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FOREWORD

Since our last report in July, the flow of economic news has been mostly bad. September ended with the RBA increasing its cash rate by another 25 basis points, the fourth rate rise since the start of the year. It means that borrowing costs are now at their highest in 15 years. Worryingly, interest rates in Australia are higher than those in nearly every other advanced economy.

The RBA had to put rates up because inflation in Australia is still too high. Headline inflation accelerated to 4.0 per cent during August 2026, the result of renewed pressure on petrol and diesel prices and the ending of electricity rebates. Underlying inflation, a truer gauge of the economy's core price pressures, clocked in at 3.6 per cent for the third consecutive month. Underlying inflation has been increasingly brazen during 2026, and its performance is what necessitated the RBA rate hikes. Even though events outside of Australia have directly contributed to worsening inflation, the relationship between demand and supply in our economy is also pivotal. When demand grows more quickly than our economy's supply capacity, price and cost pressures will mount. While there is little the RBA can do about events outside Australia, it can squeeze demand at home by hiking interest rates, something which will tend to dampen price pressures over time. That is the RBA's current strategy.

Over the year to August 2026, the cost of purchasing a new dwelling rose by 5.4 per cent while rents increased by 3.6 per cent over the same period. Housing costs remain a disproportionately large source of our economy's inflationary pressures. The big problem for Australia's home building industry is that established home prices are going down in almost every major market.

There is little scope for builders to reduce the cost of creating new homes. The further established home prices fall, the more difficult it gets to sell newly built homes. The current configuration of interest rates, costs, and home sales prices is depriving more and more new developments of the financial case needed for them to proceed.

Higher interest rates kill economic activity along with inflation. The number of jobs in the Australian economy continues to grow, but more slowly than before while the unemployment rate hit a 5-year high during August. New home building approvals have recovered strongly since early 2024, but they too have started to falter. New home building approvals declined by 6.1 per cent during August 2026, making it the weakest month since January 2026. During August, higher density building approvals plunged by 19.7 per cent. There was still some good news, with detached house building approvals scoring their best monthly total in five years. Other data published during September suggests that our struggles aren't confined to residential building; there was a 4.7 per cent drop in the volume of engineering construction work done during the June 2026 quarter. Work done for the private sector was hit particularly hard (-7.4 per cent). A 0.8 per cent dip during the June 2026 quarter meant that public sector-funded engineering construction work had its weakest quarter in almost three years.

Current pricing behaviour on financial markets suggests that up to two additional interest rate increases are possible by the middle of 2027. If this happens, conditions will become even tougher for the building and construction industry.

BUILDING FORECASTS SNAPSHOT – LATEST FORECAST SET

OVERVIEW

An updated set of forecasts for the building and construction industry was published by Master Builders Australia at the end of September 2026. Prospects for the industry had deteriorated since the previous set of forecasts were released in March 2026. Interest rates have risen by more than expected, and it is likely that further interest rate increases will occur. Geopolitical instability is depriving the market of confidence and contributing to higher fuel costs. The raft of unfavourable policy changes made in the May 2026 federal budget have thrown the housing market into disarray.

During 2025-26, $327.3 billion worth of construction work was carried out across Australia. This represented a 4.7 per cent gain on the previous year with much of the growth driven by residential building. Unfavourable changes in the geopolitical environment and in domestic policy settings mean that prospects for the years ahead have dimmed significantly since our last set of forecasts were published in March 2026. Our five-year forecast horizon is likely to see $1.57 trillion worth of construction work carried out. For the four-year horizon for which they overlap, the updated forecasts are 9.5 per cent weaker than the March 2026 collection.

Even though our updated forecasts represent a downgrade on the previous set, there are still downside risks to them. This is because the geopolitical situation remains unresolved and the danger of interest rates rising by more than expected is real.

TABLE 1

Forecast volume of all construction activity to 2030-31 (Millions of 2023-24 dollars, CVM) [September 2026 Forecast set]

	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31
AUS	**$327,340**	**$317,500**	**$313,138**	**$312,060**	**$311,705**	**$312,370**
NSW	$93,838	$90,772	$89,822	$90,112	$90,674	$91,257
VIC	$75,887	$70,635	$69,002	$68,400	$68,302	$68,379
QLD	$65,934	$61,970	$60,255	$59,814	$59,781	$59,858
SA	$21,661	$20,394	$20,051	$19,988	$20,025	$20,131
WA	$56,880	$58,646	$57,887	$57,521	$57,330	$57,323
TAS	$4,777	$6,271	$7,199	$7,243	$6,518	$6,227
NT	$3,798	$4,367	$4,489	$4,585	$4,702	$4,838
ACT	$4,564	$4,444	$4,433	$4,397	$4,373	$4,357

Source: Master Builders Australia-produced forecasts and analysis of ABS Building Activity (8752.0)

RESIDENTIAL BUILDING

New home building starts rose by 11.7 per cent to reach 202,000 during 2025-26. This was the strongest performance in four years. However, the worsening backdrop of higher interest rates and the policy measures unleashed in the May 2026 federal budget mean that new home building will probably fall rather than rise over the next few years. It means that Australia will suffer a 262,000-home shortfall relative to our National Housing Accord target. Over the five years to 2030-31, work is projected to begin on 919,192 new homes- about the same volume (-0.4 per cent) of building we got over the last five years.

TABLE 2

Comparison of Master Builders Australia Forecasts with National Housing Accord targets to June 2029 [September 2026 Forecast set]

	Master Builders forecast for total new home building starts (five years to June 2029)	National Housing Accord target	Projected over/ underperformance relative to Accord targets	Under/ overperformance as % of target (+/-)
AUS	**937,939**	**1,200,000**	**262,061**	**-21.8%**
NSW	243,191	375,730	132,539	-35.3%
VIC	270,990	306,940	35,950	-11.7%
QLD	204,128	245,980	41,852	-17.0%
SA	67,369	83,430	16,061	-19.3%
WA	118,365	129,700	11,335	-8.7%
TAS	11,777	25,810	14,033	-54.4%
NT	3,641	11,380	7,739	-68.0%
ACT	18,479	21,030	2,551	-12.1%

Source: Master Builders Australia-produced forecasts and analysis of ABS Building Activity (8752.0)

NON-RESIDENTIAL BUILDING

2025-26 was the strongest year on record for non-residential building in Australia. Activity expanded by 9.9 per cent to reach $69.9 billion. The rapid emergence of Data Centres as a major player in the non-residential building market has been one of the most intriguing recent developments.

Looking ahead, we anticipate that non-residential building activity will total $331.0 billion over the five years to 2030-31. This would represent 2.9 per cent more activity than we got over the last five years – but less than we expected in our March forecast set.

TABLE 3

Forecast volume of all non-residential building activity to 2030-31 (Millions of 2023-24 dollars, CVM) [September 2026 Forecast set]

	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31
AUS	**$69,887**	**$67,031**	**$66,129**	**$66,076**	**$65,985**	**$65,814**
NSW	$21,138	$20,194	$19,772	$19,850	$19,872	$19,834
VIC	$19,911	$18,593	$18,164	$18,175	$18,186	$18,135
QLD	$13,496	$12,913	$12,802	$12,948	$13,051	$13,111
SA	$4,582	$4,400	$4,320	$4,335	$4,337	$4,326
WA	$7,310	$7,141	$7,023	$7,060	$7,067	$7,051
TAS	$1,101	$1,532	$1,818	$1,465	$1,221	$1,105
NT	$1,048	$903	$895	$901	$906	$907
ACT	$1,301	$1,355	$1,334	$1,342	$1,346	$1,346

Source: Master Builders Australia-produced forecasts and analysis of ABS Building Activity (8752.0)

CIVIL CONSTRUCTION

Engineering construction activity is likely to have peaked at $148.9 billion during 2025-26. In recent years, transport construction had been the main driver of growth, but the baton has since been passed to utilities-related projects. The period to 2030-31 is projected to see $687.8 billion worth of engineering construction, slightly more activity (+1.4 per cent) than we got over the five years to 2025-26. Resources and utilities projects are predicted to be the strongest performers while transport and recreation work is anticipated to be weaker compared with recent years.

TABLE 4

Forecast volume of all engineering construction activity to 2030-31 (Millions of 2023-24 dollars, CVM) [September 2026 Forecast set]

	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31
AUS	**$148,863**	**$139,774**	**$137,480**	**$137,015**	**$136,595**	**$136,906**
NSW	$39,853	$36,772	$36,881	$37,536	$38,241	$38,869
VIC	$23,924	$20,799	$19,904	$19,307	$18,960	$18,796
QLD	$28,685	$24,308	$23,036	$22,681	$22,600	$22,558
SA	$10,660	$9,761	$9,550	$9,479	$9,495	$9,569
WA	$39,544	$40,591	$39,810	$39,258	$38,940	$38,818
TAS	$2,443	$3,408	$4,043	$4,426	$3,930	$3,738
NT	$2,249	$2,955	$3,092	$3,183	$3,290	$3,420
ACT	$1,503	$1,179	$1,163	$1,146	$1,138	$1,137

Source: Master Builders Australia-produced forecasts and analysis of ABS Building Activity (8752.0)



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PRICES AND COSTS

JUNE 2026 QUARTER

Price and cost pressures have worsened over the course of 2026. Had they not, the RBA would not have needed to hike interest rates four times since the start of the year. The latest burst of inflation has both domestic and international components. The Middle East crisis has forced the cost of fuel and other key commodities higher, something the RBA can do little about. But inflationary pressures are also being generated by the mismatch between demand in the Australian economy and our supply capacity. In raising interest rates, the blunt strategy of the RBA is to dampen demand growth and bring it closer into line with supply – thereby depriving inflation of a key catalyst.

Over the year to June 2026, the cost of home building materials rose by 3.8 per cent – the worst pace of increase in almost three years. Events in the Middle East have had major ramifications for building products inflation: the biggest cost deteriorations affected electrical equipment (+12.1 per cent), plumbing products (+5.6 per cent), cement products (+4.9 per cent) and non-steel metals (+4.9 per cent) over the year to June 2026. Steel was the only major category of material to get cheaper (-1.2 per cent) over this period.

Not surprisingly, the acceleration of building material costs and continued labour shortages have propelled the cost of final building and construction output higher. Over the year to June 2026, the cost of building and construction output rose by 4.9 per cent. However, there was a 5.9 per cent gain in the cost of a new house. Non-residential building output costs rose by 4.4 per cent while road and bridge construction was 5.8 per cent more expensive. Continued cost escalations mean that it is now 51.6 per cent more expensive to build a new house compared with just before the pandemic. However, some markets have suffered much worse deteriorations: in WA house building costs have more than doubled (+105.4 per cent) since 2019 while those in Tasmania are almost 75% more expensive.

TABLE 5

Cost of house building materials
(Year to June 2026 Quarter)

Capital City average	+3.8%
Sydney	+3.5%
Melbourne	+3.5%
Brisbane	+4.4%
Adelaide	+4.4%
Perth	+3.9%
Hobart	+3.4%
Darwin	na
Canberra	na

Source: Master Builders Australia analysis of ABS Producer Price Index, Australia (June 2026 quarter)

TABLE 6

Rental price changes by Capital city
(August 2026)

	During August 2026 quarter	Year to August 2026
Capital City average	+1.0%	+3.6%
Sydney	+0.9%	+3.5%
Melbourne	+0.8%	+2.5%
Brisbane	+1.3%	+4.7%
Adelaide	+1.1%	+4.1%
Perth	+1.5%	+5.3%
Hobart	+0.9%	+3.1%
Darwin	+2.0%	+6.3%
Canberra	+0.2%	+1.4%

Source: Master Builders Australia analysis of ABS Consumer Price Index, Australia (August 2026)

BUILDING APPROVALS – AUGUST 2026

New home building approvals had been recovering strongly since bottoming out in early 2024. However, the growing set of economic challenges means that building approvals have started to falter. During August 2026, there was a 6.1 per cent reduction in the number of new homes approved; approvals have declined in three of the last four months.

The trend in approvals has still been quite mixed in the different segments of the market. Higher density home building tends to be more sensitive to deteriorations in the economy environment: during August 2026, approvals in this part of the market plunged by 19.7 per cent.

In contrast, detached house building approvals have performed strongly up until now. August 2026 saw more new detached houses winning approval in any month since August 2021. However, it is difficult to see how approvals for detached houses will continue expanding in the current environment.

Even though the collective national picture for new home building approvals has got tougher, there is still considerable variation across the different states and territories. During August 2026, new home building approvals in South Australia soared by 24.0 per cent, the largest increase of any state or territory. For South Australia, August 2026 was the strongest month on record for new home building approvals. Victoria (+8.9 per cent) and Western Australia (+3.2 per cent) also saw improved home building approvals during August. However, other markets suffered reverses in new home building approvals during August, the largest of which was in the Northern Territory (-52.6 per cent), the ACT (-38.9 per cent) and Queensland (-22.5 per cent). New South Wales (-17.3 per cent) and Tasmania (-1.5 per cent) also saw reduced new home building approvals during August.

Since the National Housing Accord's term began in July 2024, about 428,600 new homes have received approval across Australia. However, keeping pace with the Housing Accord's target would have required 520,000 approvals over this period. It means that a 91,400 homebuilding deficit has accumulated over the Accord's term. Eliminating this deficit and building to Accord pace over its remaining term would require a 37.6 per cent increase in the volume of new home building approvals relative to what has happened since the Accord started.

