



# CEO UPDATE



23 June 2015

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## Message from the CEO

Housing in the last fortnight has and will over the coming months continue to be under close scrutiny and attack.

There has been uninformed debate about the causes of housing affordability and even more uninformed debate about the solution.

The problem with housing unaffordability is supply and the answer is not the removal of negative gearing. Master Builders will continue its strong defence against these uninformed attacks in the months ahead

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Over the last two weeks Master Builders' lobbying has paid dividends with the Fair Work Commission allowing greater flexibilities in relation to annual leave where annual leave can now be paid out. This is a great win. Master Builders is also rejecting the ACTU's claim for annual leave loading to be paid on termination of employment.

The Heydon Royal Commission into union corruption continues to unearth unacceptable and unlawful behaviours by building unions and only vindicates Master Builders' call for the return of the ABCC powers.

Another major area of lobbying for Master Builders is non-conforming products. We are working very closely with other industry players as well as the Government in tackling the problem at source. In that regard we have made a submission to the ACCC on proposed criteria for accepting international standards for products that are manufactured overseas.

The latest apprenticeship numbers are very worrying with the numbers of young people in training continuing to fall. Master Builders will continue its lobbying for more funding from the Commonwealth for apprenticeship training.

For those of you who are thinking of a break, take advantage of the super early bird special for the Master Builders National Conference on the Gold Coast in November. Reward yourself and your staff for a well-earned break.

*Wilhelm Harnisch*

Chief Executive Officer

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**Workplace Relations**

**Modern Award Litigation - Annual Leave - Win for Employers**

On 11 June the Fair Work Commission handed down [a decision that benefits employers](#). Master Builders and other employer groups had asked the Commission to introduce flexibilities in a number of matters relating to annual leave. We also opposed the ACTU's claim to mandate that annual leave loading is payable on termination of an employee's employment. The Commission has adjourned this claim pending the outcome of Federal Court proceedings. The highlights for employers from the case are:

- The capacity to direct an employee to take paid annual leave where the employee has an excessive balance of accrued leave.
- Where an employee is paid by EFT they are able to be paid in accordance with their usual pay cycle.
- An employer may grant an employee annual leave in advance.
- With the agreement of the employer, an employee may cash out a portion of their annual leave subject to some safeguards including retaining a balance of at least four weeks leave.

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**Productivity Commission Draft Report re Workplace Relations Framework**

The release of the Productivity Commission's draft report regarding the Workplace Relations Framework has been delayed. The Commission's website indicates that "The draft report is expected to be released in August 2015 at which point the Commission will seek further information and feedback." The draft report had been due for release in July 2015.

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## FWC Annual Wage Review 2014–15

The Expert Panel for annual wage reviews issued the Annual Wage Review 2014–15 decision on Tuesday 2 June 2015. A summary of the decision is available on the Commission's [Summaries of decisions of interest](#) page. All modern awards have now been updated in accordance with the Annual Wage Review 2014-15 decision to include adjusted rates of pay and allowances. The increased rates and allowances come into force from 1 July 2015. See <https://www.fwc.gov.au/about-us/news-and-events/modern-awards-updated>

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## Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman Bill 2015

The Minister for Small Business, the Hon. Bruce Billson, has introduced into Parliament the *Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman Bill 2015*. Master Builders supports the establishment of the Ombudsman.

The Ombudsman will be able to respond to requests for assistance by an operator of a small business or family enterprise, and will also have an advocacy function.

The Ombudsman won't duplicate the functions of existing Commonwealth, State or Territory officials. It will also not undertake a formal role at this time in relation to dispute resolution under the Franchising and Horticulture Codes.

The Bill and Explanatory Statements can be viewed at the [Parliament of Australia website](#).

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## Work Health and Safety

### Master Builders provides feedback on SWMS Fact Sheet.

Master Builders recently lodged a submission with the Office of the Federal Safety Commissioner (OFSC) on a Draft Fact Sheet created by the OFSC on Safe Work Method Statements (SWMS). In its submission, Master Builders emphasised its commitment to reducing the incidence of workplace injuries and fatalities in the building and construction industry. The feedback welcomed the provision of information that assisted industry in meeting its obligations in relation to SWMS. Master Builders however submitted that requirements needed to be presented in a more accessible format to ensure that responsibilities, in relation to the preparation of SWMS, were clear. It was also argued that the OFSC should also consider releasing the Draft Fact Sheet to the wider industry for comment to generate robust, value added feedback.

