team's input from first year apprentices, labourers, tradespeople and leading hands, discussing yesterday, today and tomorrow's work fronts, critical paths and working toward a builder's construction program.

After this, our 10 to 30 employees make their way to their work areas, and I will generally walk the site, oversee all our services, installs and hold points. I host and attend site meetings with the builder to discuss up and coming work fronts/future works.

After making sure all work fronts are productive and the correct information is being passed on, I will look to scheduling deliveries for the week, look at plans and drawings and co-ordinate labour with my Project Manager.

What do you like about your job?
The great thing about my job is being at the forefront of the design and coordination of a job and then physically assisting my teammates with the plumbing and different components of the project (these being water, sewer, gas and stormwater pipes going into the building but also joining all the pipework from the ground in the mud/dirt to the roof 30 floors above).

What was your career pathway to where you are now?
I started my career in a small country town with a terrific plumbing business which consisted of a husband and wife team and myself. At the time we specialised in mainly new home single dwelling builds, sewer chokes and hydronic in-slab floor heating. After completing my trade and moving to Newcastle I had an interview with Mullane Plumbing where I still work today. I started as a tradie on construction/commercial sites before transitioning into a leading hand role for a few years which then progressed to taking on my own jobs as a senior site manger running major projects up to $5 million in value.

What advice would you give to someone at school considering becoming a Site Manager?
My advice to any of the younger generation is: a job in plumbing can set you up for life. Get involved early and do a couple of weeks work experience to try it and see what goes on. Plumbing in most cases is nothing like what people perceive it to be, but it's so rewarding and fun as there so much variety of different work that gets done.

What advice would you give to a parent/ guardian whose daughter is considering a career in building and construction?
I would suggest the building industry has so many opportunities ranging from physical hands-on jobs right through to programming and technology roles with everything in between. There is certainly a position for all applicants, different levels of studies and qualifications creating endless opportunities.

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Surveyor, Inspector and Estimator Roles

Surveyors in building and construction establish the location and alignment of different structures like roads, buildings, bridges, tunnels and waterways. They are also important once a structure has been built to ensure that the outcome is ‘as built’ and to check for any modifications or changes that might have been made during the construction process.

Building surveys need to be undertaken not only to ensure the building is where it needs to be, but that it stays true to plan. This process is to make sure that buildings are safe and there are no areas for concern.

Inspectors and Certifiers have similar responsibilities in that they inspect structures during construction and on completion of a project to make sure it complies with regulation, is safe and fit for purpose and doesn’t have any areas of concern. Estimators forecast the likely costs of a project, and they usually set this out in phases so they can break costs down to be as accurate as possible. Quantity Surveyors and Estimators read and interpret documents like plans and blueprints, drawing and specifications to estimate the value of the construction cost.

Surveyors, Estimators, Building Inspectors and Certifiers can be university educated, but some of them (depending on the role) can also use the vocational system to obtain their qualification, or at least start off.

If you have a great eye for detail, you understand the importance of compliance and you like making sure things are done right, then maybe you should consider becoming a Surveyor, Inspector or Estimator!

SURVEYOR, INSPECTOR AND ESTIMATOR ROLES

Quantity Surveyor

What you need to know

A Quantity Surveyor will use different technologies to manage the costs of a construction project.

Quantity Surveyors are responsible for studying architectural designs to measure and quantify the materials and labour that are required to construct all types of projects and calculate an estimated construction cost.

They are also responsible for regularly reviewing and managing the costs throughout construction from to project completion as well as providing post construction services. This includes helping with design change negotiations and any impactful changes to plans.

Quantity Surveyors can also utilise their core skills and experience to provide services such as carbon quantification and measurement, tax depreciation, replacement cost estimates, and dispute resolution.

Typical employers of Quantity Surveyors include quantity surveying firms, multi-disciplinary consultancies, contractors, developers, financiers, engineering firms, and government agencies.

Quantity Surveyors are in high demand globally. Do you have a keen eye for detail, love a varied work life and enjoy working with numbers and people? Maybe you should be a Quantity Surveyor!

Average income:
$132,938*

Training:
3-4 years

What should you be good at?

- Working with a team
- Problem solving
- Working with numbers
- Communicating
- Complying with rules and regulations
- Being organised
- Having a good eye for detail

What should you enjoy?

- Collaborating with people
- Working with numbers and financials
- Working with technology
- Providing detailed advice

Relevant qualifications

- Bachelor of Construction Management and Property (or similar)

What subjects are helpful to do at school?

- Maths
- Science
- Business studies
- English
- Design and technology

How a career pathway can look

Quantity Surveyors work across all aspects of building and construction – residential, commercial and civil infrastructure. They are vital when it comes to managing projects to ensure client needs are met, but not at the expense of the Builder or Developer.

Quantity Surveyors are typically university educated and need to be really good not only with construction processes, materials, costs inflation but also with negotiations and project planning.

They need to be good with maths and technology – they will use lots of different technologies in their work depending on the project.

Quantity Surveyors can work as employees for larger organisations or governments, but many also work as contractors who provide their services via a consultancy.

It is a good idea to do a cadetship with a quantity surveying firm or contractor firm whilst you are studying. Once you graduate, employment opportunities are excellent. It is worth noting that there are many job titles that also sit within the quantity surveying profession including Cost Estimator, Cost Planner, and Contract Administrator.

For more information on becoming a Quantity Surveyor, visit the website of **Australian Institute of Quantity Surveyors.**

**Please know that if they look a little lower than you expected, that's because they include everyone in those jobs! Full-time, part-time, apprentice, trainee, graduate, manager, early career or ready to retire, it doesn't matter! They're all included to come to an average and that's the number we have used.*

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Imandee Jayawardena

Assistant Quantity Surveyor
MBM

What is your job?
I am an Assistant Quantity Surveyor at MBM. Have you ever looked at towering skyscrapers or beautiful homes and wondered how they are built? And then, have you thought about how much these projects might cost? My job is to answer that second question. As a Quantity Surveyor, my primary goal is to save money for the client without negatively impacting any other stakeholders.

