

7 March 2017

## Building Industry Can Help WA Recover

The Master Builders Association believes the building industry will need to play an important role in assisting the next state government in getting the economy moving again.

According to Master Builders' Director, Michael McLean, all major political parties have made announcements or promises which will rely a lot on the building industry for their ultimate success.

"It's pleasing that the major parties support the \$5,000 boost in the First Home Owners Grant to \$15,000 for the rest of 2017," Mr McLean said.

"Likewise, we're pleased that all parties support the extension to Keystart's income eligibility criteria which will assist hundreds more West Australians to fast track deposits to buy their own homes."

Mr McLean said an obstacle to getting homes built quicker, however, was the planning approvals process.

"It's encouraging that all major parties recognise the importance of streamlining this process with a view to eventually implementing a workable private certification regime. In addition, there needs to be greater accountability for local Councils in respect to their decision making, and further measures for the Department of Planning to have greater involvement in providing direction on planning matters."

"Other policy announcements that have pleased builders include additional subsidies to take on first and second year apprentices, more reasonable bushfire regulations, an infrastructure advisory body to government and doubling the Buy Local Policy incentives to retain businesses and skilled labour in regional towns."

However, Mr McLean said the industry had concerns about the impact that imposing a 4% additional stamp duty tax on foreign investors would have on the building and property industries.

"With WA not having such a surcharge, it provides us with a healthy competitive advantage over other states, and if implemented would erode such an advantage."

On subcontractors not being paid their lawful entitlements, he said Master Builders understood politicians' concerns.

"However, we're alarmed that the Labor Party is even contemplating project bank accounts for the housing industry," he said. "This would be a disastrous policy and completely unworkable in the housing industry. There must be a focus on improving housing affordability, not increasing red tape."

Mr McLean said the major parties had included a range of major infrastructure and public works construction projects in their announcements and this, and any bringing forward of projects, would be well received by builders who currently are operating at well below capacity.

“Master Builders welcomes initiatives such as the part sale of Western Power which will allow the state to continue investing in capital works aimed at improving the ongoing sustainability of the economy,” he said. “Master Builders is looking forward to the outcome of the election and working with the next government so that we can start rebuilding WA’s economy in a responsible and methodical manner.”

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