TABLE 7

National Housing Accord: Comparison of targets with latest home building approvals data to August 2026 (not seasonally adjusted)

	AUS	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	NT	ACT
National Housing Accord: 5-year homebuilding target	**1,200,000**	**375,730**	**306,940**	**245,980**	**83,430**	**129,700**	**25,810**	**11,380**	**21,030**
Annual homebuilding requirement	240,000	75,146	61,388	49,196	16,686	25,940	5,162	2,276	4,206
Latest Master Builders Australia forecast for new home starts to June 2029 (September 2026 forecast round)	**937,939**	**243,191**	**270,990**	**204,128**	**67,369**	**118,365**	**11,777**	**3,641**	**18,479**
Comparison versus National Housing Accord Target (number of homes)	262,061	132,539	35,950	41,852	16,061	11,335	14,033	7,739	2,551
Comparison versus National Housing Accord Target (+/-%)	+21.8%	+35.3%	+11.7%	+17.0%	+19.3%	+8.7%	+54.4%	+68.0%	+12.1%
Total new home building approvals during Accord's term so far (sa, except NT and ACT)	**428,609**	**110,721**	**122,626**	**94,074**	**32,844**	**53,631**	**5,632**	**1,693**	**7,382**

Source: Master Builders Australia analysis of ABS Building Approvals, Australia (August 2026)

TABLE 7 continued

	AUS	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	NT	ACT
Number of approvals we should have got this far into the Accord	520,000	162,816	133,007	106,591	36,153	56,203	11,184	4,931	9,113
Accord backlog so far	-91,391	-52,095	-10,381	-12,517	-3,309	-2,572	-5,552	-3,238	-1,731
Future monthly new home approval flow needed to make Accord	22,688	7,794	5,421	4,468	1,488	2,237	593	285	401
Average monthly new home approvals since start of the Accord	16,485	4,259	4,716	3,618	1,263	2,063	217	65	284
Change in approval rate needed to reach the Accord	**+37.6%**	**+83.0%**	**+14.9%**	**+23.5%**	**+17.8%**	**+8.5%**	**+174.0%**	**+337.5%**	**+41.4%**

Source: Master Builders Australia analysis of ABS Building Approvals, Australia (August 2026)

TABLE 8
Non-residential building approvals (August 2026)

	AUS	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA
Number of non-residential building jobs approved in August 2026	**3,000**	847	911	578	193
Value of non-residential building jobs approved in August 2026 ($m)	**$6,408.5**	$2,215.5	$1,223.9	$1,574.2	$304.4
Average value of non-residential building jobs approved during August 2026	**$2,136,200**	$2,615,700	$1,343,400	$2,723,500	$1,577,100
Public sector share of total value (%)	**33.8%**	18.9%	16.2%	54.3%	53.4%
Number of non-residential building jobs approved in August 2026 by category:					
Retail & wholesale	**978**	336	287	154	51
Transport	**17**	4	4	3	2
Offices	**495**	144	152	96	31
Factories	**44**	9	10	12	3
Warehouses	**302**	74	100	62	20
Agri/acquaculture	**175**	44	67	24	23
Education	**166**	30	66	29	10
Religion	**21**	4	2	8	3
Aged care	**24**	6	7	10	0
Health	**97**	33	25	18	7
Entertainment	**166**	42	60	31	5
Accommodation	**134**	20	41	44	12
Other non-residential building projects	**381**	101	90	87	26

Source: Master Builders Australia analysis of ABS Building Approvals, Australia (August 2026)

TABLE 8 continued

	WA	TAS	NT	ACT
Number of non-residential building jobs approved in August 2026	346	69	40	16
Value of non-residential building jobs approved in August 2026 ($m)	$700.2	$254.0	$119.8	$16.6
Average value of non-residential building jobs approved during August 2026	$2,023,700	$3,680,600	$2,994,000	$1,040,600
Public sector share of total value (%)	41.9%	52.6%	85.4%	10.8%
Number of non-residential building jobs approved in August 2026 by category:				
Retail & wholesale	121	15	7	7
Transport	3	0	1	0
Offices	43	15	10	4
Factories	7	2	0	1
Warehouses	36	3	6	1
Agri/acquaculture	13	4	0	0
Education	22	2	5	2
Religion	3	0	1	0
Aged care	0	1	0	0
Health	9	5	0	0
Entertainment	22	3	2	1
Accommodation	12	4	1	0
Other non-residential building projects	55	15	7	0

Source: Master Builders Australia analysis of ABS Building Approvals, Australia (August 2026)

HOME LENDING – JUNE 2026 QUARTER

Since restrictions on Negative Gearing and Capital Gains Tax were imposed during the May 2026 budget, the housing market has been in a state of flux. Detailed lending data are published only on a quarterly basis with the latest set covering the June 2026 quarter. This is a time period which mixes both pre- and post-Budget time elements. The upcoming release of data for the September 2026 quarter should provide a better indication of how the federal budget has affected the different segments of the lending market.

Even so, some disruption to home lending can be detected in the June 2026 quarter figures. Predictably, housing investors seem to be fleeing the established housing market. Loans to investors for the purchase of existing homes sank by 14.8 per cent during the June 2026 quarter.

It's not all bad news though: the number of loans granted for new home construction was +4.5 per cent stronger during the quarter. Lending in this part of the market has increased by some 17.4 per cent over the past year. Interestingly, investor demand for home construction loans (+4.4 per cent) and new home purchase loans (+3.7 per cent) both strengthened during the quarter.

Over time, the tax changes in the federal budget may induce a switch in investor demand away from the established market – and towards the new home building market. It's just too early to say whether or not this is happening.

For new home builders, the biggest worry today is that the price of established homes is falling – a dynamic which places them at an increasingly large price disadvantage. We review home price developments in next section.

TABLE 9

Home lending data – June 2026 quarter (seasonally adjusted)

	AUS	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	NT	ACT
Total number of loans for construction of new home - June 2026 quarter	**18,443**	3,155	5,375	3,963	1,710	3,526	311	114	151
Change on same quarter of previous year (+/-%)	**+17.4%**	+19.0%	+15.5%	+15.7%	+19.7%	+14.2%	+117.5%	+20.0%	+24.8%
Total number of loans for new home purchase - June 2026 quarter	**6,887**	1,791	1,826	1,437	655	744	85	40	290
Change on same quarter of previous year (+/-%)	**+9.2%**	-0.1%	-4.7%	-4.5%	+28.7%	+44.2%	+26.9%	+60.0%	+32.4%
Total number of loans for purchase of existing dwellings - June 2026 quarter	**108,880**	30,699	29,290	24,160	6,930	11,853	2,401	1,016	2,531
Change on same quarter of previous year (+/-%)	**-3.0%**	-2.9%	-1.1%	-4.5%	-3.2%	-8.0%	+11.8%	-0.3%	+6.0%
Total number of residential land purchase loans - June 2026 quarter	**8,930**	2,204	2,609	2,168	821	1,575	251	73	86
Change on same quarter of previous year (+/-%)	**+2.3%**	-1.3%	-4.5%	+7.1%	+9.3%	+1.9%	+29.4%	+43.1%	+28.4%
Total number of loans for residential alterations, additions and repairs - June 2026 quarter	**11,517**	3,439	2,084	3,270	785	1,447	168	86	209
Change on same quarter of previous year (+/-%)	**+6.8%**	+3.6%	+7.0%	+8.2%	-0.8%	+14.2%	-14.3%	+62.3%	+19.4%
First Home Buyer share of owner occupier loans during June 2026 quarter (%)	**36.7%**	33.4%	38.9%	31.5%	33.3%	38.5%	37.2%	39.0%	42.9%

Source: Master Builders Australia analysis of ABS Lending Indicators (June 2026 quarter)

HOME PRICES – SEPTEMBER 2026

Established home prices continue to fall. According to Cotality, home prices dropped by another 1.1 per cent during September 2026 – the sixth consecutive month of decline. Since their peak earlier this year, home prices nationally have fallen by 5.2 per cent. Geographically, the drop in home prices is almost universal: all capital cities apart from Darwin saw a drop in home prices during September. Furthermore, Cotality estimates that almost every capital city suburb in Australia experienced a drop in home prices over the past three months.

Since their respective peaks, the cumulative home price decline in some markets has been considerable. Sydney prices are now 8.6 per cent lower than they were in February while both Perth (-6.0 per cent) and Brisbane (-5.4 per cent) prices have lost quite a bit of ground over recent months.

In other capital cities, the price pattern is quite different. Home prices in both Melbourne and Canberra peaked during the first half of 2022 and subsequently declined before partly recovering. The resumption of home price falls means that Melbourne home prices are 7.5 per cent lower than they were in March 2022 while those in Canberra are now 6.2 per cent lower than their peak of May 2022. Of the eight capital cities, Darwin prices have seen the shallowest fall so far and are just 0.2 per cent lower than their high point reached in July 2026.

TABLE 10

House price changes: Year to September 2026 (+/-%)

	All homes	Detached houses	Units
All Capital Cities	**-1.8%**	**-2.0%**	**-1.1%**
Sydney	-7.0%	-8.2%	-3.8%
Melbourne	-6.2%	-7.3%	-3.8%
Brisbane	+5.9%	+5.3%	+8.5%
Adelaide	+6.5%	+6.5%	+6.2%
Perth	+10.1%	+10.0%	+10.5%
Hobart	+7.0%	+7.0%	+6.7%
Darwin	+11.9%	+9.6%	+17.0%
Canberra	-1.6%	-1.5%	-2.0%

Source: Master Builders Australia analysis of Cotality Monthly Home Value Index (September 2026)

NEW HOME BUILDING PIPELINE – MARCH 2026 QUARTER

During the March 2026 quarter, new home building starts plunged by 11.2 per cent making it the weakest quarter for home commencements since mid-2025. The reduction was driven by higher density homes, which suffered a 19.8 per cent drop during the March 2026 quarter. There was a 3.6 per cent decline in the number of detached houses starts.

Over the year to March 2026, work began on 197,341 new homes across Australia. This was 12.1 per cent up on the previous 12-month period, a gain which was heavily influenced by a +28.0 per cent escalation in the number of higher density dwelling starts. Growth in the number of detached house starts was more modest (+2.5 per cent).

The latest figures mean that 331,903 new homes have been commenced between the start of the National Housing Accord in July 2024 and the end of March 2026. Had we been building at a pace consistent with the Accord's target, we should have got 420,000 new homes started over this period. The 88,000 home shortfall accumulated so far needs to be cleared over the remaining 3 years of the Accord's term.

At the end of March 2026, there were 243,864 new dwellings under construction across Australia. Even though detached houses accounted for the majority (57.4 per cent) of new home starts over the past year, higher density homes account for almost two thirds (62.7 per cent) of the homes still under construction. This is because higher density homes take considerably longer to build than detached houses – something which results in them having a longer stay in the pipeline.

TABLE 11

New home building pipeline – March 2026

	AUS	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	NT	ACT
New dwellings started - year to March 2026	**197,341**	51,829	55,186	43,237	14,893	24,223	2,422	697	4,946
Detached house starts	**113,246**	22,307	32,626	24,579	10,589	19,472	2,317	565	800
Other new dwelling starts	**84,095**	29,522	22,560	18,658	4,304	4,751	105	132	4,146
New dwellings completed - year to March 2026	**173,526**	44,804	54,599	33,060	14,051	19,963	2,285	601	4,160
Detached houses	**109,134**	21,275	34,289	22,287	10,215	17,724	2,066	493	783
Other new dwellings	**64,392**	23,529	20,310	10,773	3,836	2,239	219	108	3,377
New dwellings under construction as at 31 March 2026	**243,864**	80,522	61,641	50,100	15,605	26,741	2,248	677	6,330
Detached houses	**90,972**	21,417	21,087	16,928	9,460	18,799	2,135	474	671
Other new dwellings	**152,892**	59,105	40,554	33,172	6,145	7,942	113	203	5,659
New dwellings approved but not yet commenced as at 31 March 2026	**29,936**	12,745	3,797	4,809	3,308	3,936	516	102	723
Detached houses	**12,371**	3,884	1,840	1,841	2,071	2,201	443	30	60
Other new dwellings	**17,565**	8,861	1,957	2,968	1,237	1,735	73	72	663

Source: Master Builders Australia analysis of ABS Building Activity (March 2026)

CIVIL AND ENGINEERING CONSTRUCTION – JUNE 2026 QUARTER

Australia's civil and engineering construction market appears to be losing some of its momentum. During the June 2026 quarter, there was a 4.7 per cent reduction in the volume of engineering construction work done across Australia meaning that activity was 3.7 per cent weaker than the same quarter last year.

The deterioration in activity during the June 2026 quarter was largely the result of a 7.4 per cent drop in the amount of engineering construction work done for the private sector. The same period saw only a marginal dip (-0.8 per cent) in work performed for the public sector. However, it meant that the June 2026 quarter was the weakest three-month period for public sector engineering construction since the September 2023 quarter.

There are a number of different sub trends at play in the engineering construction market. Government-funded transport project work had been a big driver of activity in recent years, but this is now well past its peak. Part of the slack has been taken up by growth in utilities project work, including that relating to the energy transformation and the expansion of electrification. Prospects for resources-related project work are also strengthening, partly helped by the boost to global commodities prices in the wake of the Middle East crisis.

TABLE 12

Civil and engineering construction activity – June 2026 quarter (Millions of dollars, NSA, Current prices)

	AUS	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	NT	ACT
Works started during June 2026 quarter (millions of dollars, nsa, current prices)	**$37,638.6**	$8,413.6	$6,577.4	$6,970.7	$3,146.3	$11,541.4	$421.0	$318.7	$249.5
Works done during June 2026 quarter (millions of dollars, nsa, current prices)	**$41,916.3**	$11,712.7	$7,020.6	$8,343.3	$3,178.1	$10,179.8	$705.0	$474.2	$302.6
Works yet to be done on 30 June 2026 (millions of dollars, nsa, current prices)	**$101,867.4**	$27,375.7	$18,826.4	$19,787.3	$8,802.6	$24,553.1	$1,368.4	$538.9	$615.0

Source: Master Builders Australia analysis of ABS Engineering Construction Activity, Australia (June 2026 quarter)

TABLE 13

Civil and engineering construction: Value of work started during June 2026 quarter (Millions of dollars)

	AUS	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	NT	ACT
Bridges, railways and harbours	**$3,951.3**	$314.5	$2,175.9	$517.4	$20.8	$875.3	$47.1	$0.2	na
Roads, highways and subdivisions	**$6,167.4**	$2,203.5	$1,077.4	$1,584.8	$511.0	$583.1	$71.7	$50.7	$85.2
Water storage and supply, sewerage and drainage	**$5,212.1**	$1,575.3	$321.9	$843.9	$477.1	$1,913.6	$65.5	$9.2	$5.7
Electricity generation, transmission and distribution incl pipelines	**$10,342.2**	$2,199.7	$2,002.2	$1,057.8	$1,479.3	$3,406.2	$109.0	$35.8	$52.3
Telecommunications	**$1,939.5**	$715.2	$304.0	$377.5	$171.9	$193.4	$56.2	$44.4	$76.8
Heavy industry	**$7,578.3**	$717.2	$155.7	$2,207.7	$365.4	$3,921.4	$47.8	$162.9	$0.1
Recreation and other	**$2,447.8**	$688.1	$540.3	$381.6	$120.9	$648.4	$23.7	$15.5	$29.4
Total	**$37,638.6**	**$8,413.6**	**$6,577.4**	**$6,970.7**	**$3,146.3**	**$11,541.4**	**$421.0**	**$318.7**	**$249.5**

Source: Master Builders Australia analysis of ABS Engineering Construction Activity, Australia (June 2026 quarter)

TABLE 14

Civil and engineering construction:
Value of work done during June 2026 quarter (Millions of dollars)

	AUS	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	NT	ACT
Bridges, railways and harbours	**$4,341.9**	$1,205.5	$1,416.1	$940.5	$108.4	$480.5	$81.9	$45.1	$63.8
Roads, highways and subdivisions	**$8,518.8**	$2,303.2	$2,414.6	$1,752.0	$999.7	$807.7	$99.2	$100.8	$41.7
Water storage and supply, sewerage and drainage	**$5,332.2**	$1,810.4	$410.2	$1,044.1	$590.4	$1,183.6	$230.6	$47.9	$15.0
Electricity generation, transmission and distribution incl pipelines	**$8,597.2**	$3,839.7	$1,562.5	$1,305.9	$538.1	$1,120.8	$133.1	$36.9	$60.3
Telecommunications	**$1,941.8**	$722.6	$301.0	$360.1	$174.4	$220.0	$56.2	$31.0	$76.5
Heavy industry	**$10,472.7**	$910.6	$229.7	$2,471.2	$616.7	$5,993.0	$67.9	$183.6	$0.1
Recreation and other	**$2,711.7**	$920.8	$686.6	$469.6	$150.3	$374.2	$36.1	$28.9	$45.2
Total	**$41,916.3**	**$11,712.7**	**$7,020.6**	**$8,343.3**	**$3,178.1**	**$10,179.8**	**$705.0**	**$474.2**	**$302.6**

