



**NATIONAL 2021**  
SKILLS WEEK August 23rd - August 29th

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Bricklayers most in-demand trade: HIA**

#### ***Bricklayers Association announced as major supporter of National Skills Week 2021***

**18 August 2021** – While the Greater Sydney lockdown is estimated to cost the construction industry a reported \$1 billion per week, bricklayers, in particular, are facing a huge demand in the industry.

The opportunity to become a bricklayer apprentice is at all time high because of the current building boom in Australia.

The Housing Industry Association June 2020 Quarterly Report highlighted that bricklaying remains the most in-demand trade out of the 13 trades covered in the report in the majority of capital cities in Australia.

With an aging bricklaying workforce, bricklaying has been placed in the Skilled Occupations List and prior to the international border closure, overseas bricklayers were able to apply for a range of skilled visas, allowing them to work in Australia.

Partnering for the first time with **National Skills Week 2021**, the ABBTF is urging government to fast track the Priority Skilled Occupations List in order to fill the job shortages.

Increased bricklaying apprenticeship placements will help avoid construction delays, reduced costs to the housing and development market and improve the quality of the bricklaying work being completed, says **ABBTF CEO, Michael Morrissey**.

“COVID has been challenging for all businesses throughout Australia, we have promptly reacted to this by implementing several new agile strategies that have proven to be very successful,” he said.

ABBTF has put the following measures in place to support the bricklaying industry:

- ABBTF has achieved 73% growth (pre-COVID) in first year supported apprentices.
- 250+ national apprentice job vacancies and opportunities for youth to take on an apprenticeship through the support of our registered bricklayers.

- Prioritised the engagement with career teachers and students with the employment of Community and School Liaison Officers (CSO) in all major states with a focus on reaching out to Years 9 and 10 students.
- ABBTF continues to recruit suitable candidates via various channels such as social media, Seek adverts, expos, school presentations and Try-a-Trade programs.

“As our number one purpose, we continue to support young Australians to build a career in the building and construction industry, commencing with an apprenticeship in bricklaying /blocklaying.”

The new age of bricklayers representing the future of the construction industry in Australia is growing as a result of ABBTF programs and initiatives.

“There’s a huge opportunity for younger generations to step up to a career with strong earning potential,” Mr Morrissey said.

“If not enough of the younger generation step up before current bricklayers retire, this will hurt the industry. If the older generation has no one to pass their knowledge onto, this will affect the quality of the trade for the long term.”

As more bricklayers are looking to retire, the void of skilled bricklayers will continue to widen.

More broadly, the construction sector as a whole is facing similar skills shortages, says **Jon Davies, Chief Executive of the Australian Constructors Association.**

The Morrison government’s \$110bn infrastructure pipeline is at risk of delays and cost blowouts, to the detriment of taxpayers and with the current lockdowns to Greater Sydney, it’s forecast to take the sector at least a year to recover, he says.

Infrastructure Australia’s next five-year infrastructure plan, to be released next month, will attempt to address some of the problems, including workforce issues.

“The economy retains some capacity to expand employment and plug skill shortages. Effective skills training is vital for maximising the skilled workforce and productivity,” he said.

Now moving into its eleventh year, **National Skills Week 2021** will be held August 23 to 29, inviting Australians to explore the many vocational career pathways as Australia’s economy recovers from the pandemic.

**National Skills Week Chair, Brian Wexham, says** there has never been a more important time to educate job seekers and school leavers on the importance of gaining a skill and particularly highlighting key job growth industries such as bricklaying and construction.

National Skills Week is a federal government supported initiative designed to expose the highest job growth areas, skills shortages and highlight inspiring and rewarding career pathways that can be attained through Vocational Education and Training.

**National Skills Week will be launched (virtually) by Minister for Employment, Workforce, Skills, Small and Family Business, The Hon Stuart Robert on Tuesday 24 August, from 8-9am.**

For more information, visit [www.nationalskillsweek.com.au](http://www.nationalskillsweek.com.au)

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