

MAY 2023

NATIONAL OFFICE MONTHLY REPORT

FROM THE ACTING CEO

Industrial relations and the Federal Budget were front and centre of our advocacy during May. The proposed 'employee-like' and 'Same Job, Same Pay' reforms threaten the freedom of choice for tradies to be their own boss and represent one of the most significant and real attacks on the rights of subcontractors and independent contractors. While we continue to engage with the Government where possible, we hold grave concerns the Government is not listening to the concerns raised by the industry and broader business community. The legislation, as foreshadowed in their discussion papers, go far beyond their intention to target certain sectors of the economy, like the gig economy and genuine labour-hire firms. Over the coming weeks, we will launch several campaigns on this legislation. We met with MPs from both Labor

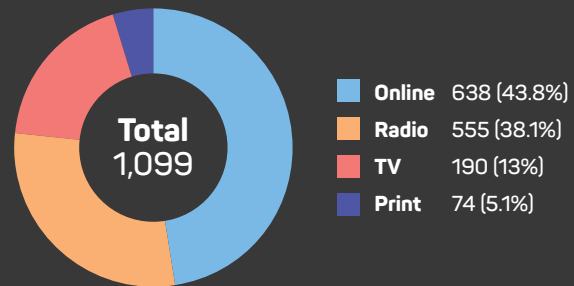
and the Coalition to discuss our concerns around the housing crisis and the levers that need to be pulled at a state and federal level to address supply-side barriers. This includes planning reforms, zoning, developer chargers, labour market shortages and fixed-price contracting. Productivity is starting to emerge in the national debate as an important driver for economic growth and lowering inflation. Unfortunately, the Federal Budget missed this opportunity and failed to provide big picture fiscal policy measures to tackle the challenges in this economic environment.

Finally, thank you to the National Office staff who have stepped up in Denita's absence. We wish her a speedy recovery and look forward to her return in the coming days.

ADVOCACY

May saw a lot of activity focused around the Federal Budget, the housing crisis and the next tranche of industrial relations reforms.

We responded to around 50 media queries which generated around 1,100 news items across print, online, TV and radio at a national level alone. Our potential audience reach over the period was 32.60 million.



FEDERAL BUDGET

The Federal Budget was formed against a difficult economic backdrop which saw the Government make moderate changes across multiple sectors to reign in spending. However, it missed an opportunity to boost business productivity, a critical tool in the inflation-busting toolkit.

There were measures to support SMEs on specific issues including: greater flexibility for the ATO to support small business in navigating tax issues, increase to the instant asset write-off, small business energy incentive and relief fund, and digital technology uptake will be of assistance. Nevertheless, it was disappointing that business productivity was not a centrepiece of the budget.

We issued a [media release](#) and participated in various media interviews, including Sky News and Ausbiz.

Business & Industry
Master Builders CEO urges housing reform ahead of the budget



INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

We [released](#) our submission to the Government's discussion paper on 'employee-like' forms of work, which kick-started our advocacy against the proposed industrial relations reforms. The proposed 'employee-like' policy goes beyond the Government's purported original scope of supporting gig workers and leaves the door open to swallow industries across the economy. This includes well-established forms of work, including independent contractors and self-employed tradies. We emphasised the dynamic nature and array of specialist contractors required on a project mean it is simply not feasible for businesses to have to permanently employ independent contractors, and critically, it takes away the rights of independent contractors to run their own business. This had considerable pick up with a front-page story on The Australian and a number of media interviews over the course of the week.

HOUSING

Building approval figures released over the month confirmed our forecasts that we will fall well short of the 200,000 homes needed to be built each year. According to the ABS, new home building approvals sank by 8.1 per cent over the month, hitting their lowest levels since 2012. To ensure we continue to supply enough homes to house all Australians, governments need to look at what impact their regulations and policies have on the cost of building homes and on the cost of building social infrastructure. We issued media releases and did a number of TV and radio interviews responding to the data.

PRODUCTIVITY

The release of Australian industry performance data 2021-22 by the Australian Bureau of Statistics confirms the impact of fixed-price contracts, high inflation, supply chain disruptions and labour market shortages on the building and construction sector viability.

Building and construction industry net profits dropped by 9.3 per cent during 2021-22, despite a 10 per cent increase in the industry's total income during the year.

However, the rise in income was eclipsed by a 14.1 per cent jump in the industry's total expense bill, with the biggest underlying impact stemming from soaring costs of goods and materials which increased by 20.4 per cent.

We used the opportunity to advocate for a conversation around fixed-price contracts and appropriate risk-sharing between banks, developers and builders.



Hamah Mottram works with a saw at a Waterloo site on Tuesday as Perth-based construction company owner Robert Shaw looks on. OLIVIA MORTY

No worse time for IR reforms: builder

contractors in decades, only after Covid-19. "It's a whole cultural change," he says. "The downturn in demand and housing starts in the second half of this year is only actually going to date - already the highest annual figure in this going back to 2015-16. The weekly data, which is a whole cultural change that, for example, over 2.5 years ago, it would be impossible to imagine."