Source: Master Builders Australia analysis of ABS Engineering Construction Activity, Australia (June 2026 quarter)

TABLE 15

Civil and engineering construction:
Value of work yet to be done as at June 2026 quarter (Millions of dollars)

	AUS	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	NT	ACT
Bridges, railways and harbours	**$17,849.8**	$3,532.3	$5,670.9	$5,681.9	$211.8	$2,074.2	$289.8	$42.7	$346.1
Roads, highways and subdivisions	**$28,662.8**	$6,059.6	$8,455.6	$4,872.4	$6,224.8	$2,516.9	$118.7	$231.7	$183.1
Water storage and supply, sewerage and drainage	**$12,941.1**	$2,657.6	$1,737.2	$4,297.5	$362.7	$2,985.0	$744.5	$102.4	$54.2
Electricity generation, transmission and distribution incl pipelines	**$21,634.2**	$11,911.7	$2,105.0	$1,973.6	$1,394.0	$4,078.6	$108.3	$42.5	$20.7
Telecommunica-tions	**$422.2**	$164.4	$41.0	$75.0	$19.7	$88.2	na	$31.4	$2.5
Heavy industry	**$17,894.3**	$2,173.4	$202.1	$2,506.2	$483.6	$12,362.7	$89.0	$77.3	na
Recreation and other	**$2,463.0**	$876.8	$614.6	$380.8	$106.0	$447.5	$18.0	$10.9	$8.4
Total	**$101,867.4**	**$27,375.7**	**$18,826.4**	**$19,787.3**	**$8,802.6**	**$24,553.1**	**$1,368.4**	**$538.9**	**$615.0**

Source: Master Builders Australia analysis of ABS Engineering Construction Activity, Australia (June 2026 quarter)

LABOUR MARKET – OCTOBER 2026

Australia's unemployment rate has risen steadily over the course of 2026. Latest figures show the unemployment rate clocking in at 4.9 per cent during October 2026 – the highest it's been since June 2021. This time last year, the unemployment rate was falling and it eventually bottomed out at 4.1 per cent in January 2026.

The RBA's strategy of raising interest rates has been partly aimed at engineering an increase in unemployment. A weaker labour market tends to take pressures off wages and other costs, eventually contributing to weaker inflation. Even though unemployment has increased, the economy still continues to create new jobs. Over the year to October 2026, the number of jobs in the Australian economy rose by +0.6 per cent meaning that an additional 83,500 people are working compared with a year ago.

There is much more variation in the geographic pattern of unemployment compared with earlier in the year. During October 2026, the unemployment rate was highest in Victoria (5.4 per cent) and Tasmania (5.4 per cent), followed by the Northern Territory (5.0 per cent). The ACT currently has the lowest unemployment rate (4.2 per cent), followed by Western Australia (4.5 per cent) and New South Wales (4.6 per cent). At 4.8 per cent, unemployment in both Queensland and South Australia is just below the national average.

TABLE 16

Australia's labour market (October 2026)

	AUS	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	NT*	ACT*
Unemployment rate (October 2026)	**4.9%**	4.6%	5.4%	4.8%	4.8%	4.5%	5.4%	5.0%	4.2%
Change in total employment - year to October 2026 (number of jobs)	**+83,500**	+421	+33,509	+25,588	-1,199	+33,063	-6,590	-1,105	+3,048
Percentage change in total employment - year to October 2026 (+/-%)	**+0.6%**	+0.0%	+0.9%	+0.9%	-0.1%	+2.0%	-2.3%	-0.8%	+1.1%

Source: Master Builders Australia analysis of ABS Labour Force, Australia (October 2026)

**In Trend terms rather than seasonally adjusted*

CONSTRUCTION BUSINESS DATA

As at 30th June 2026, there were 478,651 construction businesses operating across Australia. Over the year to June 2026, the number of construction businesses in Australia expanded by 15,603 – equivalent to growth of 3.4 per cent. This was a slightly faster pace of growth than the average for the whole economy (+3.1 per cent). Of the 2.81 million businesses in existence across the economy, construction accounted for 17.0 per cent of the total – more than every one of the business sectors. As in previous years, the flow of businesses into and out of the construction industry is quite high. The year to June 2026 saw 83,004 new businesses enter the construction industry while 67,400 businesses exited.

Of the businesses that departed the construction industry during 2025-26, about 1 in 19 (5.1 per cent) was due to insolvency (3,472 businesses). Even though the volume of construction insolvencies during 2025-26 was still very elevated, it was the first financial year to see a reduction (-3.4 per cent) in construction insolvencies since 2020-21.

The three months to August 2026 saw 916 construction businesses enter external administration. This represented a slight reduction (-3.3 per cent) on the same period last year. The geographic profile of insolvency activity is mixed, and in several jurisdictions, the flow of construction insolvencies is higher than it was a year ago. Elsewhere, there have been some sizeable improvements: construction insolvencies are down by 36.7 per cent on the same period last year in South Australia with more modest reductions in New South Wales (-13.8 per cent) and Queensland (-5.1 per cent) over the same period. Over the three months to August 2026, construction businesses accounted for about 1 in 4 (24.0 per cent) of the economy's insolvencies.

TABLE 17

Business insolvency volumes up to August 2026

	AUS	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	NT	ACT
Number of construction business insolvencies - three months to August 2026	**916**	363	291	150	19	48	9	5	31
Change on year earlier (+/-%)	**-3.3%**	-13.8%	+7.4%	-5.1%	-36.7%	+17.1%	+50.0%	0.0%	+106.7%
Construction share of total insolvencies - three months to August 2026 (%)	**24.0%**	25.5%	27.4%	19.4%	11.5%	19.2%	16.7%	25.0%	45.6%

Source: Master Builders Australia analysis of ASIC Insolvency Statistics (Series 1 and 2) (August 2026)

TABLE 18
Characteristics of building and construction businesses as at 30th June 2025

	AUS	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	NT	ACT
Number of building and construction businesses as at 30th June 2025	**462,863**	155,927	126,745	89,326	27,573	45,588	7,827	3,038	6,789
Non-employing businesses	**278,666**	87,109	82,805	51,209	18,352	28,998	4,687	1,627	3,843
Between 1 and 19 employees	**177,707**	67,064	42,395	36,500	8,856	15,691	3,033	1,307	2,850
Between 20 and 199 employees	**6,236**	1,682	1,487	1,568	362	836	101	101	96
200 employees or more	**254**	72	58	49	3	63	6	3	0
Proportion of construction businesses turning over less than $50,000 annually (%)	**18.4%**	18.1%	20.3%	17.4%	17.6%	17.2%	17.3%	13.3%	19.5%
Proportion of construction businesses >$10 million turnover (%)	**1.8%**	1.6%	1.7%	1.9%	1.4%	2.3%	1.1%	3.1%	2.5%

Source: Master Builders Australia analysis of ABS Counts of Australian Businesses, including Entries and Exits (30th June 2025)

THE BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION WORKFORCE

Australia's construction workforce now boasts 1.38 million people, according to latest data for February 2026. In the past, the ABS had published data relating to the construction workforce on a quarterly basis. However, a new data release schedule is being implemented. This means that latest figures are only available up to February 2026.

- Women account for 13.9 per cent of the workforce – but just 2.9 per cent of trades workers in the construction industry during February 2026.
- Of the building and construction workforce, the largest share is based in New South Wales (31.3 per cent), followed by Victoria (25.2 per cent), Queensland (20.5 per cent) and Western Australia (12.5 per cent). The remaining 10 per cent is shared across South Australia, Tasmania, the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory.
- At the end of March 2026, there were 109,420 building and construction industry apprentices in training. This is 5.2 per cent lower than at the end of 2024.
- A total of 28,020 building and construction apprentices successfully completed their training year to March 2026 – 11.3 per cent more than in year to March 2025.
- Year to March, 39,375 new apprentices started out in the construction industry. This was 3.6 per cent more than the previous year.
- Yet again, those successfully completing their construction apprenticeships were outnumbered by those who prematurely exited their training without a qualification.

The size of Australia's building and construction workforce shrank by 3,923 people over the year to February 2026. This is equivalent to 0.3 per cent of the workforce. Year to March 2026, 28,124 construction apprentices quit their training prematurely. While this was 3.7 per cent lower than in the previous year, it still means that for every 100 apprentices who successfully finished their training, about the same number pulled out unqualified.

TABLE 19

Overview of construction employment by State and Territory (February 2026)

	AUS	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	NT	ACT
Total construction employment - February 2026	**1,375,324**	**430,837**	**346,098**	**281,618**	**82,959**	**172,525**	**29,622**	**11,882**	**19,783**
Construction's share of total employment (%)	**9.3%**	9.5%	9.0%	9.3%	8.3%	10.3%	10.5%	8.2%	7.1%
State/Territory share of total construction industry employment (%)	**100.0%**	31.3%	25.2%	20.5%	6.0%	12.5%	2.2%	0.9%	1.4%

Source: Master Builders Australia analysis of ABS Labour Force, Australia, Detailed (February 2026)

In February 2026, the most prevalent building and construction trades occupations were carpenters/joiners (151,714), followed by plumbers (107,865) and painters (47,882).

The table below provides a more comprehensive breakdown of each of the states and territories.

TABLE 20

Number of building and construction trades workers by detailed occupation category (February 2026)

	AUS	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	NT	ACT
Carpenters and Joiners	**151,714**	56,033	42,098	25,903	9,691	11,766	4,057	664	1,502
Plumbers	**107,865**	29,626	35,631	17,287	5,303	14,976	2,716	336	1,990
Painting Trades Workers	**47,882**	13,450	13,329	9,775	3,500	4,467	2,090	457	814
Plasterers	**31,442**	12,477	4,973	6,312	4,022	2,017	222	424	995
Wall and Floor Tilers	**19,615**	6,322	1,255	8,170	1,328	1,309	256	208	767
Bricklayers and Stonemasons	**21,818**	3,095	5,982	4,821	1,156	5,444	608	4	708
Floor Finishers	**10,857**	1,613	2,279	3,389	260	2,852	462	1	1
Glaziers	**9,195**	1,342	433	4,111	1,428	1,467	331	81	2
Roof Tilers	**8,170**	4,125	2,342	861	297	408	130	6	1
Bricklayers, and Carpenters and Joiners (not further defined)	**2,424**	1	673	679	519	2	273	4	273
Total number of construction trades workers	**410,982**	**128,084**	**108,995**	**81,308**	**27,504**	**44,708**	**11,145**	**2,185**	**7,053**

Source: Master Builders Australia analysis of ABS Labour Force, Australia, Detailed (Table EQ08) (February 2026)

JOBS AND SKILLS AUSTRALIA OCCUPATIONAL SHORTAGE LIST 2025

Jobs and Skills Australia released their latest Occupational Shortage List in October 2025. Despite some slight changes on a state and territory basis, it shows that all construction trades continue to be in short supply in almost every jurisdiction.

TABLE 21

Jobs & Skills Australia Occuptional Shortage

CODE	Occupation	AUS	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	NT	ACT
322312	Pressure Welder	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	No shortage	No shortage	No shortage
322313	Welder (First Class)	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage
323211	Fitter (General)	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage
323212	Fitter and Turner	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage
323213	Fitter-Welder	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage
331111	Bricklayer	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage
331112	Stonemason	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage
331211	Carpenter and Joiner	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage
331212	Carpenter	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage
331213	Joiner	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage
332111	Floor Finisher	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage
332211	Painter	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage

CODE	Occupation	AUS	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	NT	ACT
333111	Glazier	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage
333211	Plasterer (Wall and Ceiling)	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage
333212	Renderer (Solid Plaster)	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage
333311	Roof Tiler	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage
333411	Wall and Floor Tiler	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage
334112	Airconditioning and Mechanical Services Plumber	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage
334113	Drainer	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage
334114	Gasfitter	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage
334115	Roof Plumber	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage
334116	Plumber (General)	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage
334117	Fire Protection Plumber	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage
341111	Electrician (General)	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage
341112	Electrician (Special Class)	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	No shortage	Shortage	No shortage
342111	Airconditioning and Refrigeration Mechanic	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage
342211	Electrical Linesworker / Electrical Line Mechanic	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage
342212	Technical Cable Jointer	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage

BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION WORKERS BY INDUSTRY SUB-DIVISION AND STATE

The 11 subdivisions of the building and construction industry as at February 2026 are summarised below. Based on employment, the largest of these is Building Installation Services (325,733 people) followed by Building Completion Services (215,262 people) and Residential Building (168,743).

TABLE 22

Building and construction industry employment by subsector in each State and Territory (February 2026)

	AUS	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	NT	ACT
Total construction employment - February 2026	**1,375,322**	**430,838**	**346,100**	**281,617**	**82,957**	**172,526**	**29,620**	**11,881**	**19,783**
323 Building Installation Services	**325,733**	102,378	88,025	61,247	19,377	38,363	6,292	4,300	5,751
324 Building Completion Services	**215,262**	69,946	51,221	48,921	13,757	20,336	5,943	1,488	3,650
301 Residential Building Construction	**168,743**	53,867	47,040	29,900	8,716	22,530	3,526	818	2,346
329 Other Construction Services	**135,894**	42,163	36,940	22,330	10,815	17,511	2,606	915	2,614
310 Heavy and Civil Engineering Construction	**133,685**	42,494	29,218	31,974	6,935	18,264	2,902	674	1,224
300 Building Construction nfd	**133,567**	43,002	28,575	29,684	9,800	17,586	2,142	1,327	1,451
322 Building Structure Services	**106,800**	33,174	26,402	24,987	4,302	13,425	2,928	861	721
302 Non-Residential Building Construction	**85,183**	19,474	23,712	17,869	5,147	14,691	2,314	731	1,245
321 Land Development and Site Preparation Services	**62,314**	20,898	13,675	13,654	3,986	7,926	823	583	769
320 Construction Services nfd	**5,720**	2,458	1,180	589	7	1,278	122	85	1
E00 Construction nfd	**2,421**	984	112	462	115	616	22	99	11

Source: Master Builders Australia analysis of ABS Labour Force, Australia, Detailed (Table EQ06) (February 2026)

BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION WORKERS BY OCCUPATION GROUP AND EMPLOYMENT STATUS

The construction industry has one of the economy's highest full-time employment rates. Of those employed in the industry during February 2026, 84.7 per cent worked on a full-time basis. This is the fourth highest share after mining (94.2 per cent), utilities (91.6 per cent) and financial services (88.6 per cent). Amongst the different occupations active in the construction industry during February 2026, managers had the highest full-time employment rate (93.3 per cent), followed by machinery operators/drivers (92.9 per cent) and trades workers (88.4 per cent). The full-time employment rate was lowest amongst community and personal service workers (41.0 per cent).