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## Legal and Contracts

### Infinity Cable Recall Update

On Thursday 4 June, Master Builders attended a teleconference convened by the ACCC's Product Safety Branch in relation to the Infinity Cable Recall. The meeting was also attended by other industry stakeholders. Master Builders was alarmed to learn that only 15% of the estimated Infinity Cable identified had been remediated. The ACCC said this figure was evenly spread across the States and Territories. The ACCC re-iterated that, under the Australian Consumer Law, the Minister can exercise the compulsory recall power if one or more suppliers are not deemed to be taking sufficient action. A mandatory recall could have the effect of potentially broadening the scope of remediation works currently required under the recall.

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Attendees of the meeting supported the ACCC's goal for industry associations to take a more collaborative approach to communications about the recall. The ACCC has also uploaded the results of an FOI application, which include testing results of the cable. These documents are now publicly available on the ACCC's website – <http://foi.accc.gov.au/foi-disclosure-log> - Refer to ACCC FOI Request – 16/2015 & 19/2015.

On Monday 15 June, the ACCC released its communication material informing consumers about its Infinity Cable recall. The ACCC's awareness campaign is being rolled out through radio advertising, online video and a website [www.accc.gov.au/checkyourcable](http://www.accc.gov.au/checkyourcable)

The ACCC is asking industry stakeholders such as Master Builders to assist the campaign by making members aware of it so they can be ready to respond to consumer requests. More information about the campaign is available at <https://www.accc.gov.au/update/infinity-cable-recall-act-now-before-its-too-late#about-the-recall>

The ACCC's messages to consumers are:

- Get your cables/wires checked by a licenced electrician or your builder.
- Don't attempt to inspect cables yourself.
- If your home has the faulty cable, your costs should be covered, but even if it doesn't, a small call-out fee is worth peace of mind.

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## Master Builders lodges submission on International Standards

As foreshowed in the last CEO update, Master Builders recently lodged a submission in relation to the ACCC's proposed criteria for accepting international standards and risk assessments for product safety. The ACCC took feedback in response to a review of the regulatory regime with regard to products that are manufactured overseas, imported and used in Australia. Submissions were sought in response to the Federal Government's intention to adopt the principle that if a system, service or product has been approved under a trusted international standard or risk assessment, then Australian regulators should not impose any additional requirements.

In the submission, Master Builders stated that the increasing prevalence of non-conforming products (NCPs) was of on-going concern to the building and construction industry and reinforced its commitment to the well-being of consumers and to the construction of buildings that were safe and performed well. Master Builders stated that it supported the proposition of greater integration of accepted and recognised international standards into Australia's regulatory regime, provided they were consistent with Australian conditions, practice and requirements. Although the plan to reduce regulation is supported by Master Builders in principle, in the matter of NCPs it is our view the government's objective should be to focus on the introduction of appropriate, rather than simply less, legislation.

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## APCC Procurement of Construction Products Guide now online

In September last year, the Australasian Procurement and Construction Council (APCC) launched its *Procurement of Construction Products – A guide to achieving compliance* (the Guide). The Guide was jointly developed by 30 key construction industry stakeholders, including Master Builders. The document increases awareness, and provides guidance, in relation to procurement and compliance issues of construction products. It also includes an appendix that lists recognised product conformity assessment schemes, which is a practical reference tool for procurers. [The Guide is available online.](#)

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## ACCC IPA Small Business Scams and Cybercrime Forum – video now available

On 19 May 2015, the ACCC and the Institute of Public Accountants (IPA) hosted a small business scams and cybercrime forum in Melbourne. The aim of the forum was to help small business operators and stakeholders understand the scam and cybercrime risks small businesses face, and how they can best protect themselves. The event featured three expert speakers and a question-and-answer panel discussion. Go here [to view the webinar](#).