Industries unite for IR war

■ BUILDERS, MINERS REJECT LABORS WORKPLACE REFORMS ■ CONSULTATION BRANDED A SHAM

EXCLUSIVE
GEOFF CHAMBERS
CHIEF POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

The building and mining industries have united to oppose the government's proposed second round of industrial relations reforms. Builders and miners say the reforms are a "sham" and will harm the economy. They argue that the government is trying to force through changes without proper consultation.

Keep CFMEU away from 'fair umpire', say builders

Construction
David Marin-Guzman
Workplace correspondent

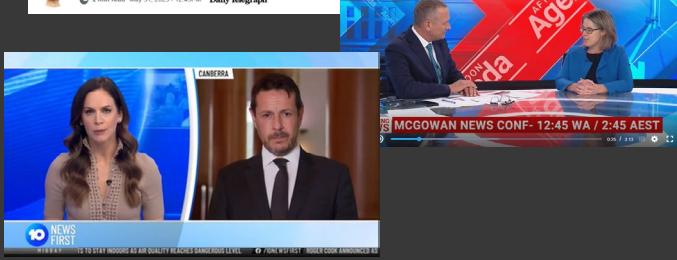
Builders fear the Albanese government's review of the Fair Work Ombudsman's operations could divert resources away from enforcing coercion and industrial laws against the CFMEU and threaten the watchdog's independence.

IR battle reaches deep into nation's aspirational heart



Australian building approvals hit 11-year low in blow to hopes of solution to rental, housing crisis

Australia's building approvals have slumped to an 11-year low, in a fresh new blow to hopes of a quick solution to our housing and rental crisis.



'No silver bullet to solve housing crisis': Millions of homes outdated

Hours ahead of federal budget 2023, Australia's peak builders' body says "no silver bullet" will solve the housing crisis, as experts warn millions of existing homes also need upgrades.

Builders stuck with old fixed price contracts while new customers stay away

Kim Macdonald | The West Australian
Wed, 31 May 2023 10:35AM | [+](#)

COMMITTEE INQUIRY INTO MIGRATION

National Director Industry Policy, Alex Waldren, appeared before the migration pathway to nation building parliament committee inquiry on 12 May. In her [opening statement](#), Alex emphasised the need to grow our population to support growth and productivity and how an improved migration system will support this. Her comments were picked up across WIN News that evening.



NEW WEBSITE

This month we launched the new Master Builders website with a key focus on our various advocacy initiatives. We have a housing campaign underway and will ramp up our industrial relations campaign in the coming weeks.

PODCAST

This month our two podcasts have focused on the lead-up to the end of financial year, featuring interviews with Assistant Commissioner Tim Loh from the ATO and Aaron Froud, Partner at Bellchambers Barrett. Both provide tips for builders around the latest tax news and tips for business growth. You can listen [here](#).



MASTER BUILDERS AUSTRALIA

2023 NATIONAL BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARDS

6 SEPTEMBER 2023 • SYDNEY
6.00-10.00PM



APPLICATIONS OPEN NOW

NATIONAL ECONOMIC DATA SNAPSHOT

NON-RESIDENTIAL BUILDING

April 2023

2,427 non-residential building jobs valued at **\$5,137.7 million** were approved in AUS.

\$2,116,896 average value of non-residential building jobs approved.

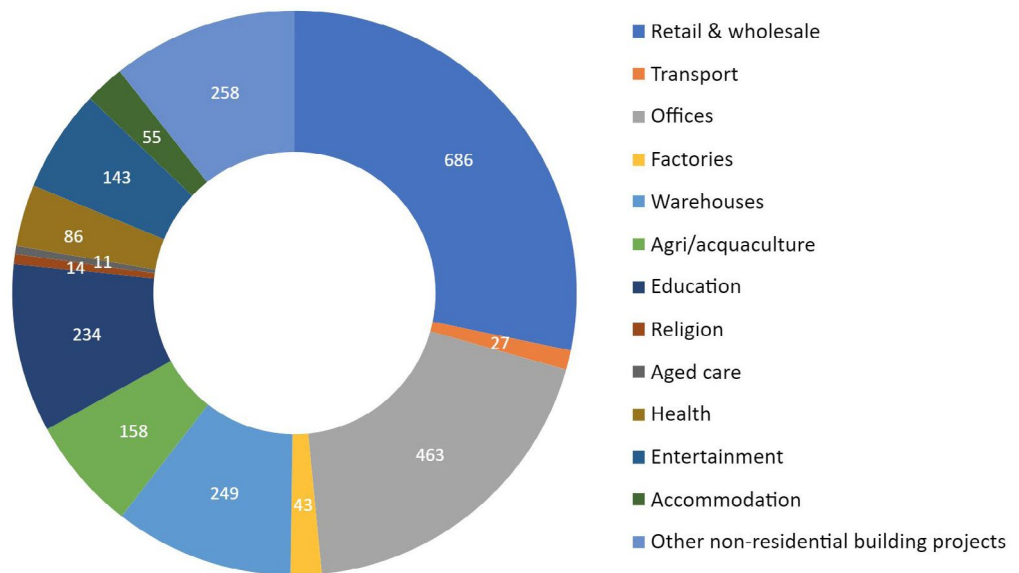
34.0% public sector share of non-residential building jobs approved.