TABLE 23

Number of people employed in building and construction industry by occupation group (February 2026)

	Employed full time	Full time share of total (%)	Employed part time	Part time share of total (%)	Total number of employees
Managers	167,443	93.3%	11,941	6.7%	179,384
Professionals	71,717	85.0%	12,635	15.0%	84,352
Technicians and Trades Workers	583,398	88.4%	76,185	11.6%	659,583
Community and Personal Service Workers	1,197	41.0%	1,721	59.0%	2,918
Clerical and Administrative Workers	72,448	58.5%	51,389	41.5%	123,837
Sales Workers	8,360	75.2%	2,760	24.8%	11,120
Machinery Operators and Drivers	90,516	92.9%	6,909	7.1%	97,425
Labourers	169,332	78.1%	47,374	21.9%	216,706
All Occupations	**1,164,411**	**84.7%**	**210,914**	**15.3%**	**1,375,325**

Source: Master Builders Australia analysis of ABS Labour Force, Australia, Detailed (Table EQ09) (February 2026)



During February 2026, full-time building and construction workers averaged 40.6 working hours per week, slightly more (+0.7 per cent) than a year earlier. For those employed on a part-time basis, building and construction jobs typically involved 18.5 hours' work per week. Average full-time hours in building and construction were slightly higher than for the economy as a whole (39.3 hours per week).

THE GENDER DIVIDE IN AUSTRALIA'S BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION WORKFORCE

Building and construction continues to be male dominated. During February 2026, there were 190,878 women employed in the industry – equivalent to 13.9 per cent of the industry's workforce.

Within the construction industry, female participation varies widely depending on occupational category. During February 2026, women accounted for 74.5 per cent of clerical/administrative workers in the construction industry and 44.4 per cent of sales workers. At the other end of the scale, women comprised just 2.9 per cent of technicians/trades workers and 3.5 per cent of machinery operators/drivers in the construction industry.

TABLE 24

Overview of construction employment by sex (February 2026)

	AUS	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	NT	ACT
Total construction employment - February 2026	**1,375,324**	**430,837**	**346,098**	**281,618**	**82,959**	**172,525**	**29,622**	**11,882**	**19,783**
Women	**190,878**	58,246	53,618	40,590	7,303	23,177	3,095	1,989	2,861
Men	**1,184,446**	372,591	292,480	241,027	75,657	149,348	26,527	9,893	16,923
Women as a share of total (%)	**13.9%**	13.5%	15.5%	14.4%	8.8%	13.4%	10.4%	16.7%	14.5%

Source: Master Builders Australia analysis of ABS Labour Force, Australia, Detailed (February 2026)

The proportion of women in some occupation groups presents an opportunity to meet future workforce needs. By addressing the barriers to female entry and retention in trade and labouring roles and actively recruiting women in these areas, the industry will be able to draw from a larger pool of potential workers.

BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION WORKFORCE IN RECENT TIMES

Australia's construction workforce is close to the largest it's ever been. In seasonally adjusted terms, the size of the workforce peaked in February 2025. It is marginally smaller than this (-0.4 per cent) at present.

Even though the construction workforce is close to the largest it's ever been, it still isn't big enough to fully match demand. The dynamics of the construction workforce are complicated: new workers arrive through apprenticeships and migration from outside of Australia. At the same time, the industry loses workers through retirements, apprentice withdrawals and switches to other industries.

Our workforce needs to get much bigger if we are to deliver our future housing and infrastructure needs. This problem is compounded by the fact that there has been a decline in the typical amount of work done per hour over the past decade – the kernel of the productivity problem.

Because it takes four years for newly started apprentices to qualify, immediate expansions in the size of our workforce can only be achieved through the migration of skilled workers from overseas. Current migration settings make this difficult. It is also important that the construction industry improves its ability to attract the categories of workers that are underrepresented in our industry – like women.

TABLE 25

Overview of construction employment by State and Territory (February 2026)

	AUS	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	NT	ACT
Total construction employment - Feb 2026	**1,375,324**	**430,837**	**346,098**	**281,618**	**82,959**	**172,525**	**29,622**	**11,882**	**19,783**
Change over year to Feb 2026	**-3,923**	-17,800	-10,361	-8,678	-5,051	+28,072	+8,096	+100	+1,698
Percentage change over year to Feb 2026 (+/-%)	**-0.3%**	-4.0%	-2.9%	-3.0%	-5.7%	+19.4%	+37.6%	+0.9%	+9.4%

Source: Master Builders Australia analysis of ABS Labour Force, Australia, Detailed (February 2026)

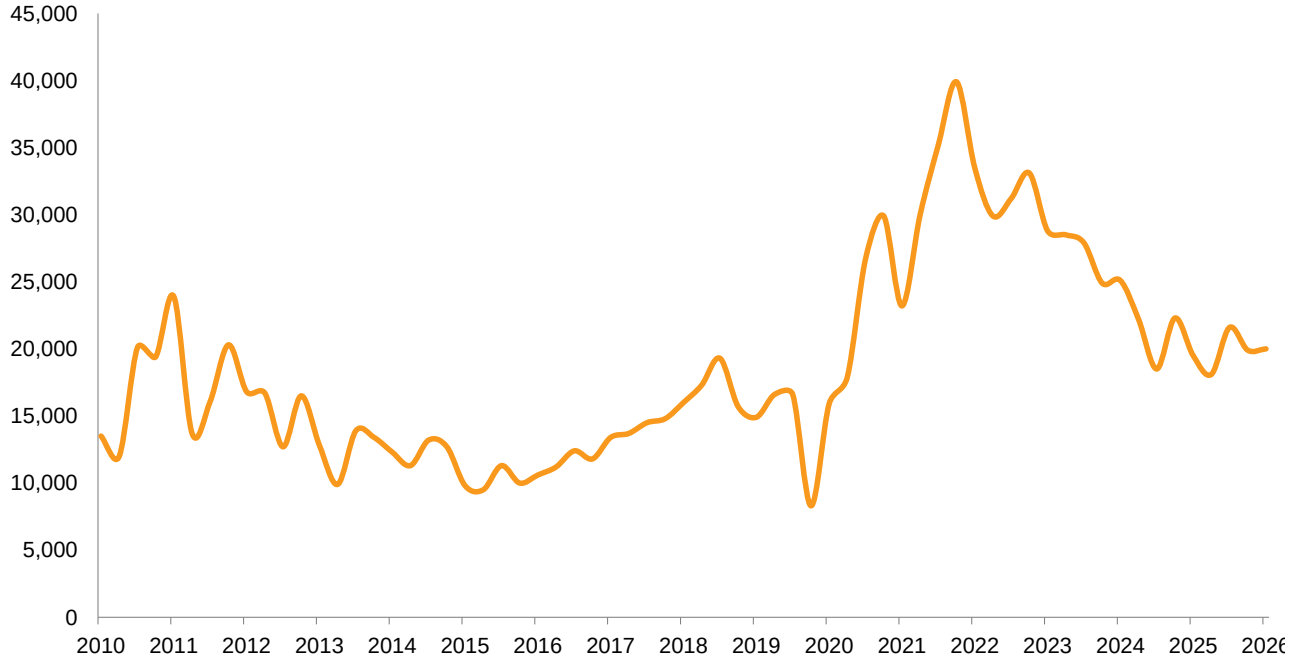
WORKFORCE SHORTAGES AND JOB VACANCIES

BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION JOB VACANCIES

Feedback from Master Builders members suggests that tradie shortages remain a significant issue for the construction industry. Official data on job vacancies is a useful gauge of the situation with respect to labour shortages. As the chart below shows, the labour shortage in the construction industry was at its worst in mid-2022 when almost 40,000 vacancies were reported to be affecting the industry.

According to latest estimates, there were 20,000 vacant positions in the construction industry during August 2026. This was 0.5 per cent more than in the previous quarter and 2.6 per cent more than a year earlier. However, it still represents a significant degree of labour shortage. Construction accounted for 6.2 per cent of the economy's job vacancies during August 2026.

Chart 1 - NUMBER OF CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY JOB VACANCIES UP TO AUGUST 2026

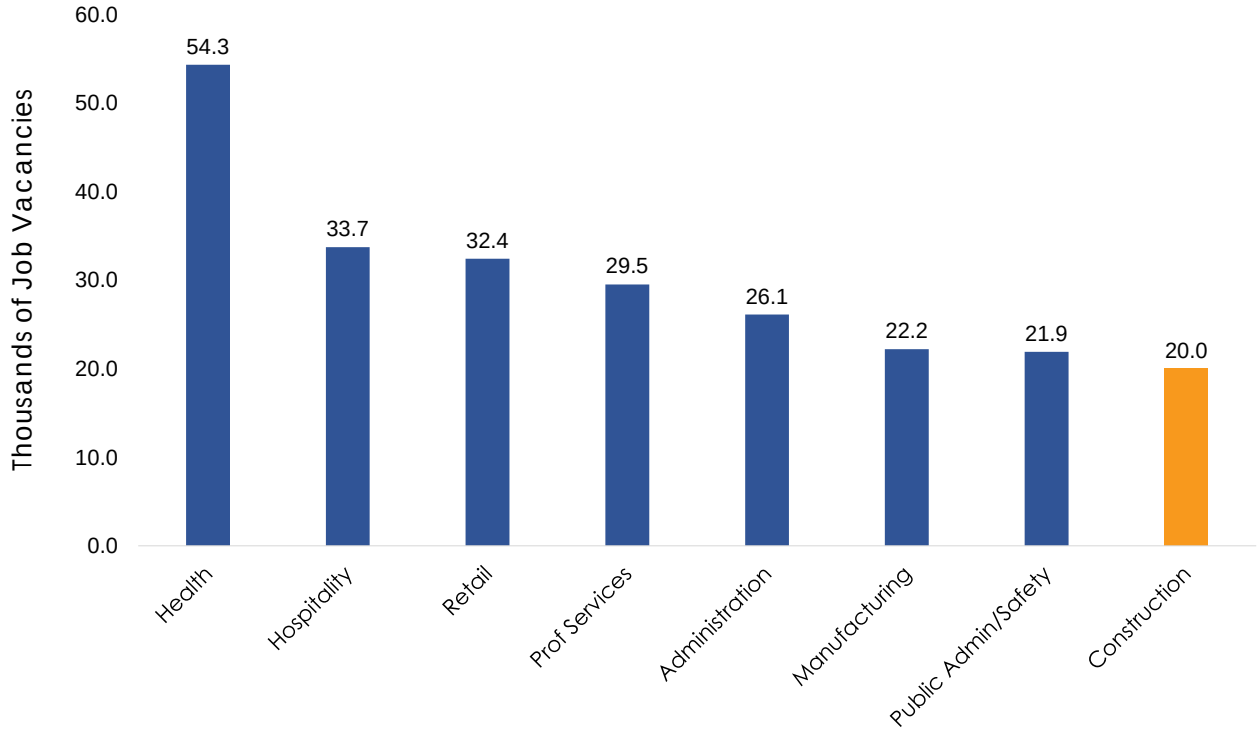


JOB VACANCIES BY INDUSTRY SECTOR

Across the 18 different industries comprising the Australian industry, there was a total of 321,500 job vacancies during August 2026. This was 0.8 per cent lower than in the previous quarter. The chart below ranks the industries most afflicted by job vacancies.

Construction is in eight place when it comes to the prevalence of job vacancies. The largest number of vacant roles is in health (54,300) followed by hospitality (33,700) and Retail (32,400).

Chart 2 - NUMBER OF JOB VACANCIES BY INDUSTRY AS AT AUGUST 2026



NATIONAL JOB VACANCIES

There are 15 key occupation groups in the building and construction industry. These groups include construction managers, trades, and labouring roles.

State and territory vacancies are in Appendix A.

TABLE 26

Number of building and construction-related job ads (August 2026)

	Job ads in August 2026	Change on July 2026 (%)	Change on August 2025 (%)	Job ads in July 2026	Job ads in August 2025
Construction Managers	3,986	+1.2%	+11.7%	3,938	3,570
Bricklayers and Stonemasons	77	-12.2%	-27.6%	88	106
Carpenters and Joiners	1,044	+3.3%	-1.1%	1,011	1,055
Floor Finishers	37	-1.8%	-0.9%	38	37
Painting Trades Workers	573	+5.6%	-4.4%	543	600
Glaziers	90	-6.6%	-1.8%	97	92
Plasterers	70	-7.0%	+2.9%	76	68
Roof Tilers	122	+1.7%	+25.3%	120	98
Wall and Floor Tilers	95	+5.6%	-2.7%	90	97
Plumbers	1,480	+2.2%	+5.4%	1,449	1,404
Building and Plumbing Labourers	984	+6.0%	+13.9%	928	864
Concreters	158	-2.9%	-2.7%	163	162
Fencers	44	+4.0%	-6.4%	42	47
Insulation and Home Improvement Installers	84	+10.1%	+6.4%	76	79
Structural Steel Construction Workers	405	+12.3%	+23.2%	361	329

Source: Master Builders Australia analysis of Jobs & Skills Australia Internet Vacancy Index (August 2026)

APPRENTICESHIP DATA

Year to March 2026, a total of 39,375 new apprentices started in the building and construction industry. This represents a 3.6 per cent increase on the previous 12-month period.

Building and construction remains by far the largest employer of apprentices of any industry. Latest figures show that 109,420 building and construction apprentices were in training at the end of March 2026 – representing 37.8 per cent of all Australian apprentices (289,089).

Building and construction is the #1 apprentice employer in Australia

39,375 NEW STARTS

109,420 IN-TRAINING

28,020 GRADUATES

During the year to March 2026

Over the year to March 2026, 28,020 construction apprentices successfully completed their training. This is 11.3 per cent higher than in the year to March 2025 and represents the lagged effect of record commencement volumes during the early years of the pandemic.

Last year also saw 39,375 new apprentices start out in the construction industry for the first time. There were 3.6 per cent more new starters in over the year to March 2026 compared with the same period a year earlier. There were 109,420 construction apprentices still in training at the end of March 2026. This was 5.2 per cent lower than a year earlier and represents a 15.0 per cent reduction on the peak achieved at the end of June 2022.

As has been the pattern in recent years, 2026 was overshadowed by the fact that those withdrawing early from construction apprenticeships outnumbered those successfully completing. A total of 28,124 construction apprentices quit their training prematurely over the year to March 2026, a reduction of 3.7 per cent on 2025.