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## Court upholds principal's recourse to performance bonds

Recently the Victorian Court of Appeal has upheld a principal's right to access a performance bond under a construction contract without having to prove the underlying claim. In *Sugar Australia Pty Ltd v Lend Lease Services Pty Ltd* [2015] VSCA 98, Sugar Australia Pty Ltd (Sugar) contracted Lend Lease Services Pty Ltd (Lend Lease) to construct a sugar refinery. Lend lease provided a performance bond under the contract for just over \$4 million. After claiming delays and alleged breaches of the contract by Lend Lease, Sugar gave notice that it would be calling on the bond to cover its losses.

Lend lease sought an injunction on the basis that it had not yet been proven that it was in breach of the contract. Sugar appealed and the injunction was overturned, allowing Sugar to recover damages via the bond.

The decision is a reminder that if a principal has a reasonable claim to a performance bond the courts are likely to uphold its validity. Master Builders' National Contracts Advisory Committee is currently considering whether Master Builders' contracts should expressly provide for surety bonds in addition to other forms of security such as bank guarantees. [Go here to view the full text of the case](#).

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## Economics and Taxation

### Housing Affordability Demands A Bi-Partisan Approach

The heightened debate in Federal Parliament about housing affordability is welcomed but Master Builders calls for a bi-partisan and rational approach, one that must also involve state and territory governments. As properly identified by the Treasury and the Reserve Bank, at the core of the housing affordability challenge is the lack of supply in meeting the demands of a growing population and changing demographic housing needs.

Policy makers at all levels need to implement structural reforms to boost housing supply if they are serious about improving housing affordability. The recent establishment of various inquiries is very welcome by industry, but to be effective they need to tackle the nub of the problem. Increasing the housing supply is the only effective way to exert downward pressure on house prices by making sure supply can keep up with demand, this is fundamentally 'Economics 101'.

One of the principal reforms must be more efficient and streamlined state and local government planning and approvals processes and the cutting of excessive infrastructure charges. Master Builders is calling for the return of federal national competition policy payments to state and territory governments for targeted and permanent structural reforms that removes the current unnecessary regulatory blockages that holds back and inflates the cost of housing supply.

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The recent Harper Review of Competition Policy recognised that there is a proper role for competition payments and Master Builders has put the case to both the Harper Review and the Federal Government that they should be used for accelerating structural reform especially at local government level. Master Builders also reinforced the need for this reform to Victorian Treasurer Tim Pallas as chair of the housing affordability working party announced by the Federal Treasurer Joe Hockey at the recent Council on Federal Financial Relations.

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**More ‘Mums and Dads’ Enter New Housing Market**

The boost in building approvals for detached houses signals the welcome entry of more non-investors into the housing market. It is important this continues to rebalance the make-up of the new housing market, which has been dominated by high rise apartments. The latest building approvals for April recorded a rise of 4.7 per cent seasonally adjusted for detached houses to be up by 9.1 per cent in annual terms entrenching a strong positive trend for residential building sector.

This trend needs to continue to ensure that the new housing market becomes more sustainable and in putting downward pressure on new house prices. In total there was a 4.4 per cent seasonally adjusted fall in approvals of new dwellings, largely due to a drop in approvals of multi-unit developments particularly in New South Wales and Queensland. Nevertheless, overall approvals are up 16.6 per cent through the year confirming the strongly positive role residential building is playing in economy and jobs growth.

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**Early Sign of Rebalancing In Housing Finance**

The latest housing finance figures for April shows a welcome turnaround away from the focus on investment toward finance for the construction of houses. The 4.3 per cent increase in finance for construction of dwellings is an encouraging sign that the market is starting to rebalance away from the dominance of investment property.

The industry is looking to the non-investor sector to strengthen over the next 12 months to ensure that this rebalancing takes hold.

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**Budget Boosts Business Confidence**

According to the National Australia Bank’s latest survey, the recent Federal Budget and interest rate cut have had a positive impact on business confidence which moved up strongly in May. This is the highest level of confidence since August 2014 and has helped to turn the trend more positive. Business conditions rose in May to reach the highest level since October 2014, further cementing the upward trend seen over recent months. Encouragingly, leading indicators such as forward orders improved, as did capacity utilisation and capital spending.