What do you do on an average day?
I've been in the industry for about a year, so my daily routine is similar to what you might experience as a cadet or an intern. On an average day, I start by coming to the office and assessing the resources needed for a project based on drawings and reports. Each resource has a price, and sometimes these prices can be challenging to determine. This is where the talent of a Quantity Surveyor shines. There are also hidden factors that can affect the cost of a project, and my job is to identify them.

Additionally, I review tenders, which are proposals submitted by contractors to win a job. A keen eye for detail and the ability to think outside the box are crucial in this role. Master these skills, and you'll be able to forecast the cost of a project in no time. As you progress in your career, you'll improve your ability to predict construction costs and even understand how factors like geopolitics, inflation, and the cost-of-living crisis can impact a project.

What do you like about your job?
I love the variety and challenges that come with being a Quantity Surveyor. No two projects are the same, and each one presents its own unique set of challenges. The satisfaction of solving a problem that makes a significant impact on a project is exhilarating. Additionally, I get to visit sites all across New South Wales, which adds an exciting dimension to my work.

Quantity Surveying is essentially where corporate meets construction, and I enjoy the blend of both worlds. I've been fortunate to work for a company that encourages me to reach my full potential. MBM nominated me for two awards at the 2024 National Association for Women in Construction (NAWIC) awards, and I became a finalist for both. Throughout your career, you will be supported by amazing people who provide invaluable insights and knowledge.

What was your career pathway to where you are now?
Truth be told, I was thrust onto the path of being a Quantity Surveyor, and it turned out to be the best thing that happened to me. I've always been a jack of all trades, but I come from a background that prefers careers like doctor, engineer, or lawyer. None of these quite fit me.

I began my journey by joining a defence university in Sri Lanka to study Quantity Surveying and later transferred to Western Sydney University and I am currently completing my degree. At both universities, I engaged in extracurricular activities that helped build my confidence, and I made sure to pay attention in class, despite its difficulties, as university provides the foundational knowledge needed for this career. I also kept up to date with the software used by Quantity Surveyors.

When I moved to Australia and started looking for internships, it was admittedly tough. I attended every networking and career event within my budget to learn about the work culture and industry nuances. With the confidence I gained, I walked into MBM's office, presented my case, and requested an internship.

What advice would you give to someone at school considering becoming a Quantity Surveyor?
Do you enjoy solving puzzles and find maths interesting, even if you don't excel at it? Are you ready to take on a challenge? If you answered yes, you might make an excellent Quantity Surveyor. You don't need to have a background in construction; a thirst for knowledge is what truly matters.

There are multiple pathways to becoming a Quantity Surveyor. I recommend aligning your career to become a Certified Quantity Surveyor via The Australian Institute of Quantity Surveyors (AIQS).

My advice is to start searching for internships after your first year and learn the art of networking. Once you graduate, you'll need three years of experience in the field to be eligible for the chartered process. Stay passionate about construction, and I promise you'll have an incredible experience.

SURVEYOR, INSPECTOR AND ESTIMATOR ROLES

Land Surveyor

What you need to know

A Land Surveyor will use different tools and technologies to determine position tracts of land, natural and constructed features, coastlines, marine floors and underground works.

Land Surveyors measure and map land to determine property boundaries, topography, and the location of natural or human-made features on a site. Land Surveyors work across all parts of the building and construction industry. They might be plotting out new highways or roads, bridges or tunnels, or new home developments or apartment blocks.

They use photogrammetric measurement systems, cadastral systems and land information systems to determine the best way to use the land for certain kinds of structures. In the residential space their role includes plotting out subdivisions and advising Architects and Engineers on mapping or spatial information.

They prepare land use plans and survey reports that are required for conveyancing and land ownership too. Land Surveyors work inside and outside, and you might have driven past them on the side of the road sometime plotting out a new route or making sure the current one is still fit for purpose.

Do you have a keen eye for detail, love a varied work life and enjoy working inside with technology, but also outside on site? Maybe you should be a Land Surveyor!

Average income:
$119,982*

Training:
3-4 years

What should you be good at?

- Working with a team
- Problem solving
- Have a great eye for detail
- Complying with rules and regulations
- Being organised

What should you enjoy?

- Working both indoors and outdoors
- Working with technology
- Providing detailed advice
- Maths, especially calculus

Relevant qualifications

- Diploma of Surveying (CPP50121)
- Advanced Diploma of Building Surveying (CPP60121)
- Bachelor of Surveying

What subjects are helpful to do at school?

- Maths (calculus)
- Science (physics)
- Business studies
- Industrial design
- English
- Design and technology

How a career pathway can look

Land Surveyors can choose to specialise in certain surveying work, like mapping residential boundaries, or undertaking topographical surveys, determining construction layouts or conducting geodetic surveys. Some Land Surveyors might do all of the above!

They are usually university educated, although there are vocational pathways too. It really depends on the kind of work they want to do.

They need to be good with maths and technology – they will use lots of different technologies in their work depending on the project. Land Surveyors need an excellent understanding of land use and property law and must have really good attention to detail.

Land Surveyors will work as employees for larger organisations, but they can also work as contractors who provide their services via a consultancy.

Land Surveyors need to be accredited.

For more information on becoming a Land Surveyor and accreditation requirements, visit the **website of Surveyors Australia.**

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Peta Cox

Land Surveyor

Want to follow Peta's story?
Check it out here

What is your job?

My job as a surveyor, is to measure and map the land. This includes navigating and determining the flow of the land, defining boundaries for properties, which means showing exactly where one piece of land ends, and another begins which is important for things like building new homes, roads, or even entire neighbourhoods. As a surveyor, I get to work on a variety of projects, from construction sites and city planning to environmental projects, mapping sea floors, riverbeds, and mining and so much more.

Getting to use cool tech like Robotic Total Stations, GNSS (GPS), drones, and laser scanners, part of my job is to ensure everything is in the right place, and structures are built safely. My work is vital in making sure communities have accurate plans and supporting projects that shape the places we live, work, and play. Surveying is essential for making the plans and designs that turn ideas into real, working structures and spaces.