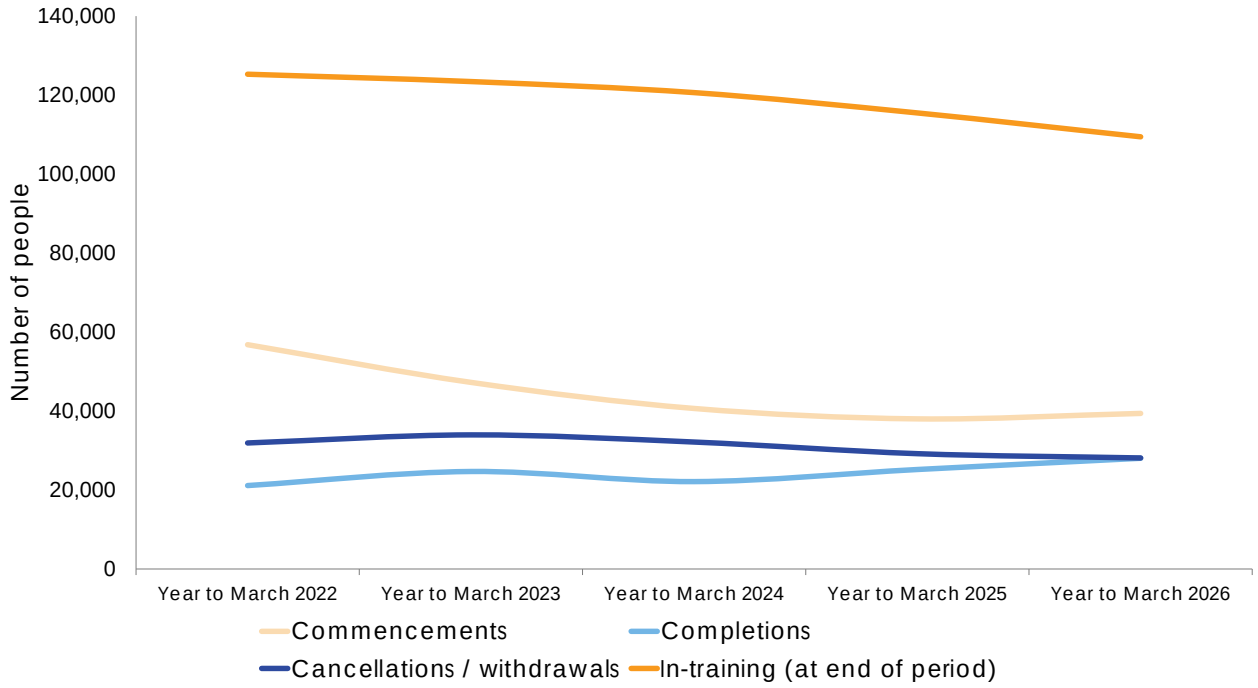
TABLE 27

Trends in construction apprenticeships up to March 2026

	Year to March 2022	Year to March 2023	Year to March 2024	Year to March 2025	Year to March 2026	Change (+/-##)	Change (+/-%)
Commencements	56,775	47,236	40,630	37,995	39,375	+1,380	+3.6%
Completions	21,109	24,672	22,111	25,175	28,020	+2,845	+11.3%
Cancellations / withdrawals	31,911	33,955	32,146	29,203	28,124	-1,079	-3.7%
In-training (at end of period)	125,282	123,421	120,619	115,469	109,420	-6,050	-5.2%

Source: Master Builders Australia analysis of NCVER Apprentices and Trainees Statistical Report (March 2026)

Chart 3 - CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY APPRENTICE TRENDS UP TO MARCH 2026



APPRENTICES IN-TRAINING ACROSS ALL INDUSTRIES

The construction industry remains the most popular choice among apprentices. At the end of March 2026, a total of 289,089 apprentices were in training across the economy. Construction accounted for more than one third of 37.8 per cent of active apprentices. Manufacturing was the second most important economic sector for apprentices, accounting for 8.8 per cent of the total. Health (8.6 per cent) and administration (8.4 per cent) also accounted for substantial shares of Australia's apprentice community.

TABLE 28

Number of apprentices in training by industry as at March 2026

RANK	Industry	Number of apprentices in training	Share of total (%)
1	Construction	109,420	37.8%
2	Manufacturing	25,326	8.8%
3	Health Care and Social Assistance	24,747	8.6%
4	Administrative and Support Services	24,143	8.4%
5	Public Administration and Safety	10,741	3.7%
	All other industries	94,712	32.8%
	Total number of apprentices in training - all industries	**289,089**	**100.0%**

Source: Master Builders Australia analysis of NCVER Apprentices and Trainees Statistical Report (March 2026)

A large majority of construction apprentices are in training at TAFE (63.4 per cent) followed by private providers (29.9 per cent). Most of the remainder are at universities (6.3 per cent).

TABLE 29

Construction apprentices in training by provider type up to March 2026

	End of March 2022	End of March 2023	End of March 2024	End of March 2025	End of March 2026
TAFE institutes	76,497	75,065	75,487	73,223	69,394
Private training providers	40,266	40,122	37,211	34,393	32,755
Universities	7,780	7,502	7,334	7,353	6,870
Community education providers	544	509	395	341	253
Schools	112	125	134	107	109
Enterprise providers	83	98	58	52	39
Total	**125,282**	**123,421**	**120,619**	**115,469**	**109,420**

Source: Master Builders Australia analysis of NCVER Apprentices and Trainees Statistical Report (March 2026)

State and territory breakdown by sex shows that a large cohort of apprentices are males at TAFE in New South Wales and Victoria.

TABLE 30
Construction apprentices in training by sex and type of provider as at March 2026

	NEW SOUTH WALES		VICTORIA	
	Male	**Female**	**Male**	**Female**
TAFE institutes	25,381	954	14,783	666
Private training providers	5,031	445	8,175	549
Community education providers	180	51	18	2
Schools	60	12	34	2
Universities	0	0	4,872	165
Enterprise providers	0	0	0	0

	QUEENSLAND		SOUTH AUSTRALIA	
	Male	**Female**	**Male**	**Female**
TAFE institutes	12,591	620	3,357	109
Private training providers	10,750	780	2,892	125
Community education providers	0	1	1	1
Schools	0	0	0	0
Universities	875	64	0	0
Enterprise providers	22	0	12	0

	WESTERN AUSTRALIA		TASMANIA	
	Male	**Female**	**Male**	**Female**
TAFE institutes	7,719	376	1,650	112
Private training providers	2,673	204	405	52
Community education providers	0	0	0	0
Schools	0	0	0	0
Universities	0	0	0	0
Enterprise providers	0	0	4	0

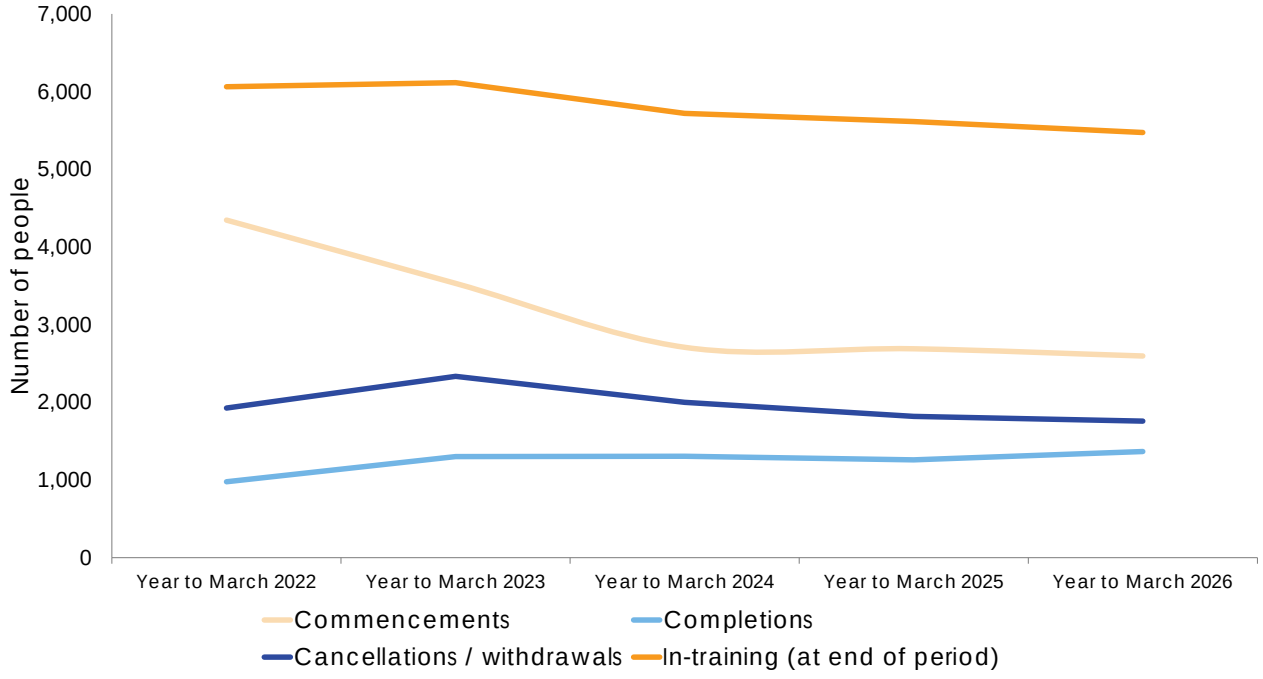
	NORTHERN TERRITORY		AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY	
	Male	**Female**	**Male**	**Female**
TAFE institutes	51	5	942	58
Private training providers	116	20	488	44
Community education providers	0	0	0	0
Schools	0	0	1	0
Universities	835	57	0	0
Enterprise providers	0	0	0	0

Source: Master Builders Australia analysis of NCVER Apprentices and Trainees Statistical Report (March 2026)

DIVERSITY IN APPRENTICESHIPS

Amongst construction apprentices, women remain hugely underrepresented. At the end of March 2026, 5,473 women were undertaking construction apprenticeships – equivalent to just 5.0 per cent of the total. The year to March 2026 saw just 2,596 women commencing construction apprenticeships, fewer (-3.5 per cent) than a year earlier. Over the year to March 2026, 1,366 female construction apprentices successfully concluded their training, quite an improvement (+8.5 per cent) compared with the year before.

Chart 4 - FEMALE CONSTRUCTION APPRENTICE TRENDS UP TO MARCH 2026



Amongst the different construction trades, the female share of apprentices in training as of March 2026 was highest for painters (18.7 per cent), followed by cabinet/furniture makers (8.3 per cent) and electricians (4.7 per cent). The trades with the lowest rates of female apprentice participation were bricklayers/stonemasons (2.2 per cent), plumbers (2.8 per cent) and aircon/refrigeration mechanics (2.9 per cent).

TABLE 31

Construction trades apprentices in training by sex and occupation group as at March 2026

	Females	Males	Total	Female Share of Total (%)
3411 - Electricians	1,607	32,843	34,450	4.7%
3312 - Carpenters and Joiners	802	25,420	26,222	3.1%
3341 - Plumbers	548	18,728	19,276	2.8%
3421 - Airconditioning and Refrigeration Mechanics	172	5,722	5,894	2.9%
3627 - Landscape Gardeners and Irrigation Technicians	116	2,472	2,588	4.5%
3941 - Cabinet and Furniture Makers	185	2,038	2,223	8.3%
3322 - Painters	375	1,629	2,004	18.7%
3311 - Bricklayers and Stonemasons	34	1,511	1,545	2.2%
3332 - Plasterers and Renderers	53	1,383	1,436	3.7%
Other trades	633	8,197	8,830	7.2%
Total	**4,525**	**99,943**	**104,468**	**4.3%**

Source: Master Builders Australia analysis of NCVER Apprentices and Trainees Statistical Report (March 2026)

The breakdown of apprentices by gender and state/territory shows that the female share of apprentices in training at the end of March 2026 was highest in the Northern Territory (7.5 per cent), Tasmania (7.4 per cent), and the ACT (6.7 per cent). The lowest female apprentice shares were in South Australia (3.6 per cent), New South Wales (4.6 per cent) and Victoria (4.7 per cent).

TABLE 32

Construction apprentices in training by sex and State/Territory as at March 2026

	AUS	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	NT	ACT
Female	**5,474**	1,462	1,384	1,465	236	580	164	81	102
Male	**103,917**	30,651	27,881	24,239	6,262	10,392	2,059	1,002	1,431
Sex not known	**29**	9	3	11	5	2	0	0	0
Total	**109,420**	**32,122**	**29,268**	**25,715**	**6,503**	**10,974**	**2,223**	**1,083**	**1,533**
Female share of total (%)	**5.0%**	4.6%	4.7%	5.7%	3.6%	5.3%	7.4%	7.5%	6.7%

Source: Master Builders Australia analysis of NCVER Apprentices and Trainees Statistical Report (March 2026)

As the table below shows, there were 5,714 Indigenous apprentices in training at the end of March 2026 – equivalent to 5.2 per cent of the total. At the same time, 3,078 active construction apprentices were living with a disability, equivalent to around 1 in 35 (2.8 per cent).

TABLE 33

Composition of construction industry apprentices in training by selected characteristics as at March 2026

	With a disability	Without a disability	Not known	Total
Indigenous	265	5,353	96	**5,714**
Not Indigenous	2,786	97,934	1,853	**102,572**
Not known	27	953	153	**1,133**
Total	**3,078**	**104,241**	**2,102**	**109,420**

Source: Master Builders Australia analysis of NCVER Apprentices and Trainees Statistical Report (March 2026)

TOP TEN APPRENTICE OCCUPATIONS

Of the construction industry apprentices still in training at the end of March 2026, Electricians were the largest in number and accounted for 30.3 per cent of all construction apprentices. Carpenters/Joiners were the second largest apprentice group (24.4 per cent of the total) followed by plumbers with a 17.8 per cent share of current trainees.

TABLE 34

Construction trades apprentices in training by specific occupation group as at March 2026

	Total number of apprentices	Share of total (%)
3411 Electricians	34,459	30.3%
3312 Carpenters and Joiners	26,227	24.4%
3341 Plumbers	19,277	17.8%
3421 Airconditioning and Refrigeration Mechanics	5,895	5.2%
7212 Earthmoving Plant Operators	2,809	2.8%
3627 Landscape Gardeners and Irrigation Technicians	2,589	2.4%
3941 Cabinet and Furniture Makers	2,225	2.1%
3322 Painters	2,006	2.0%
3311 Bricklayers and Stonemasons	1,545	1.5%
3332 Plasterers and Renderers	1,436	1.4%
Other trades	10,952	10.0%
Total - all apprentices	**109,420**	**100.0%**

Source: Master Builders Australia analysis of NCVER Apprentices and Trainees Statistical Report (March 2026)

The chart below illustrates trends in finishing trade apprenticeships over the past decade. In the case of all six trades, numbers in training are lower than they were 12 months ago.