Non-residential building jobs approved

Building Product Inflation %



+11.4%
Year to
March 2023



CIVIL CONSTRUCTION

Civil construction work December 2022 quarter (\$m)



Civil works by activity, December 2022 quarter (\$m)

Activity	Started	Done	To be done
Bridges, railways and harbours	\$3,362.3	\$3,947.0	\$18,893.7
Roads, highways and subdivisions	\$6,435.9	\$6,528.8	\$33,419.3
Water storage and supply, sewerage and drainage	\$1,916.0	\$1,843.0	\$8,026.2
Electricity generation, transmission and distribution incl pipelines	\$6,048.8	\$4,802.3	\$14,482.3
Telecommunications	\$1,817.8	\$1,757.6	\$398.2
Heavy industry	\$7,101.8	\$6,014.6	\$34,492.7
Recreation & other	\$2,756.6	\$3,943.4	\$2,649.4
TOTAL	\$29,439.1	\$28,836.8	\$112,361.8

RESIDENTIAL BUILDING

House prices: year to April 2023



Capital city



Regional markets

Unit prices: year to April 2023



Capital city



Regional markets

Rental price changes in Australia

+1.6%
During Mar
2023 quarter



+4.9%
Over year to
Mar 2023
quarter

Building approvals: April 2023



11,594

Total new home
building approvals
-24.1%
change on
Apr 2022



8,049

Detached houses
-18.2%
change on
Apr 2022



3,545

Units/apartments
-34.9%
change on
Apr 2022



\$836.8 million

Home renovations
-4.1%
change on
Apr 2022

Residential building work during December 2022 quarter

COMMENCED NEW HOMES

183,388

All dwellings

119,736

Detached houses

63,652

Apartments/units

COMPLETED NEW HOMES

172,388

All dwellings

114,688

Detached houses

57,700

Apartments/units

New homes still under construction on 31 December 2022



238,475

All dwellings

105,111

Detached houses

133,364

Apartments/units

New homes approved but not yet commenced as at 31 December 2022



37,616

All dwellings

11,469

Detached houses

26,147

Apartments/units

Lending indicators: March 2023

8,266

Loans to owner occupiers for
construction of new home
-35.1% change on Mar 2022

4,694

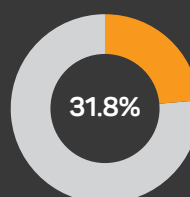
Loans to investors for construction
of new home
-4.6% change on Mar 2022

4,577

Loans to owner occupiers for
residential land purchase
-26.3% change on Mar 2022

2,451

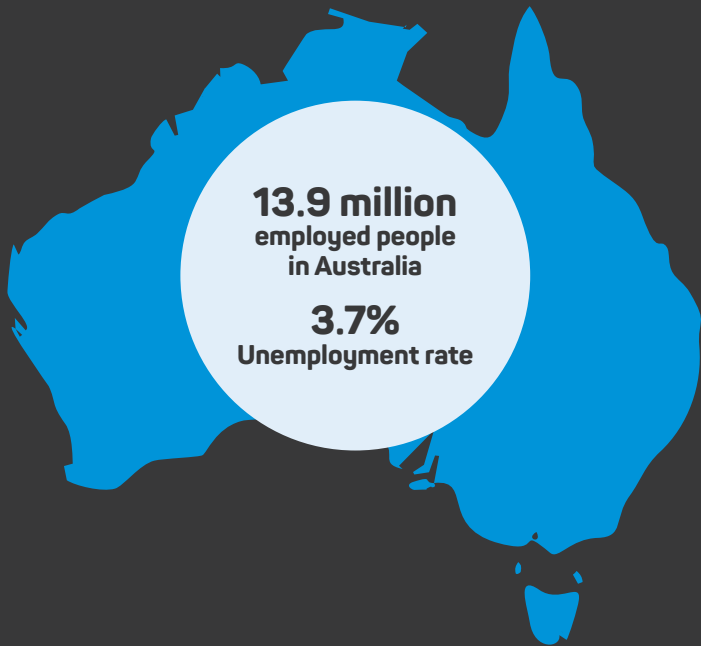
Loans to investors for residential
land purchase
-21.7% change on Mar 2022



First Home Buyers
share of loans

LABOUR MARKET

April 2023



CONSTRUCTION WORKFORCE



1,318,252
People employed in
construction in Australia

335,813 Resi/commercial
builders

144,056 Civil construction
builders

837,395 Resi/commercial
subcontractors



Of Australian
jobs are in
construction



Account for women
working in Australian
construction

CONSTRUCTION BUSINESSES

445,081

Construction Businesses
(at June 2022)