What do you do on an average day?

On an average day, a surveyor might be outdoors using very innovative and high-tech equipment like GNSS equipment, flying drones, or using a total station to gather or set out data. In the office, a land surveyor will process this information using software to create maps, plans or 3D models. This information is used to work with other professionals, such as engineers and architects, to interpret these results for the project at hand.

We are the first people on a job site or project, we work with all contractors throughout the project and are usually the last to leave, ensuring the job has completed as per the plans and is suitable to be sold, lived in or driven on. A job will not go ahead without a surveyor.

What do you like about your job?

As a surveyor, we get to enjoy the best of many worlds. Water, land, underground, infrastructure, environmental and communities, using technical expertise and precision with a mix of outdoor exploration and office calculation, drafting and management. Every project is different, and it's rewarding to see one's efforts become the foundation of a building, road, or new community.

Surveyors also enjoy the blend of technology and problem-solving that comes with working in surveying. It's not just about measurements; it's about understanding how land is shaped, used, and valued.

Working with a team of professionals also makes each project a learning experience, which keeps things interesting.

What was your career pathway to where you are now?

My career began in the vocational sector completing an Associate Diploma in Engineering Surveying. This provided the foundation to work in various areas and sectors and environments over the past 30 years. To become a surveyor, there are a few study options. You can apply to go straight to university for a bachelor's degree of 3 or 4 years. There are various Universities across Australia to choose from. With a degree you can then become a Registered or Licensed Surveyor, they are responsible for Boundary definition and signing plans creating titles for ownership of land.

Others choose to be Technical/Engineering Surveyors and do a Certificate IV in Surveying and Spatial Information followed by a Diploma of Surveying. I manage the educational training for Industry Training Alliance RTO, where we deliver work-based programs online that are available anywhere in Australia. Other options are traditional TAFE courses available in some states.

The best thing about the surveying pathway is that you can work while you study. There's a huge need for surveyors everywhere and Surveying Careers can help people find work and study option best suited to them.

What advice would you give to someone at school considering becoming a Land Surveyor?

For a student considering surveying, this career path is suited for someone who will enjoy using technology and being a part of a dynamic and constantly evolving profession. They're interested in sports, computers, gaming, maps, geography and mathematics and are comfortable with problem solving and measurements, and keen on both indoor and outdoor work.

Surveying blends fieldwork with data analysis, making it perfect for someone who likes spending time outdoors but also enjoys creating plans, maps, and 3D models. They're detail-oriented, have strong problem-solving skills, and don't mind working with advanced tools like GNSS, Lidar, Scanning, drones, and geospatial software.

Additionally, teamwork and communication are key, as surveyors often work closely with engineers, architects, and planners. This variety makes surveying a rewarding, hands-on career choice. As a surveyor, you have the option of finding your niche area, be it construction, land, mining, water or aerial surveying and it can take you adventuring across the world. It's not a job; it's a lifetime career.

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SURVEYOR, INSPECTOR AND ESTIMATOR ROLES

Building Surveyor

What you need to know

A Building Surveyor will use different tools and technologies to ensure buildings comply with the Building Act, Building Regulations, National Construction Code, Australian Standards and other legal requirements.

Building Surveyors work across the residential and commercial building industry. They regularly inspect buildings throughout different stages of the project to ensure they are meeting the necessary minimum construction standard requirements. They review plans and work with Architects, Builders, Engineers and other industry experts to ensure the building is correct and safe.

Building Surveyors are responsible for ensuring works completed on site are compliant with both building permit documentation and construction standards. This means they have to be good communicators, but they have to have an excellent and in-depth knowledge of the National Construction Code, the Australian Standards and all other relevant laws and regulations.

They need to have a keen eye for detail and be good at communicating when issues arise. They are part of the project for its entire duration, and it is their responsibility to make sure the building is safe, compliant and energy efficient.

Average income:
$66,119*

Training:
4 years

What should you be good at?

- Working with a team
- Problem solving
- Have a great eye for detail
- Complying with rules and regulations
- Being organised

What should you enjoy?

- Working both indoors and outdoors
- Working with technology
- Providing detailed advice
- Maths, especially calculus and trigonometry

Relevant qualifications

- Certificate IV in Surveying and Spatial Information Services (CPP41721)
- Diploma of Surveying (CPP50121)
- Advanced Diploma of Surveying (CPP60121)
- Bachelor of Surveying
- Bachelor of Building Surveying and Certification

What subjects are helpful to do at school?

- Maths (calculus)
- Science (physics)
- Business studies
- Industrial design
- English
- Legal Studies
- Design and technology

How a career pathway can look

Building Surveyors work closely with Builders, Engineers, Architects and tradespeople. They are on-site regularly so they get a good mix of working in an office and outdoors. They need to be good with maths and technology – they use lots of different technologies in their work depending on the project. Building Surveyors also need an excellent understanding of land use and property law and must have really good attention to detail.

Some Building Surveyors might start their studies in the vocational system and then move to university and some may even go on to undertake further postgraduate study. The level of qualification required depends on the type of work they do. Most of them are university-qualified though.

Building Surveyors work as employees for organisations, but they can also work as contractors who provide their services via a consultancy.

Building Surveyors need to be registered in the state and territory they work in.

Building Surveyors generally need to be a member of a local professional body and can elect to become Chartered Building Control Surveyors through the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors. This is an internationally recognised accreditation and can help you travel the world and work.

For more information on becoming a Building Surveyor and accreditation requirements, visit the website of the **Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors here.**

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SURVEYOR, INSPECTOR AND ESTIMATOR ROLES

Building Inspector

What you need to know

A Building Inspector uses different tools and technologies to ensure buildings comply with building permit documentation, National Construction Code, Australian Standards and other legal requirements.

Building Inspectors make sure that buildings comply with national and state/territory building standards, regulations, and safety codes. This includes the National Construction Code and Australian Standards, but also state/territory legislation and even local government requirements.