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**Economic Growth Lifts in March Quarter**

The national accounts released by the ABS recently revealed a stronger than expected 0.9 per cent increase in gross domestic product over the quarter. The annual rate, however, still has some way to go before economic growth is strong enough to bring the unemployment rate down. In reality, strong export growth – the return on investments made during the resources boom – and an unintended stock build-up, are behind the high quarterly figure. Domestic demand remains weak, with little sign of a lift in capacity utilisation that will drive recovery in non-mining investment needed to rebalance the economy. Until economic growth broadens, the labour market will remain soft.

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## Building & Construction Rebalancing

Rebalancing of the general economy is being replicated in the building and construction industry. In the March quarter, constant price (chain volume measures) value added in the building and construction industry declined by 2.9 per cent in the March Quarter, subtracting 0.1 percentage point from growth in GDP. Partial data show the extent of remixing happening between major sectors of the industry. Private dwelling investment rose by an extremely strong, seasonally adjusted, 4.7 per cent. This was in marked contrast to the 9.8 per cent decline in private engineering construction investment as the effect of the end of the mining investment boom begins to hit home. Non-dwelling building investment continued to muddle along, with an, albeit stronger than expected, 1.7 per cent rise in the quarter as health-related building peaks.

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## Outlook for Building and Construction

Further growth in residential building plus a resurgence in State public infrastructure spending over the next five years will go some way towards ‘filling the hole’ left by the end of mining-related engineering construction. An eventual pick up in non-mining investment – currently the missing link in the Australian economy – is expected to drive recovery in non-residential building towards the end of the forecast period.

After solid growth last year, the real value of residential building work done is predicted to experience very strong growth of more than 10 per cent this financial year 2014/15. Master Builders’ latest forecasts show further growth in residential building in 2015/16, before the next downturn begins to unfold.

Non-residential building on the other hand will remain constrained by the weak economy and generally tight public sector budgets. The sector is in danger of being labelled ‘missing in action’ until the long awaited pick up in non-mining investment eventuates. The end of a major phase of hospital building will begin to weigh on the sector, offset by some pockets of strength, for example, entertainment, recreation and hotel building. Master Builders’ latest forecasts for the building and construction industry produced in conjunction with Macromonitor, are particularly bullish on prospects for infrastructure spending in New South Wales and Victoria. The two States-combined, cumulative spend in today’s dollars on road and rail projects from 2014-15 to 2018-19 is predicted to jump to \$80.7b, a \$20b improvement on the preceding 5 years.

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## SuperStream Compliance Dates

The Australian Taxation Office (ATO) is reminding all large and medium-sized employers that the 30 June due date for SuperStream compliance is now only weeks away. The ATO will extend its compliance flexibility to employers who are not yet SuperStream-ready by four months until 31 October 2015. Employers with 20 or more employees should already be implementing SuperStream, but the ATO understands some businesses are unlikely to make the upcoming compliance date and will need more time. The ATO would not be taking compliance action against employers who miss the 30 June deadline but will be working closely with employers over the next few months to continue providing education and support. The ATO’s first priority is to help employers understand and comply with their SuperStream obligations. Employers can expect reduced processing costs in the long term, spending less time paying contributions and more time running their business. Once fully implemented, SuperStream will provide employers with a consistent process for making super contributions. In many cases, this will enable them to submit a single contribution for their employees rather than have multiple interactions in different formats previously required by each fund.

There are a variety of options available for employers to adopt SuperStream. This may include upgrading their current payroll software, using a clearing house service or their default super fund’s portal. Employers can also check the SuperStream Certified Product Register External Link which identifies the readiness of payroll software and other service providers to meet SuperStream requirements. This is updated regularly by the ATO. Once using SuperStream, employers send super contributions electronically in a standard format, with linked data and payments. It provides a simpler, consistent method of preparing contributions, and in many cases, a single channel for interacting with multiple funds.

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SuperStream for small employers with 19 or fewer employers starts from 1 July 2015. The ATO is part-way through a series of regional events around the country to explain the changes and what it means for local employers. The ATO has provided a step-by-step checklist to help employers prepare, at [ato.gov.au/SuperStreamChecklist](http://ato.gov.au/SuperStreamChecklist).