Number of workers



258,272	0
180,814	1-19
5,790	20-199
205	+200

Turnover



20.5%
turnover >\$50,000

1.4%
turnover <\$10m

CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY APPRENTICES AND TRAINEES

121,490

Construction apprentices in-training
(at September 2022)



54,824 new starts
(year to Sept 2022)

23,837 completions
(year to Sept 2022)



Female share of construction
apprentice commencements
(year to Sept 2022)



6,212
apprentice carpenters
in training



3,913
apprentice plumbers
in training

PRIORITY POLICY ISSUES

POLICY AREA	KEY ACTIONS	ISSUES PROGRESSING
Building Regulation	<p>Standards Australia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demolition Standard update Pool Barriers <p>Office of the ABCB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building Codes Committee Meeting Technical Reference Group Waterproofing and water shedding <p>Department of Climate Change, Energy, Environment and Water</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residential Energy Efficiency Disclosure Initiative (REEDI) <p>Sub-Committee Meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Building Regulation and Jobs and Skills Subcommittee held its first meeting to consider development of information content for the member network on Green Living and areas of innovation for the sector. <p>Australian Sustainable Build Environment Council (ASBEC)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meetings on subcommittee work streams including: Sustainable decarbonised communities; existing building stock; and Regulations, standards and codes. <p>Insurance Council of Australia & Planning Institute of Australia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meetings regarding preparations for and hosting a joint forum in Western Sydney on planning for disaster resilience in late July. <p>ABCB CPD materials</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ABCB has released free educational material for continuing professional development (CPD) providers. The material is designed to help practitioners better understand the NCC. For more information and to request access to its new NCC CPD micromodules, visit the ABCB website here. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BRC national committee online meeting 29 June and face to face in Sydney 27 July. Building Ministers Meeting Friday 9 June. Australian Building Codes Board engagement. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Energy Efficiency for commercial buildings is the focus for 2025 NCC. This will include class 3 to 9 buildings and public areas in class 2 buildings. This will focus on services, distributed energy resources and electric vehicle charging. Condensation mitigation Weather and Waterproofing is another focus. Standards Australia – The following key standards are currently under review. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bushfire Standard Tiling Standard Pool Barrier Standard Demolition Standard Insurance Council, Planning Institute of Australia and MBA forum in Western Sydney on planning for disaster resilience. Australian Sustainable Build Environment Council (ASBEC) meeting July, Adelaide.

Contracts

Standards Australia – General Conditions of Contract Review

- The National Office again attended an all-day meeting this month as a member of the technical committee tasked with the review of AS 4000.
- Regrettably, we continue to have cause to remind Standards Australia that the technical committee must not deviate from the project's narrow scope.
- Once an updated draft of the contract has been settled by the Committee, the document will be released for public consultation period in the latter part of 2023.

Government's proposed IR reform threatens contractual arrangements

- While noting the impact of the Government's proposed 'Employee-like' changes would be largely confined to Industrial Relations, one relevant and concerning element of the proposal involves an extension of the Fair Work Commission's jurisdiction to extend to contractual disputes.
- This is a radical and extremely concerning proposal which, if given effect, would allow the Commission to intervene in commercial contracts involving independent contractors.
- As noted in our recent submissions to Government, and as part of our upcoming IR campaign, we will be strongly advocating any changes that would give the Fair Work Commission additional powers to determine matters with respect to commercial and contractual matters.

Standards Australia Members Mid-Year Forum

- Somewhat relatedly, the National Office attended the Standards Australia mid-year forum, where Members were provided with a briefing on a number of Standards delivery initiatives under development.
- The initiatives include the development of a new app for accessing standards on mobile devices, as well as creating better access for apprentices and trainees.
- We will continue to argue for improved and more affordable access to Australian Standards for the benefit of our members.

Relevant Budget Announcements

- The recent Federal Budget, included a number of contracts-related items including:
 - \$431m for small business start-ups; and
 - \$21m to reduce tax compliance obligations for SMEs.
- However, much of the spending announced above will be paid for by cuts to other programmes, including:
 - \$116m cut to self-employment small business assistance programmes; and
 - \$22m saving by abolishing the Entrepreneurship Facilitators Program from 1 July 2023

National Contracts Advisory Committee

- The NCAC did not meet formally during the reporting period, however, we will continue to work with the Committee on contracts-related matters out of session.
- We are in the process of consulting with the Chair to schedule a short Zoom meeting of NCAC next week, as well as face-to-face meeting in Canberra next month.