For this reason, Inspectors need to be really savvy when it comes to understanding and applying regulation. They should also be good at communicating with Builders, Project Managers and tradespeople when something might not be up to standard.

Building Inspectors inspect building and construction work at various stages of the project. They assess building plans and issue certificates of compliance when they are satisfied the project is complete to the required standard.

They need to have a keen eye for detail, especially when it comes to implementing plans and keeping them to standard, and be good at troubleshooting when issues arise.

Do you have a keen eye for detail, love a varied work life and enjoy working with trades? Maybe you should be a Building Inspector!

Average income:
$106,635*

Training:
2 years

What should you be good at?

- Working with a team
- Problem solving
- Have a great eye for detail
- Complying with rules and regulations
- Being organised

What should you enjoy?

- Working both indoors and outdoors
- Working with technology
- Providing detailed advice
- Maths, especially calculus

Relevant qualifications

- Diploma of Building and Construction (CPC50220)
- Advanced Diploma of Surveying (CPP60121)
- Bachelor of Surveying

What subjects are helpful to do at school?

- Maths (calculus)
- Science (physics)
- Business studies
- Industrial design
- English
- Design and technology

How a career pathway can look

Building Inspectors work closely with Builders, Engineers, Architects and tradespeople. They will be on-site regularly so they get a good mix of working in an office and outdoors.

They need to be good with maths and technology – they will use lots of different technologies in their work depending on the project. Building Inspectors need an excellent understanding of all the regulation that construction projects must adhere to. So they need to be able to understand and apply laws, rules and regulations across a varied scope of building work.

Some Building Inspectors might start their studies in the vocational system and then move to university and some may even go on to undertake further postgraduate study.

All of them need to undertake a course to become certified and obtain the right qualification, for example this one offered by the **University of Technology, Sydney.**

They also need to be fully registered in the state/territory in which they work to undertake inspections of new builds.

Building Inspectors mostly work as employees for organisations or governments. It's not often that they work as sole traders or consultants.

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Carly Haynes

Building Surveyor/Building Inspector/Business Owner

Cacteye Building Consultants

What is a building surveyor or a building inspector?

As a private building surveyor and inspector, I issue building permits, conduct inspections and issue occupancy permits associated with building and construction works.

What do you do on an average day?

Drink a lot of coffee! But I also answer emails, make calls, attend a few different job sites for inspections and assess projects for compliance with the Building Act in Victoria and the National Construction Code.

I'm in and out of the office quite a bit – it's probably about 50/50 – and I go to lots of different sites for different scopes of work.

What do you like about your job?

It's very diverse and no two days look the same. I get to have an impact on making sure that the works that are delivered are compliant and have the best possible outcomes for the consumer and the greater community. Plus I get to see some really cool tech and architectural design solutions along the way.

What was your career pathway to where you are now?

After Year 12 I took a gap year and worked in a few different jobs. I needed a break from formal study to decide what kind of career I wanted to pursue.

I returned to study the next year and completed a Diploma of Interior Design at TAFE over two years. From there I realised that wasn't what I wanted to do so I took another year off and travelled around the UK and Europe in a camper van!

When I came back to Australia I was about 21 and went back to study a Diploma of Building Surveying for a year at TAFE in Geelong. I wanted to go into surveying because it was more black and white and logical than Interior Design so I felt it would likely suit me better.

I'd also previously heard through the TAFE that there was a huge demand for Building Surveyors in the industry so I knew it would bring me a lot of job security.

While I was studying, I volunteered at the Wyndam City Council in their building department to get some experience and once I graduated I got a job with a private surveying company in Melbourne. I worked there for about two and a half years, while I completed my Advanced Diploma of Building Surveying. I did this full-time through night classes and flexible work scheduling. It was a lot of work and quite full on (it took lots of brain power!) but because I really enjoy the work it was definitely worth the effort.

Whilst working in Melbourne I obtained my registration as a Building Inspector which meant I could inspect buildings independently and broadened my career options further.

Then my husband and I began to build our own home and I started a new role with Master Builders Building Services in Geelong. I worked there for about two years and obtained my Building Surveyors registration. This meant I could certify buildings on my own so I decided to start my business as a private building surveyor!

I started Cacteye Building Consultants in 2018 working on my own at the dining room table. I was mostly consulting to other businesses but when it was time to grow I hired an administration officer who helped me with the administrative and reporting parts of the business. Then not long after that my husband – who was running his own carpentry business and was ready for a career change – came on board to work in the business too!

We have since grown again with the addition of a second administration officer and an Assistant Building Surveyor (who is also a registered Building Inspector).
So now it's a team of five!

What advice would you give to someone at school considering becoming a Building Surveyor or a Building Inspector?

Absorb as much information and advice that is given to you as possible!

You will need to be patient with the learning process because there is a lot of reading and understanding legislation that is involved.

If you can do these things then you'll find yourself with an incredibly rewarding career.

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What advice would you give to a parent/ guardian whose daughter is considering a career in building and construction?

Right now, about five percent of Building Surveyors are women and they are some of the most talented and proficient Building Surveyors I know. Women have a different level of attention to detail so their skillset is highly valued in the industry.

Help your daughter pick the right mentor who will support her through the journey and remind her of her worth and ability.

Don't be afraid. The industry has evolved so much. In my ten years in construction I have only ever had two occasions where my gender or age was considered an issue by a client. My bosses and mentors, both times, cut ties with those clients which was an amazingly invaluable way to prove to me my worth and that my skills were valued.

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SURVEYOR, INSPECTOR AND ESTIMATOR ROLES

Plumbing Inspector

What you need to know

A Plumbing Inspector will use different tools and technologies to ensure plumbing work complies with regulations, standards and other legal requirements.

Plumbing Inspectors make sure that plumbing work across all kinds of projects is compliant with national and state/territory building standards, regulations, and safety codes. This includes the National Construction Code and Australian Standards, but also state/territory legislation and even local government requirements.

Plumbing Inspectors are almost always Plumbers.

For this reason, Plumbing Inspectors need to be really savvy when it comes to understanding and applying regulation. And also communicating with Plumbers, Builders, Project Managers and other tradespeople when something might not be up to standard and needs to be reworked.