Chart 5 - NUMBER OF FINISHING TRADES APPRENTICES STILL IN TRAINING UP TO MARCH 2026

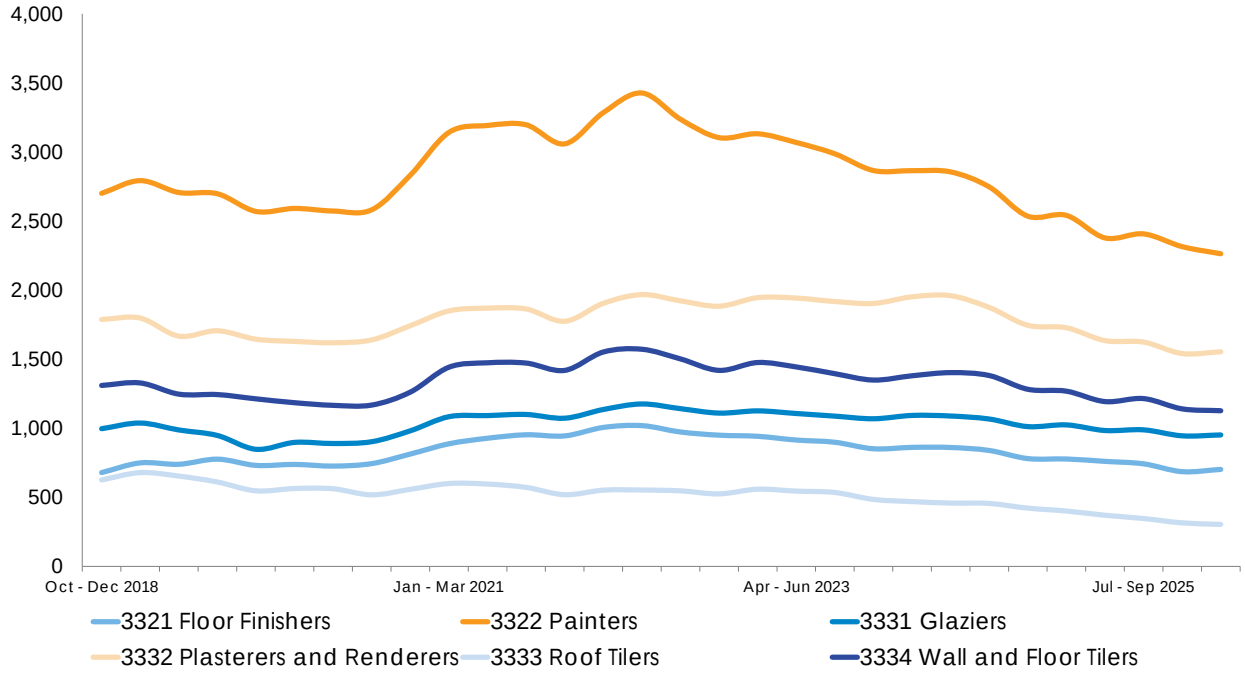


TABLE 35

Apprentices in training by occupation category as at March 2026

	AUS	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	NT	ACT
3411 Electricians	34,459	9,872	9,054	7,585	2,185	4,410	424	380	549
3312 Carpenters and Joiners	26,227	8,363	7,134	6,306	1,461	1,661	721	219	362
3341 Plumbers	19,277	5,575	6,899	3,428	938	1,747	294	137	259
3421 Airconditioning and Refrigeration Mechanics	5,895	1,979	1,068	1,578	350	649	56	122	92
7212 Earthmoving Plant Operators	2,809	300	813	1,112	162	268	85	39	30
3627 Landscape Gardeners and Irrigation Technicians	2,589	972	916	401	171	57	28	0	45
3941 Cabinet and Furniture Makers	2,225	708	510	521	162	145	97	30	50
3322 Painters	2,006	440	349	776	68	254	96	8	16
3311 Bricklayers and Stonemasons	1,545	475	329	356	143	206	29	1	6
3332 Plasterers and Renderers	1,436	327	273	537	101	108	78	4	8
Other trades	10,952	3,111	1,923	3,115	761	1,469	315	143	115
Total - all apprentices	**109,420**	**32,122**	**29,268**	**25,715**	**6,502**	**10,974**	**2,223**	**1,083**	**1,532**

Source: Master Builders Australia analysis of NCVER Apprentices and Trainees Statistical Report (March 2026)

APPRENTICES IN-TRAINING BY AGE GROUP

Predictably, construction apprenticeship participation is heavily concentrated amongst younger age groups. As of March 2026, over one in three apprentices (39.3 per cent) was still in their teens.

Three-quarters (76.5 per cent) were less than 25 years old. Just 3.7 per cent of all construction apprentices was aged 40 or older.

TABLE 36

Construction apprentices in training by age as at March 2026

	Total number of apprentices	Share of total (%)
14 years and under	43	0.0%
15 to 19 years	43,042	39.3%
20 to 24 years	40,659	37.2%
25 to 29 years	11,567	10.6%
30 to 39 years	10,055	9.2%
40 to 49 years	3,147	2.9%
50 to 59 years	764	0.7%
60 to 64 years	110	0.1%
65 years and over	31	0.0%
Not known	1	0.0%
Total	**109,420**	**100.0%**

Source: Master Builders Australia analysis of NCVER Apprentices and Trainees Statistical Report (March 2026)

During the period of COVID-19 apprenticeship incentives, the number of mature age apprentices in training increased. It has since fallen. At the end of March 2026, about one quarter (23.5 per cent) of construction apprentices in training were of mature age (i.e. at least 25 years old).

Details of apprentices by state and territory are in Appendix B.

TABLE 37

Construction apprentices in training by age group up to March 2026

	Total number of apprentices	Share of total (%)
Under 25	83,744	76.5%
Between 25 and 39	21,622	19.8%
40 and older	4,052	3.7%
Other/unknown	1	0.0%
Total	**109,420**	**100.0%**

Source: Master Builders Australia analysis of NCVER Apprentices and Trainees Statistical Report (March 2026)

APPENDIX A

STATE AND TERRITORY JOB VACANCIES

TABLE 38

NEW SOUTH WALES – Number of building and construction-related job ads (August 2026)

	Job ads in August 2026	Change on July 2026 (%)	Change on August 2025 (%)	Job ads in July 2026	Job ads in August 2025
Construction Managers	1,157	+1.8%	+9.0%	1,136	1,062
Bricklayers and Stonemasons	23	+6.3%	-12.8%	21	26
Carpenters and Joiners	249	+3.0%	-18.0%	242	304
Floor Finishers	5	-15.8%	0.0%	6	5
Painting Trades Workers	123	+8.8%	-1.3%	113	125
Glaziers	15	+7.0%	-27.0%	14	21
Plasterers	17	-5.6%	+21.4%	18	14
Roof Tilers	30	+1.1%	-1.1%	30	31
Wall and Floor Tilers	28	+12.0%	+31.3%	25	21
Plumbers	343	+2.3%	-4.0%	335	357
Building and Plumbing Labourers	204	-1.9%	+12.3%	208	181
Concreters	32	+3.2%	-4.0%	31	33
Fencers	5	0.0%	-42.3%	5	9
Insulation and Home Improvement Installers	14	+5.0%	-19.2%	13	17
Structural Steel Construction Workers	70	+22.9%	+13.6%	57	61

Source: Master Builders Australia analysis of Jobs & Skills Australia Internet Vacancy Index (August 2026)

TABLE 39

VICTORIA – Number of building and construction-related job ads
(August 2026)

	Job ads in August 2026	Change on July 2026 (%)	Change on August 2025 (%)	Job ads in July 2026	Job ads in August 2025
Construction Managers	803	+0.9%	+14.9%	795	698
Bricklayers and Stonemasons	15	-18.5%	-24.1%	18	19
Carpenters and Joiners	182	+1.9%	+11.9%	179	163
Floor Finishers	6	-5.3%	-43.8%	6	11
Painting Trades Workers	79	+5.4%	-16.6%	75	94
Glaziers	12	-2.6%	-11.9%	13	14
Plasterers	10	+11.5%	+31.8%	9	7
Roof Tilers	13	0.0%	+25.8%	13	10
Wall and Floor Tilers	12	+9.4%	-22.2%	11	15
Plumbers	385	+3.9%	+10.7%	371	348
Building and Plumbing Labourers	111	+3.1%	+28.2%	107	86
Concreters	18	-9.8%	-1.8%	20	19
Fencers	10	-11.8%	-14.3%	11	12
Insulation and Home Improvement Installers	14	+20.0%	-12.5%	12	16
Structural Steel Construction Workers	21	-9.9%	-28.1%	24	30

Source: Master Builders Australia analysis of Jobs & Skills Australia Internet Vacancy Index (August 2026)

TABLE 40

QUEENSLAND – Number of building and construction-related job ads
(August 2026)

	Job ads in August 2026	Change on July 2026 (%)	Change on August 2025 (%)	Job ads in July 2026	Job ads in August 2025
Construction Managers	1,017	+1.9%	+11.8%	997	910
Bricklayers and Stonemasons	18	-8.5%	-37.2%	20	29
Carpenters and Joiners	297	+0.9%	-0.9%	294	300
Floor Finishers	14	+5.0%	+50.0%	13	9
Painting Trades Workers	160	+8.8%	-15.2%	147	189
Glaziers	30	-16.5%	+21.3%	36	25
Plasterers	21	-14.7%	-14.7%	25	25
Roof Tilers	56	+3.1%	+40.3%	54	40
Wall and Floor Tilers	30	+6.0%	-6.3%	28	32
Plumbers	332	+0.8%	+8.6%	330	306
Building and Plumbing Labourers	336	+11.7%	+11.1%	301	303
Concreters	54	-4.2%	-5.3%	56	57
Fencers	12	+29.6%	+20.7%	9	10
Insulation and Home Improvement Installers	23	+25.9%	+15.3%	18	20
Structural Steel Construction Workers	111	+19.4%	+41.7%	93	78

Source: Master Builders Australia analysis of Jobs & Skills Australia Internet Vacancy Index (August 2026)

TABLE 41

SOUTH AUSTRALIA – Number of building and construction-related job ads (August 2026)

	Job ads in August 2026	Change on July 2026 (%)	Change on August 2025 (%)	Job ads in July 2026	Job ads in August 2025
Construction Managers	268	+0.4%	+14.9%	267	233
Bricklayers and Stonemasons	4	-8.3%	-42.1%	4	6
Carpenters and Joiners	75	-6.6%	-3.0%	80	77
Floor Finishers	4	+10.0%	-26.7%	3	5
Painting Trades Workers	35	+1.9%	-10.2%	35	39
Glaziers	3	-9.1%	-16.7%	4	4
Plasterers	4	-38.9%	-54.2%	6	8
Roof Tilers	8	-16.7%	+25.0%	10	7
Wall and Floor Tilers	5	-11.1%	-42.9%	6	9
Plumbers	102	+1.3%	-2.9%	100	105
Building and Plumbing Labourers	86	-1.9%	+12.1%	88	77
Concreters	9	-29.7%	-45.8%	12	16
Fencers	4	-7.7%	+9.1%	4	4
Insulation and Home Improvement Installers	9	-12.5%	+33.3%	11	7
Structural Steel Construction Workers	23	-2.9%	+4.6%	23	22

Source: Master Builders Australia analysis of Jobs & Skills Australia Internet Vacancy Index (August 2026)

TABLE 42

WESTERN AUSTRALIA – Number of building and construction-related job ads (August 2026)

	Job ads in August 2026	Change on July 2026 (%)	Change on August 2025 (%)	Job ads in July 2026	Job ads in August 2025
Construction Managers	514	-1.0%	+17.1%	519	439
Bricklayers and Stonemasons	16	-28.8%	-30.9%	22	23
Carpenters and Joiners	172	+12.4%	+8.2%	153	159
Floor Finishers	7	-4.8%	+11.1%	7	6
Painting Trades Workers	153	+0.7%	+19.5%	152	128
Glaziers	26	+5.5%	+2.7%	24	25
Plasterers	12	-2.6%	+48.0%	13	8
Roof Tilers	11	+3.0%	+88.9%	11	6
Wall and Floor Tilers	15	-9.8%	-8.0%	17	17
Plumbers	248	+0.1%	+7.2%	247	231
Building and Plumbing Labourers	196	+9.9%	+9.7%	179	179
Concreters	41	+8.0%	+25.8%	38	32
Fencers	9	0.0%	+7.7%	9	9
Insulation and Home Improvement Installers	20	+1.7%	+42.9%	20	14
Structural Steel Construction Workers	175	+12.7%	+34.7%	155	130

Source: Master Builders Australia analysis of Jobs & Skills Australia Internet Vacancy Index (August 2026)

TABLE 43

TASMANIA – Number of building and construction-related job ads
(August 2026)

	Job ads in August 2026	Change on July 2026 (%)	Change on August 2025 (%)	Job ads in July 2026	Job ads in August 2025
Construction Managers	36	-3.6%	-30.1%	37	51
Bricklayers and Stonemasons	1	-33.3%	-50.0%	1	1
Carpenters and Joiners	23	+22.8%	+40.0%	19	17
Floor Finishers	1	0.0%	0.0%	1	1
Painting Trades Workers	5	-20.0%	+6.7%	7	5
Glaziers	1	-42.9%	+33.3%	2	1
Plasterers	4	+140.0%	+100.0%	2	2
Roof Tilers	1	+200.0%	+200.0%	0	0
Wall and Floor Tilers	2	+40.0%	+75.0%	2	1
Plumbers	14	+10.5%	+110.0%	13	7
Building and Plumbing Labourers	16	+30.6%	+23.7%	12	13
Concreters	1	+100.0%	-33.3%	1	2
Fencers	1	-25.0%	+50.0%	1	1
Insulation and Home Improvement Installers	2	+100.0%	+50.0%	1	1
Structural Steel Construction Workers	1	0.0%	-50.0%	1	1

Source: Master Builders Australia analysis of Jobs & Skills Australia Internet Vacancy Index (August 2026)

TABLE 44

NORTHERN TERRITORY – Number of building and construction-related job ads (August 2026)

	Job ads in August 2026	Change on July 2026 (%)	Change on August 2025 (%)	Job ads in July 2026	Job ads in August 2025
Construction Managers	51	+3.4%	-11.6%	49	57
Bricklayers and Stonemasons	1	-50.0%	0.0%	1	1
Carpenters and Joiners	22	+14.0%	+16.1%	19	19
Floor Finishers	1	+100.0%	+100.0%	0	0
Painting Trades Workers	13	0.0%	-5.0%	13	13
Glaziers	0	-75.0%	-50.0%	1	1
Plasterers	2	-37.5%	0.0%	3	2
Roof Tilers	1	+300.0%	+100.0%	0	1
Wall and Floor Tilers	1	+100.0%	0.0%	0	1
Plumbers	25	0.0%	-5.0%	25	27
Building and Plumbing Labourers	21	+6.7%	+20.8%	20	18
Concreters	0	-100.0%	-100.0%	1	1
Fencers	1	+100.0%	0.0%	1	1
Insulation and Home Improvement Installers	1	-25.0%	-40.0%	1	2
Structural Steel Construction Workers	5	-31.8%	-11.8%	7	6

Source: Master Builders Australia analysis of Jobs & Skills Australia Internet Vacancy Index (August 2026)

TABLE 45

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY – Number of building and construction-related job ads (August 2026)