Economy & Productivity

- Master Builders Australia attended 2023-24 federal budget stakeholder lock up event and subsequently distributed an overview document for the building industry.
- Master Builders Australia lodged our submission to the Cost of Living inquiry being conducted by federal parliament.
 - We emphasised how better outcomes in our industry with respect to costs and productivity can help improve housing affordability and delivery lower costs for businesses right across the economy.
- Alex Waldren represented Master Builders Australia at the Migration Pathway to Nation Building Parliamentary Committee Inquiry at Parliament House on 12th May 2023. She emphasised how migration has a key role to play in the provision of Australia's future labour supply.
- The May 2023 meeting of National Economics & Productivity Committee took place via Zoom. Business insolvencies, the new National Construction Code and labour shortages remain issues, but Master Builders advocacy continues to be very active right around the jurisdictions.
- Joint Master Builders Australia/CPA Australia Business Health Webinar to take place on Friday, 2nd June 2023.
 - Over 100 participants have already signed up in advance.
- Master Builders Australia and builder members to hold inaugural meeting with new National Housing Supply & Affordability Council to discuss barriers to institutional investment in housing.

Data

- New home building approvals dropped to an 11-year low during April 2023, with particularly sharp reverse for higher density dwellings.
- Aggregate profits of construction industry dropped by 9.3 per cent during 2021-22. Total industry income rose by 10 per cent but was eclipsed by 14.1 per cent growth in expenses, including materials.
- Construction business insolvencies drop back from March's record total but still remain at high level.

Same Job, Same Pay/Employee-like update

As part of the Government’s consultation on its controversial next tranche of workplace relations changes, the National Office made submissions on the so-called ‘Same Job, Same Pay’ & ‘Employee-like’ discussion papers.

Our submissions resulted in a significant amount of media coverage. The Government, including Minister Burke, made numerous comments in the media in direct response to our submissions in an attempt to alleviate some of our concerns around the scope of the changes.

In response, however, we stated that the comments from the Minister were a welcome development but did not go far enough to ease concerns for the 264,000 self-employed tradies around the country who are rightly anxious about the adverse impacts this will have on their future.

We also said that the ‘Employee-like’ proposal must not be a ruse to interfere in every other sector of the economy and disturb existing and long-standing arrangements in the building and construction industry.

And further, if the Government intends to limit this proposal to gig-workers only, then it should make it explicitly clear and give an undertaking to exclude industries outside the gig-economy before the legislation is introduced.

The Government’s discussion papers can be viewed for:

- Same Job, Same Pay (available [here](#)); and
- Extending the powers of the Fair Work Commission to include ‘employee-like forms of work’ (available [here](#)).

Review of the Fair Work Act 2009 small claims procedure

- In addition to more substantive reforms, the Government is also consulting on proposed changes to the current small claims framework with respect to unpaid entitlements.

- Our chief concern is that considered collectively, the changes represent a real and serious threat to the legitimate, lawful and long-standing use of independent contracting as a form of engagement.
- The National Office will roll out its campaign shortly to highlight our significant concerns around the impact of the proposed changes. An overview of the campaign will be presented at the next National Policy Forum.

Fair Work Commission Advisory Committees

EBA Advisory Group

- This month the National Office attended a meeting of the FWC's EBA Advisory Group of which it is a member.
- The group was established as part of the implementation of changes to the enterprise bargaining and enterprise agreement approval processes that commence on 6 June 2023 as a result of the [Fair Work Legislation Amendment \(Secure Jobs, Better Pay\) Act 2022](#).
- The first meeting of the advisory group was co-chaired by DP Masson, National Practice Leader for EBAs and DP Hampton, National Practice Leader for Bargaining.

FWC Small Business Reference Group

- The SBRG also met this month, to update the Committee on a raft of guidance currently being prepared by the FWC, also largely to assist small businesses on navigating the recent changes to the FW Act.

ACCI Workplace Policy Committee

- With IR remaining high on the Government's agenda, the National Office again attended a number of meetings of ACCI's Workplace Policy Committee ('WPC') to discuss the Government's vast IR reform agenda.

Relevant Budget announcements

The recent Federal Budget, included a number of IR-related items including:

- \$20m to unions and employer groups to assist in educating workplaces about FW Act changes;
- \$4.4m to run the proposed National Construction Consultative Forum;
- \$2m for organisations (unions) to provide training on psychosocial health;
- \$800k for a review of Modern Awards;
- \$300k for a review into the operations of the FWO;

However, much of the spending announced above will be paid for by cuts to other programmes, including:

- \$15.8 million reducing the departmental operating funding of the Office of the Fair Work Ombudsman by 2.5 per cent.

- Our ongoing involvement on both Advisory Groups is crucial in order to minimise the impact of recent changes on our members, as far as is practicable.

- As noted above, the proposed legislative changes are significant and the WPC continues to be important in facilitating a co-ordinated response across the ACCI network.

First tranche of IR reforms update

The Government's Fair [Work Legislation Amendment \(Protecting Worker Entitlements\) Bill 2023](#) has now passed the House of Representatives, which includes changes to:

- Strengthen protections under the FW Act for migrant workers;
- Guarantee superannuation as a right under the NES;
- Streamline payroll deductions for authorised purposes; and
- Provide stronger access to unpaid parental leave ('UPL').