Plumbing Inspectors inspect plumbing work at various stages of the project. They assess plans and issue certificates of compliance when they are satisfied the project is complete to the required standard.

They need to have a keen eye for detail, especially when it comes to implementing plans and keeping them to standard and be good at troubleshooting when issues arise.

Are you a Plumber with have a keen eye for detail, who loves a varied work life and enjoys applying rules and regulations? Maybe you should be a Plumbing Inspector!

Average income:
$88,412*

Training:
4-5 years

What should you be good at?

- Working with a team
- Problem solving
- Have a great eye for detail
- Complying with rules and regulations
- Being organised
- Plumbing!

What should you enjoy?

- Working both indoors and outdoors
- Working with technology
- Providing detailed advice
- Maths, especially calculus

Relevant qualifications

- Certificate IV in Plumbing and Services (CPC40920)

What subjects are helpful to do at school?

- Maths (calculus)
- Science (physics)
- Business studies
- Industrial design
- English
- Design and technology

How a career pathway can look

Plumbing Inspectors are qualified Plumbers who have an excellent understanding of all the regulation that plumbing work must adhere to. So, they need to be able to understand and apply laws, rules and regulations across different projects both in the commercial and residential space.

Plumbing Inspectors work closely with Plumbers, Builders, Project Managers and tradespeople. They will be on-site regularly, checking plumbing work, so they get a good mix of working in an office and outdoors.

This role suits someone who is already a Plumber but who might be looking to get off the tools, or who is really talented when it comes to applying regulatory requirements. It's a great career pathway for Plumbers as they get more experience and gain more seniority.

But it can be tough work in the event that something is not done correctly. Plumbing Inspectors are the ones who have to make sure the tradespeople know where they went wrong and what needs to be amended.

Plumbing Inspectors need to be accredited by each state/territory in which they work. They work as employees for larger organisations or governments, but can also work as contractors who provide their services via a consultancy.

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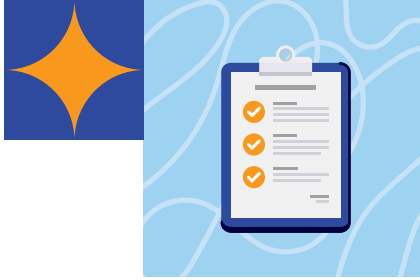
SURVEYOR, INSPECTOR AND ESTIMATOR ROLES

Construction Estimator



What you need to know

A Construction Estimator will prepare estimates and cost plans for construction projects from the tender stage all the way through to settlement.

Construction Estimators assist Quantity Surveyors, Engineers, Architects and Project Managers to forecast the likely costs of a project, and they usually set this out in phases so they can break costs down to be as accurate as possible. Construction Estimators are important when it comes to tendering for business, to ensure the tendering organisation or builder can bid for the right cost amount.

Construction Estimators will read and interpret documents like plans and blueprints, drawings and specifications to estimate the value of the total construction cost.

They will study all of the relevant documents and inputs to the project and then they will estimate the costs. In doing this, they prepare detailed plans and estimates as tools to help with project planning and budgetary control.

Construction Estimators usually go through the vocational education and training system to obtain their Diploma or Advanced Diploma. They might have a background as a tradesperson or Building Associate or Project Manager for example, but this is not mandatory.

Do you have a keen eye for detail, love a varied work life and enjoy working with numbers and people? Maybe you should be a Construction Estimator!

Average income:
$95,826*

Training:
3-4 years

What should you be good at?

- Working with a team
- Problem solving
- Working with numbers
- Complying with rules and regulations
- Being organised

What should you enjoy?

- Working both indoors and outdoors
- Working with technology
- Providing detailed advice
- Maths, especially calculus

Relevant qualifications

- Certificate IV in Building Project Support (CPC40320)
- Diploma of Building and Construction (Management) (CPC50320)
- Advanced Diploma of Building and Construction Management (CPC60220)

What subjects are helpful to do at school?

- Maths (calculus)
- Science (physics)
- Business studies
- Industrial design
- English
- Design and technology

How a career pathway can look

Construction Estimators work across mostly the commercial and residential building spaces. They are vital when it comes to managing projects to ensure client needs are met, but not at the expense of the Builder.

With building costs at an all-time high, Construction Estimators are vital when it comes to making sure that everyone is getting a fair deal. They make sure that tenders for construction projects like new apartment builds, or hospitals or infrastructure are properly costed so businesses can tender for them.

Construction Estimators are vocationally educated, but they can go on to study at university, especially if they seek to become Quantity Surveyors down the track. They need to be really good not only with construction processes, materials, costs inflation but also with negotiations and project planning. They also need to be able to use complex estimating and financial software, as well as being able to interpret building plans and understand materials costs.

Construction Estimators can work as employees for larger organisations or governments, but many also work as contractors who provide their services via a consultancy.

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Mitch Gresham

Senior Estimator/Project Optimisation Manager

H M Mullane and Sons

Want to check out what the Mullane team is up to? Follow them here

What is your job and what do you do on an average day?

My core role at HL Mullane is as estimator, however, I am also involved in project management, project optimisation, and business improvement.

On an average day, I spend my time analysing and costing potential future projects, compiling tender submissions, and negotiating contracts. I am also utilised by the wider Mullane team for assistance in high level planning, risk management, and value engineering of current projects.

What do you like about your job?

The favourite part of my role is the project optimisation aspect, in which I work alongside other members of our team, combining our knowledge and expertise to achieve the best possible outcomes for HL Mullane and our clients.

What was your career pathway to where you are now?
I started working at HL Mullane in 2006, starting as a labourer, and then moving into an apprenticeship. I completed my apprenticeship with HL Mullane in 2010, then spent the next few years working as a tradesman on small and large construction projects, civil projects, and maintenance. Over the years I naturally gravitated towards larger, more complex projects, where I progressed to a supervisory role on sites, and then into project management in 2017. For the next 6 years, I continued in my role as a project manager, before moving into my current role in 2023. I consider myself to be extremely fortunate to have chosen HL Mullane for an employer, as they have supported me greatly, and continue to allow me to grow in my career. I am excited about what the future may hold.