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## Tax Office General Interest Charge Rates

The penalty arrangements for late payment and other obligations were streamlined with the introduction of a uniform tax deductible general interest charge (GIC). The GIC replaced a complex system of interest and penalties imposed for late payments. The GIC daily compounding rate applies to pay as you earn, the prescribed payment system, the reportable payment system, sales tax as well as most other taxes including: income tax, fringe benefits tax, goods and services tax and pay as you go. The GIC is updated quarterly with rates for the next quarter generally announced two weeks before the start of that quarter.

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## Training

### Australian Industry and Skills Committee

The Australian Industry and Skills Committee (AISC) met for the first time on 9 June. The Committee oversees the National Training System and endorses new qualifications. The Committee also advises the Assistant Minister on workforce development and skills.

Mr John Pollaers, Chair of the Australian Advanced Manufacturing Council, is the chair. The construction industry has two representatives: Mr Brett Schimming, CEO Construction Skills Queensland and Mr Ian Hill, Chair of the Building Construction Industry Training Fund Board (WA).

The aim of the Committee is to put industry at the centre of the National Training System and to maintain a skilled and flexible workforce that adapts to rapid technological changes in the workplace, assisting to maintain and improve Australia's economic position in the face of increasing global competition.

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### Latest Apprentice Numbers released

The National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) has released its latest report *Apprentices and Trainees 2014 December Quarter*. The publication presents estimates of apprentice and trainee activity in Australia for the December quarter 2014.

Nationally for construction trades the number of students in training decreased by 3.5%, from 44,900 in December 2013 to 43,300 in December 2014. While this decrease is far lower than that of the apprentices and trainees across all industries, the figure represents a 21.5% decrease since December 2010.

On a state by state basis the construction apprentice numbers in-training for the 12 months ending December 2014, compared with the 12 months ending December 2013 are:

- NSW – down 1% to 13,300 apprentices
- Vic – down 10% to 13,500 apprentices
- QLD – up 1% to 8,100 apprentices
- SA – down 12% to 2,300 apprentices
- WA – up 11% to 4,000 apprentices

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- Tas – down 18% to 900 apprentices
- ACT – down 20% to 800 apprentices
- NT – steady at 300 apprentices.

Master Builders calculates that some 300,000 new skilled workers will be required nationally in the industry over the next decade to meet the demand for new building and construction projects. In addition, some 30,000 workers leave the industry each year due to retirement / career change etc. The current apprenticeship numbers fall significantly short of meeting the industry's need for skilled workers.

Master Builders has prepared a policy document *Towards 2020: Policy for Australian Apprenticeship Reforms* that has been provided to the Assistant Minister for Education and Training Simon Birmingham. Master Builders looks to work with the Government to implement the initiatives outlined in the paper to grow the pool of young people seeking to enter into a construction industry apprenticeship.

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## Housing

### Housing Affordability

Master Builders has provided a detailed submission to the Federal Opposition for their policy development work on housing affordability. The submission reiterates our advocacy for, inter alia: improving the supply side efficiency of the Australian housing market; the introduction of contestable national competition-style payments to local governments, which would be facilitated by an annual Report on Local Government Services (ROLGS); a rigorous stocktake of the approaches taken to developer/ infrastructure charges by all local governments; and, State/Territory governments to develop individual land release plans for their own jurisdictions over a ten year rolling time horizon.

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### Reserve Bank Housing Outlook

The Reserve Bank expects the current strength in dwelling investment to be sustained into the near term, riding on the back of low interest rates and relatively strong population growth. The Bank also expects an easing in labour supply pressures in the residential building sector, with a growing number of workers freed-up as mining construction projects reach completion. However, the central bank cautioned any further acceleration in new housing starts is likely to be held back by supply-side constraints, such as ongoing shortages of suitable land with development approval in parts of the country.