During the debate in the lower house, the Opposition moved a number of amendments on behalf of the Opposition (**which ultimately failed**) to:

- Require a 6-month review of the unpaid parental leave provisions and amend the notice periods for taking flexible unpaid parental leave;
- Provide protections for contraventions of employers with respect to their super obligations if their conduct was in accordance with ATO advice;
- Limit the FWC's jurisdiction so that it cannot deal with a dispute pertaining to a Cth Act or instrument relating to super;
- Require that an increase in employee authorised deductions must be authorised in writing by the employee; and
- Exclude any other monetary allowance, loading or identifiable amount from employee authorised deductions.

National Industrial Relations Advisory Committee

NIRAC met this month where the National Office provided a briefing and to discuss a multitude of issues including:

- MBA's national response to the Government's various IR consultations;
- The National Board's revised position on Worker Entitlement Funds;
- Significant decisions of the FWC and its implementation of recent legislative changes; and
- A detailed 'round-the-grounds' discussion.

- Ongoing consultation with the Committee will continue to be key in the coming months, particularly as we roll out our national campaign to preserve the rights of independent contractors.

Jobs & Skills

MBA National Jobs & Skills Policy Committee

The Committee met in Melbourne on 17 May at MBV's Building Leadership Simulation Centre.

Key items included:

- Simon Kent and Matt Ryan from Minister O'Connor's Office joining the Committee for a productive roundtable discussion and tour of the BLSC.
- Brett Schimming joining to provide an update on the establishment of BuildSkills Australia.
- Shane Garrett presenting the Federal Budget overview (more info in the economics and productivity update).

State and territory key issues:

- Labour shortages remain widespread and there is strong competition for workers.
- Apprentice commencements have dropped following the reduction in wage incentives.
- Multiple states have initiatives underway to attract and retain females in the industry.
- Licensing and insurance continues to present challenges, albeit varying across states.

Future Directions: Apprenticeship Support Services

Master Builders met with the Department and lodged a submission in response to the Future Directions consultation paper.

- Pleasingly, the paper aligned with many of our earlier recommendations, including pre-commencement assessments, mentoring, clarity of roles, and addressing apprenticeship perceptions.
- In responding to the paper, Master Builders raised concerns about the lack of funding, highlighted the need for pre-commencement assessments to include work-readiness, and called for support to follow the apprentice, not be tied to a service provider.

Jobs and Skills Councils (JSCs)

JSCs, formerly Industry Clusters, will have carriage of vocational training product development, career mapping and workforce analysis.

Master Builders is leading the development of a tripartite JSC for the built environment.

The Foundation Members met in early May and documentation for incorporation is being finalised.

Data

- Job advertisements – online job ads declined 4% nationally in April 2023 and are 1% lower than last year. In our industry, fencers were the only occupation to see a rise in job ads in April (up 0.7%). Compared to last year job ads are up the most for plasterers (+26.9%) and floor finishers (+23.7%).
- Apprentices – 121,479 apprentices in training on 30 Sept 2022 are employed in construction. Construction is the top industry for apprentice employment. 54,810 apprentices commenced in the year to 30 September 2022.
- Labour Force – 1.32 million construction workers in Australia in February 2023, including 140,000 carpenters and 124,000 construction managers and builders.

Work Health & Safety

Update on the proposed prohibition on the use of engineered stone

- Members will recall that a meeting in March this year of WHS Ministers resulted in the agreement to progress a number of initiatives to address the issue of silicosis.
 - A priority was directing SWA to undertake a public consultation on the potential prohibition on the use of engineered stone.
 - Following submissions made by MBA and others, SWA has procured the University of Adelaide to review and critically analyse available evidence on the safety of engineered stone, including if there is evidence to support a "threshold" level of silica below which engineered stone can be worked with safely.
 - SWA is considering the recent consultation submissions, workshop discussions and expert advice in developing the Decision Regulation Impact Statement on the prohibition on use of engineered stone.
 - EY will also undertake the economic modelling for each of the three options, for inclusion in the Prohibition Decision RIS.
- The Prohibition Decision RIS will be provided to WHS ministers before the end of August 2023 to inform their decision on whether to prohibit the use of engineered stone.

No progress on the ban on the importation ban of engineered stone products

- At their recent meeting, WHS Ministers also agreed that the Government should separately investigate a potential importation ban of engineered stone products.
 - We understand that this matter has been referred to other Government agencies, however, there has been no further updates on its progress.
- We will continue to consult with the Government on any proposed changes to importation arrangements, if and when they arise.

Silica training on the agenda

- Finally, a key component of the WHS Ministers agreement on silica, was to improve silica awareness and training for workers. While silica-awareness training is currently only mandated in the ACT, we are cognisant of there being an interest in rolling out a similar approach across the country.
- We will continue to advocate for the development of a national unit of competency for silica-awareness, that is freely accessible for RTOs to deliver.