What advice would you give to someone at school considering becoming a Plumbing Project Estimator?

Becoming a plumber after you finish school will provide you with very valuable skills that will benefit you long into the future. Getting a trade offers many opportunities, whether it be progressing to higher roles within the construction industry, owning your own business, or even simply finding a stable workplace to continue to operate within your trade. In my experience, if you work hard, be reliable, open your mind to new learnings or opportunities, and build strong relationships along the way, potential pathways for your future will continue to present themselves.

What advice would you give to a parent/guardian whose daughter is considering a career in building and construction?

The construction industry offers a wider range of career paths than most people initially consider, from hands on trades, to project management, estimating, design, and engineering, just to name a few. It's an exciting and ever evolving field for the next generation of professionals.

For those starting out, work experience and apprenticeships are great ways to gain hands-on knowledge and build a network in the industry. There are also many construction-related courses available, through which they can gain a higher understanding of the industry.

Encouraging your children to explore these avenues and seek guidance from professionals will help them gain insight into the opportunities available and make informed career choices.

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Administration Roles

Around a third of the building and construction industry is made up of people in professional and administrative roles. These positions are vital because they keep businesses running and take care of the back-end work while tradespeople are out on site.

Administration roles include Contract Administrators, Accounts Clerks, Office Managers, Cost Clerks, Bookkeepers and Secretaries.

The people who work in administrative roles might be university educated, or have a vocational qualification under their belt. But for some of these jobs you don't need to go on to do further study after school – you can learn on the job!

Working in business administration is a great way to be a part of the building and construction industry – which after all, is a multi-billion dollar industry – and pick up great experience along the way

If you like the building and construction industry, you're organised and process-driven, then maybe you'd like to consider an Administrative Role – read on!

Mia Buckley

Administration Assistant
M+J Builders

Want to keep in touch with M+J Builders? Check them out here

What is your job?
I work in administration at M+J Builders, a family-owned and an Indigenous-owned company in the Northern Territory. As an Indigenous woman in construction, I'm proud to contribute to a company that values community and hard work. I am also enrolled at the University of South Australia, about to start my Bachelor of Construction Management online. I am preparing to go into the insurance sector of the business which is going to allow me to learn more of the project side of M+J, not only that, but it will allow me to grow in a space that is highly important within M+J Builders.

What do you do on an average day?
On an average day, I manage our company's social media, ensuring we stay connected with our community and showcase our projects. I also handle administrative tasks that keep our operations running smoothly - which can include updating documentation for our subcontractors. As I transition into the insurance sector, my day-to-day will start to include more project-focused tasks, giving me new perspectives and challenges.

What do you like about your job?
I love the combination of creativity, learning, and connection that my job offers. Managing social media allows me to share our company's story, while working in administration helps me understand the foundation of the business. I am also able to reach out to any aspect, it leaves room for me to go into any sector of the company, I could go into marketing, contracts administrator, finance, carpentry. It gives new possibilities everywhere I look.

What was your career pathway to where you are now?
I never knew where I would end up- I was never a fan of school, I went from the good old Maccas, to hairdressing, and now here, but it was one of the best decisions I could have made for myself- I found a role where I love coming to work and that I am passionate about. This is just a reminder that everything happens for a reason, and you should just work towards what you're passionate about, no matter the lengths you need to go to.

What advice would you give to someone at school considering a career in your occupation?
Start where you are and don't worry if you don't have everything planned out.

It is also okay to not know what you want to do; trust me you don't need to have a future planned at 15 years old or any age. Something my mum and dad always told me is "as long as you try your hardest".

Working in administration is a great entry point that teaches you the inner workings of a business, and managing social media adds an important layer of communication skills.

Especially for young Indigenous people, it's important to know that your perspective and voice matter in this industry. Be open to exploring different areas, stay curious, and know that every skill you gain builds toward a stronger future.

What advice would you give to someone whose daughter is considering a career in building and construction?
Support her interest wholeheartedly and show her that there's a place for her in this industry.

Building and construction is vast and full of opportunities for growth. As an Indigenous woman, I can say it's an industry where hard work, learning, and community make a big difference.

Let her know that starting in one role doesn't mean she's limited to it – every experience adds to her knowledge and opens doors to new paths. With encouragement, confidence, and a willingness to explore, she can shape her own unique path in the field.

ADMINISTRATION ROLES

Contract Administrator

What you need to know

A Contract Administrator will prepare, interpret, maintain, review and negotiate a contract or a variation to a contract on behalf of a party to that contract (like an organisation, a client or a Builder).

Contract Administrators review, develop and negotiate contracts for building work and projects. They work in the residential, civil and commercial spaces and are needed across all kinds of different projects. For example they might work on a residential home build, or on a large-scale office block or an industrial area build.

Contract Administrators need to have a good understanding of contract law and business, as well as being great negotiators with a keen eye for detail.

Contract Administrators need to be prepared to deal with contractual issues if they arise and ensure that the contracts they prepare appropriately weigh up risks for the party they represent (as well as having favourable terms). This is a primarily office-based role for someone who is organised, detail-oriented and interested in all aspects of building and construction projects.

Do you like the idea of an office-based job working with and for building and construction companies to create and maintain contracts for projects large and small? Time to become a Contract Administrator then!

Average income:
$94,416*

Training:
2 years

What should you be good at?

- Working with a team
- Problem solving
- Negotiating
- Understanding the law
- Being organised

What should you enjoy?

- Providing detailed advice
- The law and the way contracts work
- Working with people

Relevant qualifications

- Certificate III in Business Administration (BSB30120)
- Certificate IV in Building Project Support (CPC40320)
- Advanced Diploma of Business (BSB60120)

What subjects are helpful to do at school?

