

# Media Release

## Building apprentice numbers key to fixing housing crisis

18 December 2025

New figures released by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) today lay bare the realities of WA's trade shortage, with 230 less apprentices starting a construction trade in the three months to June 2025 than in the same period last year.

The NCVER June 2025 quarter update shows new construction apprentice starts fell by a staggering 23.8 per cent compared to the June 2024 quarter.

MBAWA CEO Matt Moran said increasing commencements and improving apprentice retention is critical.

"The sharp fall in new starts and a 2.4 per cent drop in apprentices currently in training show the construction apprentice pipeline is shrinking, which will worsen an already critical skills shortage," said Mr Moran.

"We must turn this around if we are to plug the 35,000-worker gap holding WA back from meeting our National Housing Accord target of 129,700 homes by June 2029."

"The WA State Government's Mid-year Review included a focus on housing delivery and growing the construction workforce."

"MBAWA supports the extension of the Construction Visa Subsidy Program, and any measures that incentivise employers to take on apprentices and promote the industry as a career of choice for young people."

"There is some good news, with apprenticeship completion figures heading in the right direction, increasing by 28.7 per cent in the June 2025 quarter when compared to the same time last year. Withdrawals in that period also dropped by about 20.9 per cent."

"However, this still means 450 apprentices left the industry without a qualification, with the raw numbers showing that completions only exceeded withdrawals by 145 apprentices."

MBAWA is determined to be part of the solution, having recently launched the FutureBuild Academy, a new group training initiative that aims to attract new apprentices to a career in building and construction through a mix of improved workplace conditions, personal development opportunities and a focus on apprentice mental health.

"FutureBuild is more than a training pathway, it's a commitment to train and inspire the next generation of master builders," said Mr Moran.

“It’s about giving apprentices the support they need, mentors they can look up to, and the chance to thrive in one of WA most vital industries.”

“MBAWA looks forward to continuing our advocacy and working with the State Government to ensure building and construction businesses have the workers they need now and into the future,” concluded Mr Moran.

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### **About FutureBuild Academy**

A Master Builders WA initiative, FutureBuild Academy is a Group Training Organisation specialising in building and construction trades. A Master Builders WA membership is not required to become a host employer, although member discounts are available.

### **About Master Builders WA**

Master Builders services the needs of the entire building and construction industry, from residential to commercial, and civil engineering businesses, principal contractors to subcontractors, manufacturers and suppliers. We assist members by providing access to a wide range of specialised services, an impressive degree of recognition, as well as representation to government and industry. Master Builders also serves the Western Australian public by fostering best practice work standards.

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