

MEDIA RELEASE

Master Builders ACT supports calls to abolish Secure Local Jobs Code

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Master Builders ACT has backed calls from the Canberra Liberals to abolish the Secure Local Jobs Code, declaring the Code is not fit for purpose and is failing local builders, workers, and taxpayers.

‘Local builders have no confidence that procurement in the ACT is undertaken fairly and transparently, which is backed by the Operation Kingfisher findings,’ said Anna Neelagama, CEO of Master Builders ACT.

‘We are seeing significant investment in local building and construction projects and the Secure Local Jobs Code prevents local businesses from tendering for these works.

‘For years, Master Builders ACT has warned the Secure Local Jobs Code places an unnecessary administrative burden on local building and construction businesses, particularly smaller businesses. It favours big interstate and international firms, and as a result we are seeing the spending on the ACT Government's infrastructure going interstate and overseas.’

Ms Neelagama said the Code has become a box-ticking certificate, not a local jobs guarantee.

‘It does not require the procurement system to preference local providers, or to support companies that are supporting local workers. And it does not stop interstate or multinational providers from winning ACT Government work over local businesses.’

The ACT Government admitted during a recent inquiry that it has no metrics to assess whether procurement settings are strengthening or weakening local industry capacity over time, relying only on anecdotal feedback and general economic indicators.

‘If you cannot measure whether a policy is improving local participation, increasing competition or securing better outcomes for workers, how can you justify imposing it on every business seeking government work?’ Ms Neelagama said.

‘We've seen similar codes in Victoria and Queensland impose up to 25 per cent additional costs on taxpayers for government funded projects. If the same thing is happening here, this is money that the ACT Government just cannot afford in the current fiscal environment.’

‘The Code is also part of an overall culture and system that allowed union influence on the Campbell Primary project procurement. In fact, in this case the Secure Local Jobs Code enabled this backdoor influence,’ said Ms Neelagama.

‘We are not opposed to secure local jobs. We are opposed to a system that fails to deliver them. The Secure Local Jobs Code does not promote jobs that are secure or local. It's time for the code to go,’ said Ms Neelagama.

For further information, the Master Builders ACT Submission to the ACT Legislative Assembly Inquiry into Financial Management and Government Procurement Legislative Compliance can be read [here](#).

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