

# Media Release

## WA builders commend budget but still need help

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Federal budget initiatives will promote economic growth across the country but Master Builders say more investment is needed in WA due to a major decline in construction work.

In the lead up to the federal election, Master Builders Association of Western Australia calls on candidates to support WA by committing to significant construction investment.

“The Australian Bureau of Statistics recently released figures which showed the total volume of construction work in WA fell by 3.3 per cent over the final quarter of 2018 and 45.1 per cent over the year,” Executive Director John Gelavis said.

“All sectors of the industry reported a decline over the year including residential, civil and commercial, however civil and commercial recorded the greatest declines of 51.9 per cent and 13.2 per cent respectively, which impacts on jobs and the state economy.”

Mr Gelavis welcomed tax relief for small and medium businesses in the federal budget as well as new investment in skills and infrastructure to strengthen the economy.

“Master Builders applaud the Federal Government for listening to our call for the instant asset tax write off scheme to be increased and expanded. Many small business builders in Western Australia will benefit from the increase to \$30,000 but, more importantly, the significant expansion of the eligibility threshold to \$50 million annual turnover.

“We also support investment to train an additional 80,000 new apprentices in industries experiencing skills shortages, including building and construction. However, taking on apprentices is a major challenge for WA builders due to the extremely difficult market conditions.

“The latest report by the Construction Training Fund in September 2018 shows the building and construction industry employs 10.2 per cent of the state’s workforce and 42.4 per cent of its apprentices. Due to the downturn in activity it has 65,400 tradespeople, which is 10.8 per cent less than it did 12 months ago. This should worry both state and federal governments and spark action.

“It is vital for new state and federal infrastructure projects to be fast-tracked in WA. An investment boost will greatly assist Perth and regional Western Australia during the ongoing economic downturn.”

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