	Job ads in August 2026	Change on July 2026 (%)	Change on August 2025 (%)	Job ads in July 2026	Job ads in August 2025
Construction Managers	142	+3.4%	+17.7%	137	120
Bricklayers and Stonemasons	1	+200.0%	-25.0%	0	1
Carpenters and Joiners	23	-4.2%	+38.0%	24	17
Floor Finishers	0	0.0%	N/A	0	0
Painting Trades Workers	5	+150.0%	-16.7%	2	6
Glaziers	2	0.0%	+25.0%	2	1
Plasterers	1	-33.3%	-66.7%	1	2
Roof Tilers	1	-20.0%	-60.0%	2	3
Wall and Floor Tilers	2	+66.7%	+25.0%	1	1
Plumbers	31	+14.6%	+30.6%	27	24
Building and Plumbing Labourers	14	+2.4%	+82.6%	14	8
Concreters	3	-16.7%	+66.7%	4	2
Fencers	1	+33.3%	-42.9%	1	2
Insulation and Home Improvement Installers	1	+100.0%	-60.0%	0	2
Structural Steel Construction Workers	0	-100.0%	-100.0%	1	1

Source: Master Builders Australia analysis of Jobs & Skills Australia Internet Vacancy Index (August 2026)

APPENDIX B

STATE AND TERRITORY APPRENTICE BREAKDOWNS

NEW SOUTH WALES

TABLE 46

NEW SOUTH WALES – Trends in construction apprenticeships up to March 2026

	Year to March 2022	Year to March 2023	Year to March 2024	Year to March 2025	Year to March 2026	Change (+/-##)	Change (+/-%)
Commencements	15,516	12,979	11,621	10,427	11,382	+955	+9.2%
Completions	6,424	8,291	6,822	7,841	8,150	+309	+3.9%
Cancellations / withdrawals	10,403	10,912	10,651	9,918	9,465	-453	-4.6%
In-training (at end of period)	39,461	37,763	36,590	33,868	32,122	-1,746	-5.2%

Source: Master Builders Australia analysis of NCVER Apprentices and Trainees Statistical Report (March 2026)

Chart 6 - CONSTRUCTION APPRENTICE TRENDS IN NEW SOUTH WALES UP TO MARCH 2026

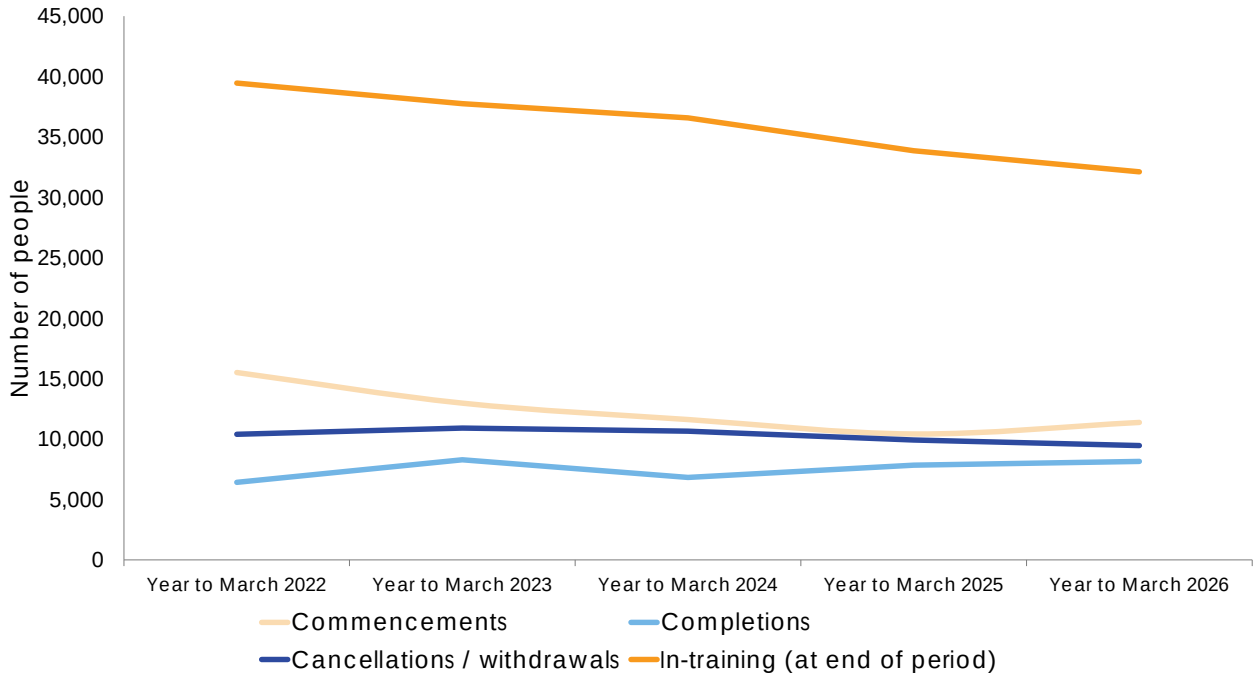


TABLE 47

VICTORIA – Trends in construction apprenticeships up to March 2026

	Year to March 2022	Year to March 2023	Year to March 2024	Year to March 2025	Year to March 2026	Change (+/-##)	Change (+/-%)
Commencements	15,569	14,873	12,047	10,499	9,532	-967	-9.2%
Completions	6,348	7,369	6,443	6,676	7,671	+995	+14.9%
Cancellations / withdrawals	10,245	10,543	9,882	8,954	8,870	-84	-0.9%
In-training (at end of period)	36,003	35,026	33,782	32,367	29,268	-3,099	-9.6%

Source: Master Builders Australia analysis of NCVER Apprentices and Trainees Statistical Report (March 2026)

Chart 7 - CONSTRUCTION APPRENTICE TRENDS IN VICTORIA UP TO MARCH 2026

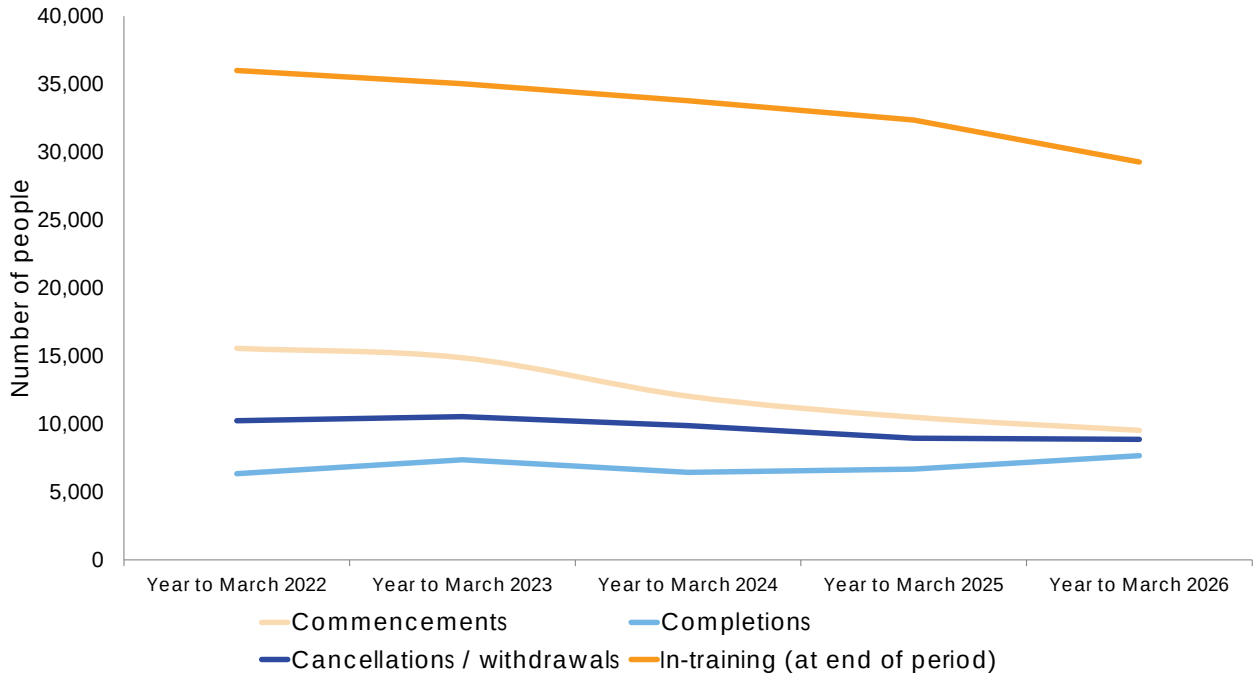


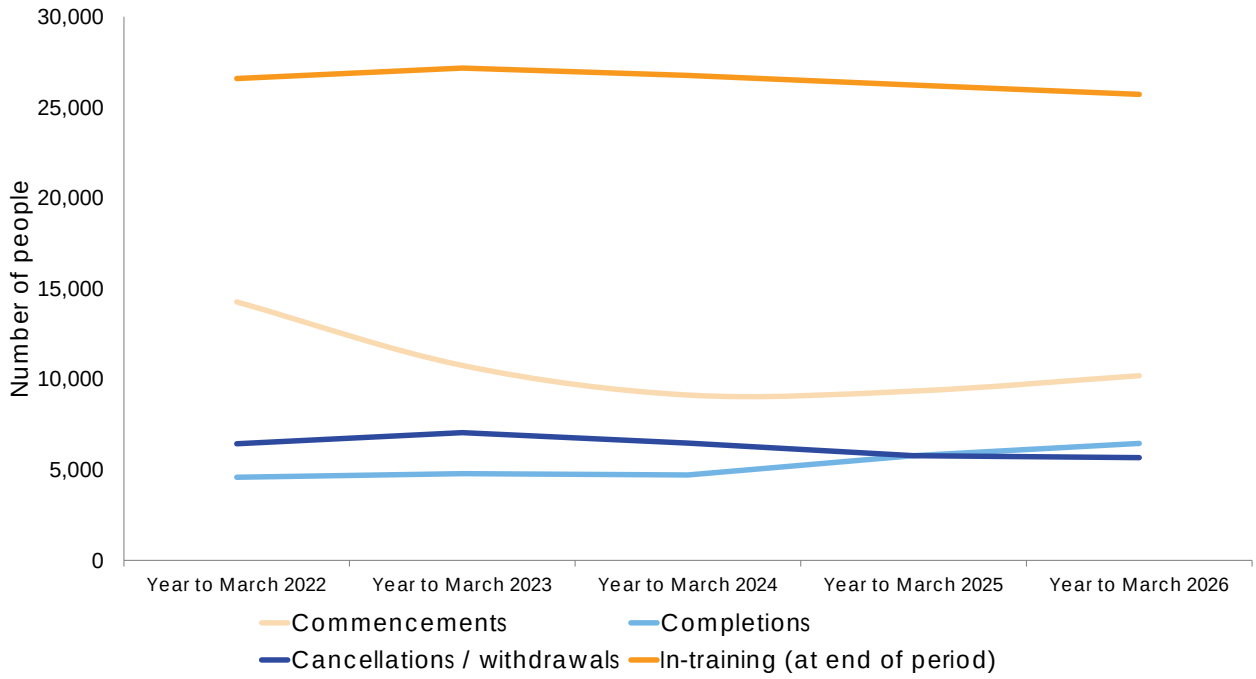
TABLE 48

QUEENSLAND – Trends in construction apprenticeships up to March 2026

	Year to March 2022	Year to March 2023	Year to March 2024	Year to March 2025	Year to March 2026	Change (+/-##)	Change (+/-%)
Commencements	14,259	10,756	9,124	9,343	10,189	+846	+9.1%
Completions	4,587	4,781	4,710	5,775	6,451	+676	+11.7%
Cancellations / withdrawals	6,436	7,046	6,471	5,774	5,670	-104	-1.8%
In-training (at end of period)	26,591	27,163	26,756	26,229	25,715	-514	-2.0%

Source: Master Builders Australia analysis of NCVER Apprentices and Trainees Statistical Report (March 2026)

Chart 8 - CONSTRUCTION APPRENTICE TRENDS IN QUEENSLAND UP TO MARCH 2026



SOUTH AUSTRALIA

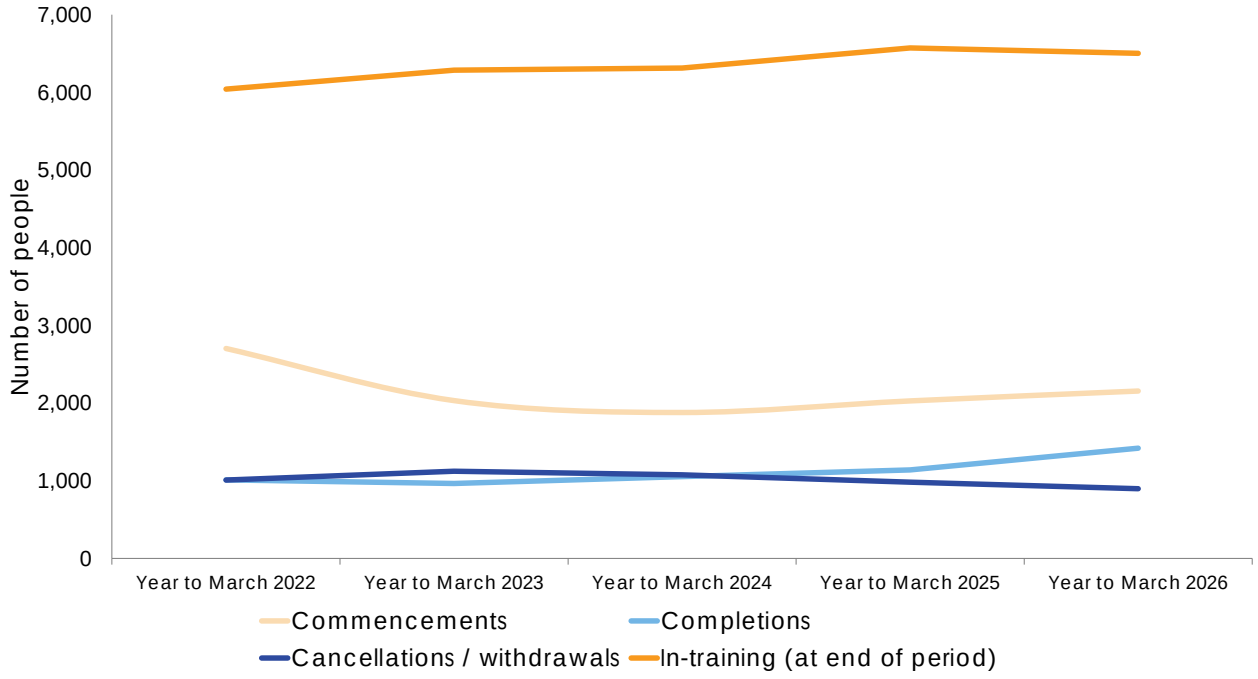
TABLE 49

SOUTH AUSTRALIA – Trends in construction apprenticeships up to March 2026

	Year to March 2022	Year to March 2023	Year to March 2024	Year to March 2025	Year to March 2026	Change (+/-##)	Change (+/-%)
Commencements	2,703	2,033	1,880	2,029	2,156	+127	+6.3%
Completions	1,012	966	1,053	1,140	1,420	+280	+24.6%
Cancellations / withdrawals	1,009	1,123	1,077	983	897	-86	-8.7%
In-training (at end of period)	6,043	6,287	6,314	6,572	6,502	-70	-1.1%