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### Regional House Prices

Healthy rates of house price growth are not confined solely to the capital cities, but are also occurring in some major regional areas around Australia. New figures from CoreLogic, a consultancy, show house prices increased by 9.3 per cent in the Illawarra, and 7.4 per cent in the Newcastle/Lake Macquarie, regions of NSW in the year to March 2015. Other regions to experience good house price growth include the Sunshine Coast (Qld, up 6.3 per cent), and Cairns (Qld; 5.1 per cent). However, several regions also saw little or no increase in house prices, most notably Townsville (Qld, down 2.4 per cent), Bunbury (WA, up 1.2 per cent) and Latrobe-Gippsland (Vic, up 2.3 per cent).

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## Land Supply

State Governments appear to be responding to building industry calls to improve land supply. According to a report by Charter Keck Cramer (CKC), a consultancy, the number of building-ready housing lots increased by 61 per cent in Melbourne and by 55 per cent in South East Queensland last year. While the supply of new lots increased by 29 per cent in Sydney, CKC say that market remains “chronically undersupplied” following a sustained period of low levels of lot production and strong population growth.

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## Commercial Property Investment

Chinese investment in the Australian appears to be heavily skewed toward commercial real estate, and infrastructure. A new study by KPMG, a consultancy, and the University of Sydney, has found Chinese investors poured just over \$4.4 billion into such investments in calendar year 2014, which amounts to 67 per cent of their total investment spend in Australia last year. This investment dwarfs commitments to leisure and retail (\$1.1 billion; 12 per cent share) and to mining (\$990 million; 11 per cent share). The study also reported private investors accounted for two-thirds of Chinese investment in Australia last year.

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## Foreign Ownership

The Federal Government has announced it is investigating some 195 potential breaches of Australia's foreign investment laws. Of these cases, 24 involve foreign investors who have come forward to self-report under the Federal Government's amnesty scheme, while another 40 cases relate to information provided by members of the community to the Australian Taxation Office. The Tax Office is also undertaking a complex data matching exercise to identify foreign owners of Australian real estate, which has reportedly found one investor holding more than 10 residential properties worth up to \$1.4 million each.

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## Small Business Employment

Master Builders has provided an expansive submission to the Federal Parliament's Standing Committee on Education and Employment, for its inquiry into small business employment in Australia. Our submission focuses in particular on the importance of small business to the building and construction industry (BCI), and the impediments they confront in continuing and/or growing their business. Our submission pointed out, inter alia: almost 63 per cent of firms in the BCI have no employees (that is, are sole operators/traders), with a further 36 per cent of firms in the industry having between 1 and 19 employees; and, constitute a sizeable share of employment (60 per cent) and value-added (46 per cent) in the industry. The submission also called for a suite of reforms in areas ranging across regulation, skills and training, the status of sub-contractors, and unfair dismissals.

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### DISCLAIMER

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**Technical**

## Pliable Building Membranes

Standards Australia has released for industry comment a proposed Australian Standard on pliable building membranes – materials. The proposed Standard sets out the requirements for materials for use as a pliable building membrane (also known as an underlay), when used either independently, or as a facing to other materials, such as insulation materials, for any one or more of the following control functions: water control; thermal control; vapour control; and, air control. This Standard does not cover requirements for materials used in: air-handling ducts and building services; under concrete slabs on-ground; or waterproofing above flat concrete roofs.



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## Grading Bamboo in Structural Applications

Standards Australia have released for industry comment a draft international standard on the strength grading of bamboo when used in structural applications. The proposed Standard specifies the grading procedures for producing visual and mechanically sorted strength and stiffness graded round, or pole, bamboo for structural applications requiring strength characteristic values. It is applicable for bamboo graded in the seasoned state. The draft Standard deals in particular with the mechanical strength grading process by which a piece of bamboo can be sorted by a machine sensing, non-destructively, one or more properties of the bamboo, with any necessary visual inspection, into grades to which characteristic values of strength, stiffness and density may be allocated. Copies of these materials are available from Master Builders upon request.

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## Wood Based Panels

Standards Australia has released for industry comment a draft international standard on Wood-based Panels — Determination of Formaldehyde Release — Gas Analysis Method. The draft international standard specifies a procedure for determination of accelerated formaldehyde release from uncoated and coated wood-based panels using the gas analysis method. The procedure is also suitable for the testing of other materials (e.g. edge bands, floor coverings, foams, foils, laminated wood products, veneered wood products, coated wood products). Copies of these materials are available from Master Builders upon request.

