

MEDIA RELEASE

Statement by Anna Neelagama, CEO, Master Builders ACT, to Inquiry into Financial Management and Government Procurement Legislative Compliance

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Canberra, ACT | Thursday, 23 April 2026

'Master Builders ACT represents businesses that deliver Canberra's homes and public infrastructure. We are proud to employ 18,000 Canberrans and are primarily made up of small businesses and private enterprise owned by long-term residents and families in the ACT.

'Our evidence today is straightforward: whilst the ACT Government's procurement framework is intended to deliver value for money for the Territory and secure local jobs, its current operation is not achieving these outcomes.

'This Inquiry is an excellent opportunity to publicly raise issues we have been raising privately in relation to the Secure Local Jobs Code. It is administratively complex, internally inconsistent and favours companies that have large compliance teams. It also has no requirement to support either local employers or local employees.

'We would like to point out that the Australian Government intends to introduce an Australian Local Jobs Code. This means that ACT building and construction businesses will be the only jurisdiction in Australia to comply with two Codes simply to compete for Government work when we are in fact the nations capital.

'Our key recommendations are practical and targeted.

'We are calling for the reform of the Secure Local Jobs Code so it supports SME participation rather than acting as a barrier.

'We are calling for procurement strategies that genuinely test and utilise your local capability.

'We are calling for stronger oversight of subcontracting practices to ensure local workforce commitments are delivered in practice.

'And, we are calling for greater transparency, proportionality and fairness in procurement compliance.



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'This will power two key outcomes that I know all members of the committee want.

'We will keep our capability local for both jobs and for business, and we will ensure that the benefits of the major projects delivered within the ACT are also returned to the ACT economy whilst also delivering better value for money for the Territory.

'We look forward to answering the Committee's questions, and thank you for allowing the opening statement.'

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