Source: Master Builders Australia analysis of NCVER Apprentices and Trainees Statistical Report (March 2026)

Chart 9 - CONSTRUCTION APPRENTICE TRENDS IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA UP TO MARCH 2026



WESTERN AUSTRALIA

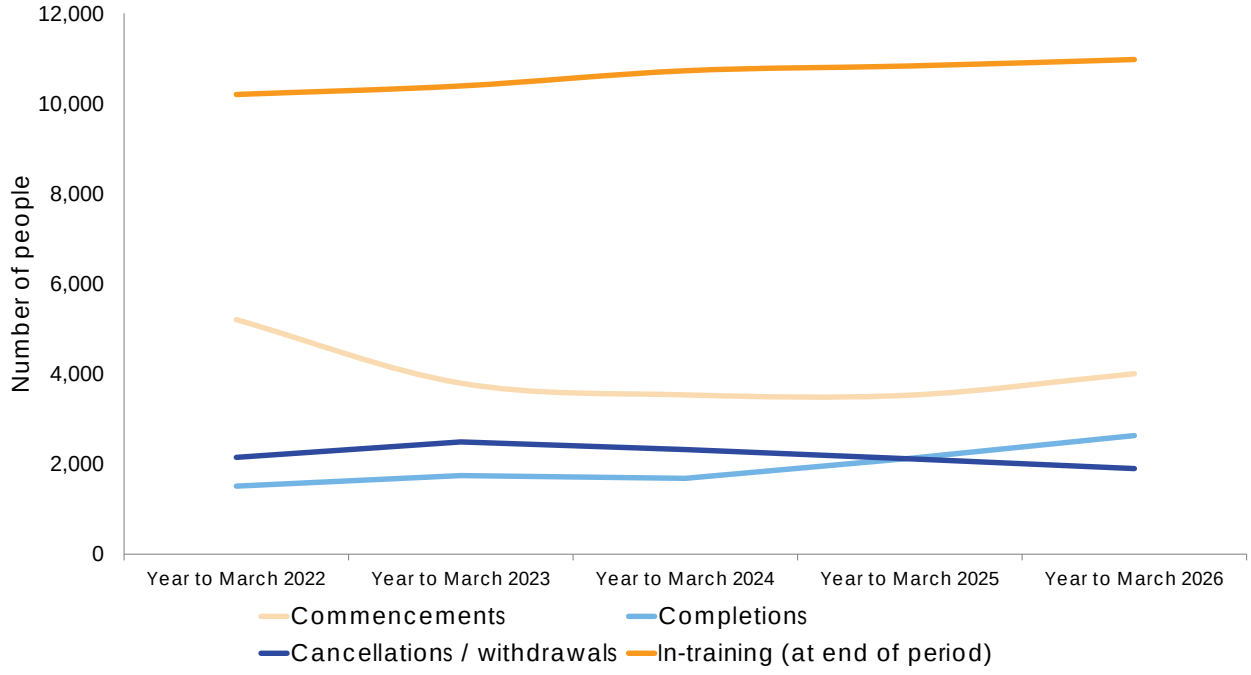
TABLE 50

WESTERN AUSTRALIA – Trends in construction apprenticeships up to March 2026

	Year to March 2022	Year to March 2023	Year to March 2024	Year to March 2025	Year to March 2026	Change (+/-##)	Change (+/-%)
Commencements	5,205	3,795	3,535	3,529	4,004	+475	+13.5%
Completions	1,509	1,743	1,685	2,128	2,632	+504	+23.7%
Cancellations / withdrawals	2,149	2,491	2,322	2,115	1,899	-216	-10.2%
In-training (at end of period)	10,198	10,387	10,725	10,831	10,974	+143	+1.3%

Source: Master Builders Australia analysis of NCVER Apprentices and Trainees Statistical Report (March 2026)

Chart 10 - CONSTRUCTION APPRENTICE TRENDS IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA UP TO MARCH 2026



TASMANIA

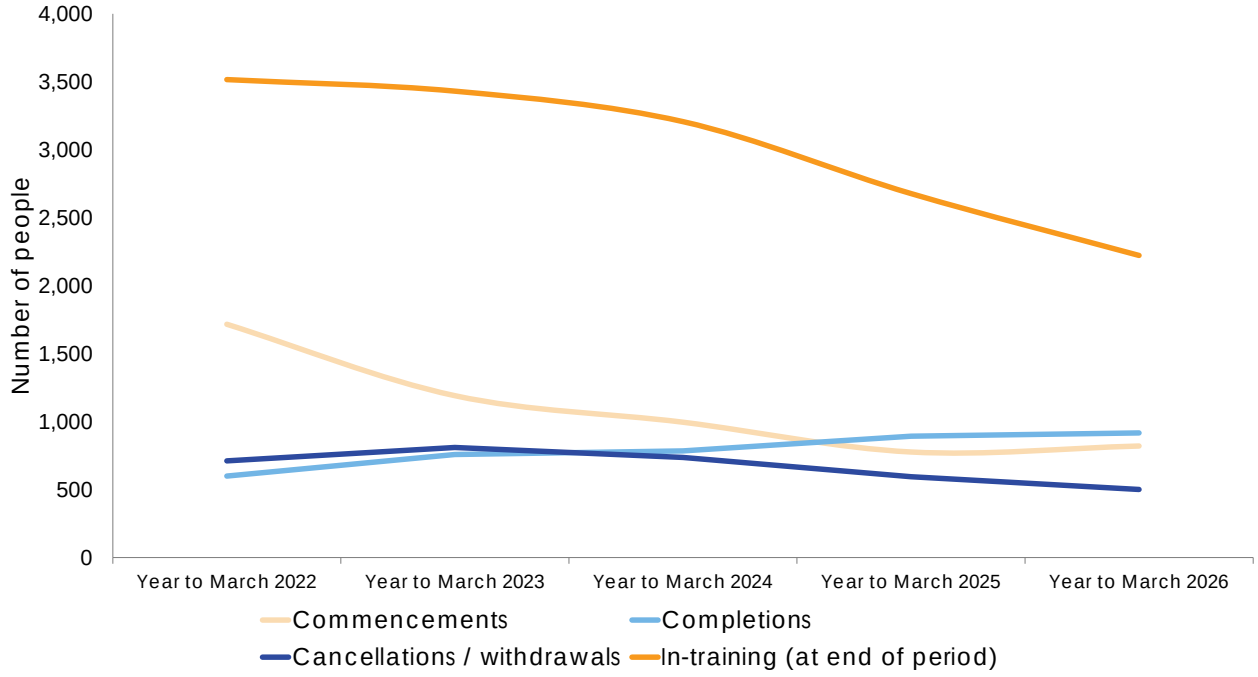
TABLE 51

TASMANIA – Trends in construction apprenticeships up to March 2026

	Year to March 2022	Year to March 2023	Year to March 2024	Year to March 2025	Year to March 2026	Change (+/-##)	Change (+/-%)
Commencements	1,716	1,191	996	777	821	+44	+5.7%
Completions	600	758	785	893	917	+24	+2.7%
Cancellations / withdrawals	712	810	737	595	501	-94	-15.8%
In-training (at end of period)	3,516	3,431	3,207	2,678	2,223	-455	-17.0%

Source: Master Builders Australia analysis of NCVER Apprentices and Trainees Statistical Report (March 2026)

Chart 11 - CONSTRUCTION APPRENTICE TRENDS IN TASMANIA UP TO MARCH 2026



NORTHERN TERRITORY

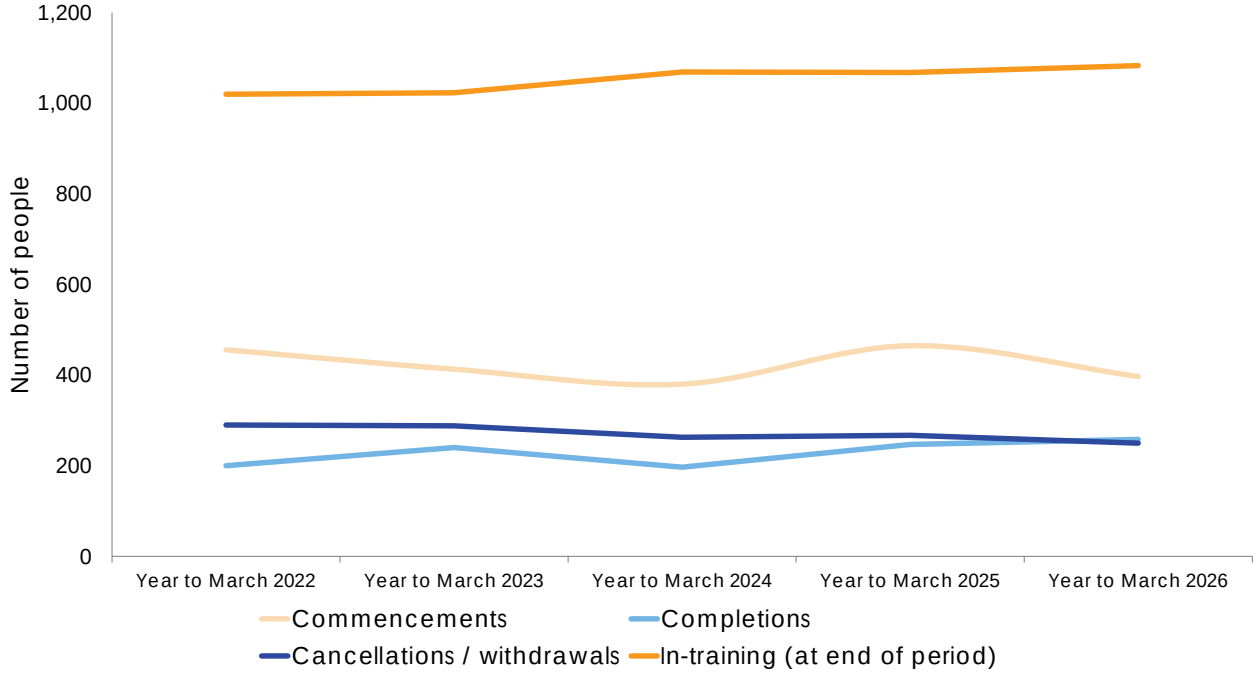
TABLE 52

NORTHERN TERRITORY – Trends in construction apprenticeships up to March 2026

	Year to March 2022	Year to March 2023	Year to March 2024	Year to March 2025	Year to March 2026	Change (+/-##)	Change (+/-%)
Commencements	456	413	380	465	397	-68	-14.6%
Completions	200	240	197	247	258	+11	+4.5%
Cancellations / withdrawals	290	288	263	267	250	-17	-6.4%
In-training (at end of period)	1,020	1,023	1,069	1,068	1,083	+15	+1.4%

Source: Master Builders Australia analysis of NCVER Apprentices and Trainees Statistical Report (March 2026)

Chart 12 - CONSTRUCTION APPRENTICE TRENDS IN NORTHERN TERRITORY UP TO MARCH 2026



AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

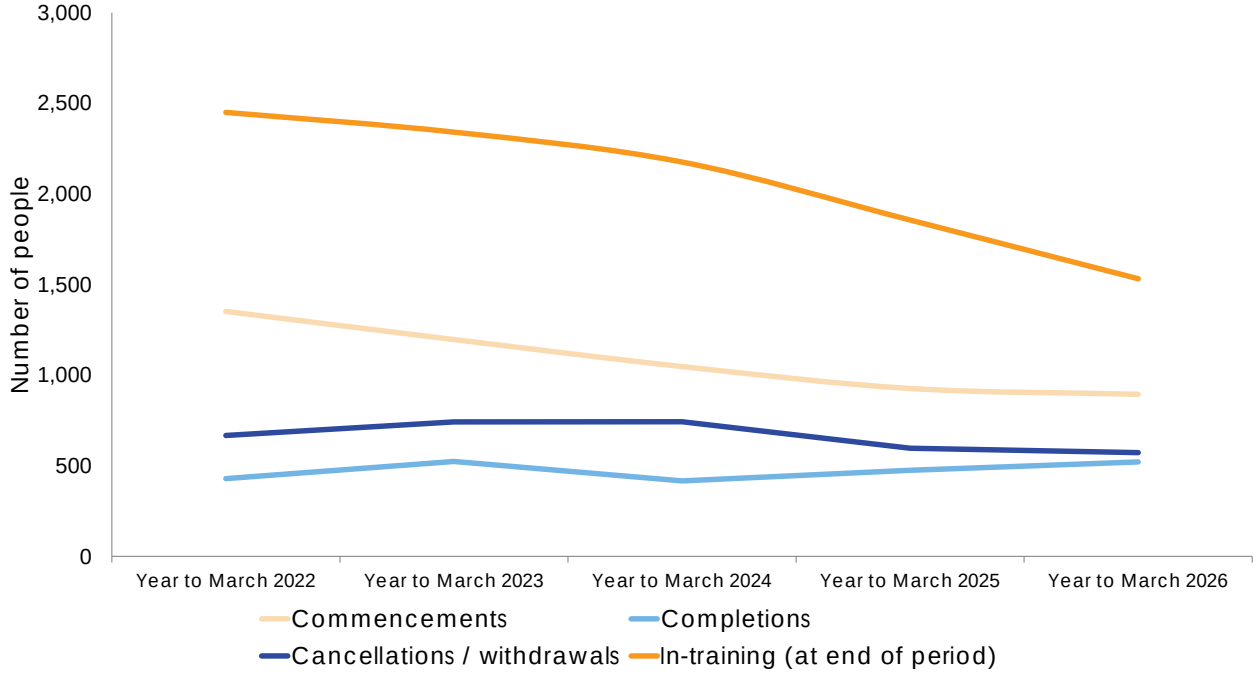
TABLE 53

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY – Trends in construction apprenticeships up to March 2026

	Year to March 2022	Year to March 2023	Year to March 2024	Year to March 2025	Year to March 2026	Change (+/-##)	Change (+/-%)
Commencements	1,351	1,196	1,047	926	894	-32	-3.5%
Completions	429	524	416	475	521	+46	+9.7%
Cancellations / withdrawals	667	742	743	597	572	-25	-4.2%
In-training (at end of period)	2,450	2,341	2,176	1,856	1,532	-324	-17.5%

Source: Master Builders Australia analysis of NCVER Apprentices and Trainees Statistical Report (March 2026)

Chart 13 - CONSTRUCTION APPRENTICE TRENDS IN AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY UP TO MARCH 2026



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MASTER BUILDERS AUSTRALIA

Unit 4, Level 1, 40 Blackall Street
Barton ACT 2600
02 6202 8888
forecasts@masterbuilders.com.au

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