Further regulation of high-risk crystalline silica processes (option 5a)

- As part of their recent agreement, WHS Ministers also agreed to progress the development of further regulations to manage silica risks.
- This directive culminated in a SWA workshop attended last month by the National Office, where there was some support for the development of a definition of crystalline silica substance and crystalline silica process proposed in the Silica Decision RIS.
- Participants were unable to agree on a definition for high-risk crystalline silica process, however, there was consensus that a definition based on a particular level of airborne respirable crystalline silica may be problematic.
- SWA is currently exploring options for determining when a crystalline silica process is high-risk and the requirements that should be in place for PCBUs undertaking a high-risk crystalline silica process. Options will be presented to Members for consideration at a future meeting.
- We remain directly engaged with SWA to propose a workable definition and scope of any new proposed regulations.

Reduction of the WES for respirable crystalline silica ('RCS') on the horizon

- SWA Members earlier this year recommend a further reduction of the WES for RCS. This comes only a short time after all jurisdictions having adopted the recent halving of the WES for RCS to 0.05mg/m³.
- As a consequence of both ACCI and MBA's strong push for a regulatory impact analysis ('RIA') of the proposed changes, the Government has now flagged it will undertake a formal consultation process in the coming months.
- A RIA is a positive outcome, as we have consistently argued that prior to WHS Ministers being presented with such a significant recommendation, a thorough regulatory impact process must be undertaken.
- We have yet to be advised as to when the RIA process will commence, however, anticipate that we will need to make detailed submissions in response. This will require significant engagement with the NWHSC and members.
- We will provide a further update once we have confirmation of timings and the next steps.

Changes to the Model WHS Regulations - uncontrolled processing of engineered stone

- The Parliamentary Counsel's Committee has finalised legislation that would prohibit uncontrolled processing of engineered stone under the Model WHS laws.
- The Chair of SWA wrote to WHS ministers on 3 May 2023 encouraging them to implement the amendments, noting that some jurisdictions may already have similar measures in place.
- Master Builders supports the model amendments and will continue to highlight that they form part of a suite of regulatory measures already in place to appropriately manage silica-related risks.
- The National Office has been heavily engaged in all aspects of SWA's silica work and will continue to do so as options for reform are considered and progressed.

ASEA's jurisdiction to now include silica

- At part of the Government's recent budget announcements, \$4.2 million over 4 years from 2023–24 (and \$1.1 million per year ongoing) will be allocated to extend the Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency's ('ASEA') remit to include the prevention of silicosis and other silica related occupational diseases and broaden the functions of the Asbestos Safety and Eradication Council.
- We have already had preliminary discussions with the Department to offer some workable suggestions for ASEA's new scope.
- The National Office will engage with the Government in the coming months on the scope and application of ASEA's new silica-related responsibilities.

Proposed WES for Diesel Particulate matter

- SWA engaged consultants to, if indicated in the research, recommend an encompassing health-based WES for all Diesel Engine Exhaust (DEE) compositions present in Australia, based on the adverse effect that occurs at the lowest airborne concentration.
- The report found that there is insufficient information to recommend a WES for DEE as a whole because DEE composition varies considerably under different conditions.
- Instead, a WES has been proposed using Diesel Particulate Matter (DPM), as an indicator compound in DEE, of 8-hour TWA of 15 µg REC/m³ for DPM.
- The National Office is in the process of reviewing the consultant's (200 page) report and its recommendations.
- We are also working with other industry stakeholders to ensure any proposal is practicable, measurable and will have the ultimate effect of improving safety outcomes.

SWA SIG-WHS Members Meeting

- The National Office provided substantive feedback on a number of items discussed at this month's SWA SIG-WHS Members' meeting, including on SWA's draft:
 - SWMS interactive tool;
 - Consultation checklist;
 - Guidance on Cultural Safety;
 - 'Know your duties' online tool; and
 - Research program.
- We will continue to provide direct feedback on SWA's ever-increasing work program as it relates to the membership.

ACCI WHS & WC Committee

- The National Office attended a meeting of ACCI's WHS & WC Committee this month, with a range of items on the agenda including:
 - Commonwealth Budget outcomes;
 - Psychosocial risk developments;
 - Proposed Diesel Particulate Matter WES; and
 - SWA workplan priorities.
- The Committee continues to be a valuable conduit between MBA and other industry organisation and provides a valuable opportunity to collaborate and share information and advocacy.

Relevant Budget announcements

The recent Federal Budget, included a number of WHS-related items (with a strong focus on the prevention of silicosis) including:

- \$10.0 million over 4 years from 2023–24 (and \$1.9 million per year ongoing) to address the rise of silicosis in workers and develop a national strategy for the prevention of silicosis and silica-related diseases. Funding includes:
 - \$4.7 million over 4 years from 2023–24 (and \$0.8 million per year ongoing) to establish a dedicated occupational lung diseases team to oversee implementation and investigate long-term reforms for an improved national framework for occupational lung diseases
 - \$4.2 million over 4 years from 2023–24 (and \$1.1 million per year ongoing) to extend the Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency's remit to include the prevention of silicosis and other silica related occupational diseases and broaden the functions of the Asbestos Safety and Eradication Council
 - \$1.2 million over two years from 2023–24 to Safe Work Australia's social partners to increase awareness and support better work practices relating to managing silica dust in the workplace.