- Business studies
- English
- Maths
- Legal studies

How a career pathway can look

Contract Administrators are a vital part of the business and professional support space in building and construction. They help parties reach agreements and they make sure things are running smoothly as projects progress. They also step in to troubleshoot and mediate if things go wrong, or if there are differences of opinion.

Contract Administrators can work in smaller organisations, or for themselves, helping builders and clients reach agreement. Or they could be working on large government procurements, or for big businesses that are undertaking huge infrastructure projects. It really depends what sort of work you enjoy!

**Please know that if they look a little lower than you expected, that's because they include everyone in those jobs! Full-time, part-time, apprentice, trainee, graduate, manager, early career or ready to retire, it doesn't matter! They're all included to come to an average and that's the number we have used.*

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Pia Pontil

Contracts Administration Cadet

M+J Builders

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What do you do on an average day?

A typical day in contracts administration can vary significantly depending on how each project I'm involved with is going. Daily tasks can include sending purchase orders, managing invoices, following up with subcontractors, and drafting subcontract agreements. It can also include compiling documents for both building and occupancy permits, and sending variations, progress claims, photo schedules and reports to clients to ensure they remain informed. Each day can be very different.

What do you like about your job?

I love many aspects of my job! I enjoy the administrative tasks involved and the challenges these tasks can present. I always enjoy visits to site, interactions with sub-contractors and clients, and being involved in all the project side of things. The best aspect is being a part of a project's completion, it's always a rewarding feeling to see all the elements come together successfully.

What was your career pathway to where you are now?

I began my career in contracts administration in March of this year!

Before this I was in real estate where I began in leasing and then ended up selling houses. It was a big jump coming across from selling a finished result to now being involved in the building process however, the growth in this role in just eight months is pretty remarkable to me.

Working with M+J has provided so many opportunities that have been amazing for my experience, knowledge, and development in this position. I am also studying a Bachelor of Construction Management, which has been great for expanding my understanding of the construction industry and advancing myself in this career.

What advice would you give to someone at school considering a career in Contract Management?

I would definitely encourage looking into the construction industry, as it has many diverse career pathways to explore.

My advice would be to identify aspects of life that you are passionate about and then explore career paths that align with those interests. Personally, I've always enjoyed administration tasks, I love interacting and engaging with others, and the feeling of accomplishment when completing a complex task. These are all aspects of my career which allows me to love what I do. Finding an occupation that links to aspects of your life you have a passion for is always the best way to go.

What advice would you give to someone whose daughter is considering a career in building and construction?

I would say to support them all the way, if they can find aspects in the construction industry that spark passion for them. The industry can sometimes be tough, but it provides so much opportunity and growth. It's a great career for character development as a young woman too, I believe the construction industry is awesome to be a part of.

ADMINISTRATION ROLES

Financial Administration

What you need to know

An Accounts Clerk monitors credits and debits to keep track of money going in and going out of a business.

A Bookkeeper manages financial records and transactions to prepare tax entitlements and submit Business Activity Statements (BAS).

A Cost Clerk will calculate operating expenses like wages and overheads to keep a business on track, including through a profit and loss statement.

Financial Administration roles keep a keen eye on the financial health of a construction business. Some of these roles, like Bookkeepers will contract to businesses, while others will be employed to work with other financial services employees like Accountants and Chief Financial Officers, depending on the size and makeup of the business.

Accounts Clerks need to manage credits and debits to make sure there is always enough cash flow to keep the organisation and its projects running.

Bookkeepers are more focussed on regulatory requirements like getting taxes right, paying worker entitlements and managing salaries.

Cost Clerks will keep an eye on business expenses to make sure everything is paid on time and there is enough money in the kitty to ensure the business remains profitable.

Average income:

$69,805*
for an Accounts Clerk

$77,669*
for a Bookkeeper

$73,606*
for a Payroll Clerk

Training: takes up to 3 years depending on the role and qualification

For all these roles you would need to be good with numbers and finances and have an understanding of business management.

Do you like the idea of an office-based job working with and for building and construction companies to manage and oversee finances? Let's look into Financial Administration roles then!

What should you be good at?

- Working with a team
- Problem solving
- Financial management
- Being organised

What should you enjoy?

- Providing detailed advice
- Numbers
- Working with people

Relevant qualifications

- Certificate III in Business Administration (BSB30120)
- Certificate III in Accounts Administration (FNS30322)
- Certificate IV in Accounting and Bookkeeping (FNS40222)
- Advanced Diploma of Accounting (FNS 60222)
- Bachelor of Accounting (for certain Bookkeeping roles)
- Traineeship

What subjects are helpful to do at school?

- Business studies
- Legal studies
- English
- Maths

How a career pathway can look

Financial Administration roles keep the wheels of the building and construction industry turning. Especially the 97 per cent of the industry that is made up of small businesses.

For so many tradespeople who are working as sole traders or running small businesses, the support they get from Bookkeepers, Accounts Clerks and Cost Clerks is invaluable and it's what gives them more time out on site on the tools to get their projects done.

Many Financial Administrators work as sole traders themselves and contract their services out to other businesses, usually a few at a time. That said, there are also lots of roles within businesses (large and small) managing financial services, or working within bigger finance departments. It really depends on the kind of work you want to do and what sort of organisation you want to work with!

If you decided to pursue a university pathway further along in your career journey then your skills could lend themselves well to becoming an Accountant or Financial Manager.

**Please know that if they look a little lower than you expected, that's because they include everyone in those jobs! Full-time, part-time, apprentice, trainee, graduate, manager, early career or ready to retire, it doesn't matter! They're all included to come to an average and that's the number we have used.*

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Aayusha Poudel

Accounts Administrator
Level Plumbing and Electrical

Want to know more about the team at Level Plumbing? Check them out here

I work as an Accounts Administrator at Level Plumbing Canberra.

What do you do on an average day?
On a typical day, I handle various tasks related to financial transactions and records. This includes processing invoices, managing accounts payable and receivable, reconciling supplier statements, and ensuring all financial documentation is accurate and up-to-date. I also assist with report preparation to maintain smooth financial workflows.