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## Wildfire Performance of Houses

Standards Australia has released for industry comment a proposal for a new international standard on the wildfire performance of houses. The new standard would amend ISO 15928. The existing ISO 15928 sets out a method for describing the wildfire performance of houses, and covers: the objectives, provides performance descriptions and outlines the evaluation processes; and, The description of relevant parameters for embers, radiation and flame actions, and measures required to reduce the likelihood of ignition. The new Standard is intended to be used: for houses that may be separated from, or linked horizontally to, another house(s); and, in the evaluation of the design and construction of houses and in the international trading of houses or their sub-systems. Copies of these materials are available from Master Builders upon request.

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## Telecoms Pathways and Spaces in Buildings

The Australian Building Codes Board (ABCB) has published a draft proposal to require the inclusion of in-building telecommunications pathways and spaces in buildings via the National Construction Code (NCC). Currently, there is no regulatory requirement to install telecommunications in buildings. The proposal seeks to address delays in the provision of fixed-line services, increased costs and impacts on occupant amenity that occur where there is a failure to install appropriate telecommunications spaces and pathways in new buildings. Copies of these materials are available from Master Builders upon request.

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## Design Life Durability Research Survey

### Design Life Durability Research Survey

The topic of 'Design Life and Durability' is being researched to understand the expectations of building materials for a range of end-users across Australia. We encourage members to participate in this very useful research for the building industry

Design life and durability of building materials are two interrelated concepts that are becoming increasingly important in the built environment, especially in relation to construction costs, ongoing maintenance, occupational health and safety, as well as sustainability.

An independent research company, Pollinate, is conducting the research on behalf of the industry organisation Forest and Wood Products Australia. Master Builder Australia will receive a copy of the results from the survey.

We encourage members to participate in this very useful ten minute research survey for the building industry. All responses will be collected anonymously and will remain strictly confidential. Results will be aggregated and not tracked back to individuals.

Thankyou for participating

**Commence survey** <https://v2.decipherinc.com/survey/selfserve/170c/150506?list=0&Qsource=7>

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**Master Builders National Conference**

**Building Australia**  
 Jupiters Gold Coast, November 12–14

**Save \$300 on the Super Early Bird End of Financial Year Special**

**You're invited** - We are delighted to invite you to the 2015 National Conference, Exhibition and Awards. The National Conference provides the opportunity for Master Builders from all around Australia to come together to learn more about the industry and where it is heading, as well as enjoying an entertaining social and partners program. The Building Australia theme focuses on leadership and assisting members in continuing to grow their business.

**High profile inspirational** speakers such as Chris Richardson one of Australia's leading economists will be presenting on the Economic Outlook and the future of the industry, the inspirational Alisa Camplin OAM Business Leader and Olympic Gold Medallist. Delegates will learn firsthand from members who are delivering the Commonwealth Games infrastructure about the complexities involved in delivering projects of this magnitude. Be inspired by Nigel Watts – Gearing up for the next growth phase. This is just a sample of the exciting line up of speakers. Further details and the conference brochure can be found on our [website](#).

**Accompanying Partners** have the option of taking in the sessions or indulging themselves in a fun day out. Ladies will embark on a day to remember which will include visits to unique Gold Coast attractions.

**National Awards** are part of the conference program and will be presented on Saturday evening.

**Delegates' end of financial year Super Early Bird Special**  
[Register now and save up to \\$300](#)

**What's included?** The delegates' package is outstanding value and a comprehensive one that mixes business with pleasure:

- Thursday evening Assa Abloy Welcome Social Dinner
- All conference speaker sessions on Friday and Saturday
- Cbus Conference Dinner and Show on Friday night at SeaWorld
- Site tour – Commonwealth Games facilities under construction
- Access to Exhibition
- Happy hour
- Lunch and morning tea on Friday and Saturday
- Conference satchel
- The National Excellence in Building and Construction Awards Dinner

**Forecast:** The Gold Coast is expecting sunny days with a central swell of inspirational speakers and strong gusts of exciting social activities.



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