National Work Health and Safety Committee

- The NWHSC had a reprieve this month, however continued to provide support out of session on a range of WHS-related developments.
- The NWHSC's ongoing support is key in ensuring the most practicable and appropriate policy settings are advocated on behalf of our members.

KEY DATES IN JUNE

WED, JUNE 7	Risk Management Committee Meeting
THURS, JUNE 8	Finance Committee Meeting
MON, JUNE 12	PUBLIC HOLIDAY - Kings Birthday
THURS, JUNE 15	Casual Dinner - Darwin - National Board, EDs & MBNT Board
FRI, JUNE 16	Policy Forum - Darwin - face-to-face National Board Meeting - Darwin - face-to-face
WED, JUNE 21	Fortnightly Executive Directors Zoom

WOMEN BUILDING AUSTRALIA

May 2023 has been a dynamic and eventful month for WBA. We were thrilled to participate in two notable events: the 2023 Florence Luncheon hosted by MBA NSW and the Hi Viz Luncheon hosted by MBA SA. These gatherings provided us with the opportunity to connect with remarkable women from the construction industry in New South Wales and South Australia. Denita Wawn, speaker at both events, emphasized that "Women are the solution to the skills and labor shortage the construction industry is facing." We are thankful to our dedicated WBA representatives who took time out of their busy schedules to attend these luncheons and inspire more women to join the construction industry. Witnessing so many women breaking barriers and leaving their mark in the traditionally male-dominated construction sector fills us with hope and optimism.

Furthermore, we were proud to sponsor the Tradie Lady Luncheon held in Adelaide earlier this month. This event brought together a group of inspiring women who are actively breaking down barriers in the trades. We were privileged to witness the exceptional leadership of our ambassadors, Bailee Major and Gemma Forsythe, who are at the forefront of the WBA Female Lead Business Register. Through such initiatives, we are excited to continue supporting events that empower women in the trades.



HiViz Luncheon 2023, Adelaide.
Denita Wawn, Tamika Smith & Amanda Hewer

We are thrilled to announce the launch of two significant initiatives for Business Operators:

Women Building Australia Business Resilience Training in collaboration with MYOB: This training comprises a comprehensive 7-part self-paced course designed to enhance the skills and knowledge of women in growing a business in the building and construction industry. The training modules are delivered through on-demand teaching, allowing participants to attend at their convenience and learn at their own pace. Interested individuals can register for the training by visiting the [website here](#).

Mentoring on Demand Program: Our Mentoring on Demand Program offers a unique self-matching and on-demand mentoring experience. This program enables mentees to seek guidance for specific acute business issues they may be facing. Mentees can select suitable mentors from our pool of experienced industry practitioners and receive practical advice and guidance.

We encourage experienced members of the construction industry, who wish to give back and support women in building robust businesses, to join us as mentors. Mentoring not only allows mentors to enrich their mentoring and leadership skill set but also provides intellectual challenge, new perspectives, opportunities to exercise emotional intelligence, and a chance to network and connect with other industry practitioners. Mentors should have at least 10 years of industry experience, regardless of gender, and be either owner/operators or in senior/management roles in the building and construction industry. Those interested in becoming a mentor can find more information and apply for the Mentoring on Demand program by visiting the [website here](#).



Tradie lady Luncheon, Adelaide.
WBA FLBR Members: Gemma Forsythe & Bailee Major

In line with our commitment to promoting career opportunities in the construction industry, we actively participated in multiple career expos this month. We were present at the VCE Careers Expo in Melbourne, the Adelaide Careers & Employment Expo, and the Brisbane Careers & Employment Expo. The WBA stall at these expos was joined by esteemed professionals, including Margaret Sleswick, HSEQ Lead at Icon, Anna Galluzzo, National Construction Manager Commercial Brands at Bunnings Group (Melbourne Expo), Lisa D'Andrea, HR Manager at Hansen Yuncken (Adelaide Expo), and Amelia Simony, Associate Director at FEFO Consulting, and Storm Sandilands, Safety Advisor at FKG Group (Brisbane Expo). The presence of these accomplished women at our stall exemplified the thriving and inclusive environment for women in the construction industry. Their valuable insights and experiences showcased the promising career prospects available to young women exploring their options. Through our efforts to encourage more women to participate, we aim to inspire future generations and break the gender barriers that have historically plagued the construction industry. Together, we are forging a more inclusive future.



Brisbane Expo - Storm Sandilands, Safety Advisor at FKG Group & Amelia Simony, Associate Director at FEFO Consulting



Adelaide Careers Expo - Lisa D'Andrea, HR Manager at Hansen Yuncken



Melbourne Expo - Margaret Sleswick, HSEQ Lead at Icon



Melbourne Expo - Anna Galluzzo, National Construction Manager Commercial Brands at Bunnings Group

Be sure to follow us on our social media handles for timely updates on all WBA Activities at the below links:



@WomenBuildingAustralia



@womenbuildingaustralia



@women-building-australia