What do you like about your job?
I enjoy the structure and detail-oriented nature of my role. It's rewarding to see everything balanced and organized, knowing that my work supports the financial health of the organisation. I also appreciate the opportunities to develop my skills in accounting and finance, which are valuable in a wide range of industries.

What was your career pathway to where you are now?
I began by studying accounting and later took on an entry-level role that gave me experience in financial administration. I am developing my skills in accounts management and financial systems. I am also working on my CPA program so that I can grow my career as a Management Accountant.

What advice would you give to someone at school considering becoming an Accounts Administrator?
I would advise focusing on building strong organisational and analytical skills. Familiarise yourself with accounting software and gain experience with basic financial tasks, like budgeting or bookkeeping.

Practical experience like internships, can be valuable, as it allows you to understand the day-to-day responsibilities and gain confidence in handling financial data.

What advice would you give to a parent/ guardian whose daughter is considering a career in building and construction?
While my role is in finance, I would encourage parents to support their daughter's interest in any career, including building and construction. There are numerous roles available within the industry, from project management to financial administration. Encourage her to explore and gain experience in various areas to find what she's passionate about and to pursue it with confidence.

ADMINISTRATION ROLES

Office Management

What you need to know

Office Managers organise the administration of an office – from managing administration staff to ordering materials and liaising with customers.

Office Management roles include Office Managers, Executive Assistants and Secretaries.

Office Managers oversee the running of the office. They organise staffing, resources and administrative systems. They might manage finance administration professionals and human resources processes like recruitment or payroll. They may also be involved in governance work depending on the structure of the organisation.

Executive Assistants and Secretaries will manage diaries and events, work with clients, manage receptions and phone or email communications, and provide general administrative support to executive and other people within the organisation.

People in Office Management roles need to be highly organised, personable and good with technology. They need to be able to communicate clearly because in many cases they are the front line staff dealing with clients and potential clients.

Do you like the idea of an office-based job working with and for building and construction companies to run an office and provide administrative support? Maybe Office Management is for you!

Average income:

$72,146*
for an Office Manager

$45,235*
for an Administration Assistant

Training: takes 1 year, but formal qualifications are not mandatory

What should you be good at?

- Working with a team
- Problem solving
- Communicating
- Being organised

What should you enjoy?

- Working with people
- Using technology
- Planning events and meetings

Relevant qualifications

- Certificate III in Business Administration (BSB30120)

What subjects are helpful to do at school?

- Business studies
- Legal studies
- English
- Maths

How a career pathway can look

Office Management roles keep the wheels of the building and construction industry turning. They provide valuable support and keep businesses going, giving tradespeople more time to focus on the tools.

And let's face it, tradespeople aren't generally known for their love of paperwork, so they need their Office Management staff!

Office Management staff are highly organised and need to be good at working across lots of different projects at once, and with lots of different people.

If you decided to pursue a university pathway further along in your career journey then your skills could lend themselves well to studying business or business administration. As an Office Manager you will probably find you have the skills and understanding to run your own business one day too.

Office Management roles are also very transferable across different industries so you can take your skills with you anywhere!

**Please know that if they look a little lower than you expected, that's because they include everyone in those jobs! Full-time, part-time, apprentice, trainee, graduate, manager, early career or ready to retire, it doesn't matter! They're all included to come to an average and that's the number we have used.*

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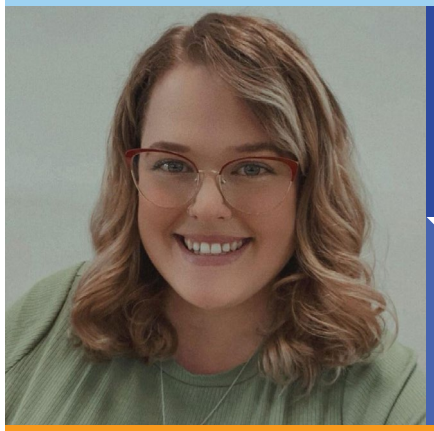
Laura Monroe

Human Resources Manager and Office Manager

Cord Civil



Want to know more about the team at Cord Civil? Check them out here

What is your job?

I am a Human Resources and Office Manager.

What do you do on an average day?

Sometimes there are certain tasks that have to be done on specific days (e.g. payroll is always processed on Wednesdays, job costs are done Thursdays) however if I'm not working on either of those, I'm typically answering phone calls, distributing mail or just being the 'Go To' person for a wide range of internal and external stakeholders.

What do you like about your job?

I love the variety it brings, and the fact that I get to liaise with a range of people on a daily basis.

No two days are really the same – one minute I could be pulling reports from different programs, entering data into spreadsheets or looking into training options for different employees, the next I could be on site checking in with coworkers, learning about what their goal is for the day and how they aim to achieve it.

After that I could be out stocking up on PPE/stationery/ office supplies, then heading into various meetings with internal and external stakeholders.

What was your career pathway to where you are now?

It's been a bit of an odd journey for me to be completely honest!

When I finished high school I completed a chef's apprenticeship, then decided that the hospitality industry wasn't for me and decided to complete a Certificate III in Business Administration.

A small construction company in Sydney hired me as their Administration Assistant and it was there that I was exposed to all areas of construction (Contracts Admin, Project Management, Interior Design, General Labouring) it was more like an 'all-rounder' kind of role.

I then moved to Canberra and worked as an Administration Officer for a smaller cleaning company and was exposed to some areas of Human Resources. I ended up really missing the different aspects of construction and the diversity it brings to each day, so I then commenced another role as an Office Manager for a larger construction company, I then transferred to a Human Resources Officer role within the same company, before finally coming to Cord Civil in a hybrid Human Resources and Office Manager role.

What advice would you give someone at school considering a career in your occupation?

You can teach an old dog new tricks!

If you have your heart set on a specific role now, and then 5-10 years down the line decide it's no longer the role for you, that's completely okay! I couldn't name one person who has stuck with the same role/profession they chose when they finished school. You are always capable of learning something new if you put in the work.


SO,
WHAT DO YOU THINK?
Are you ready to
CONSTRUCT YOUR CAREER WITH US?
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