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MASTER BUILDERS CALLS ON GOVERNMENT TO BOOST THE BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION SECTOR

“In a post-mining boom economy, and with declining investment in commercial construction in Victoria, there is tremendous pressure on the Andrews Government to boost Victoria’s building and construction industry in this year’s budget,” Master Builders Association of Victoria chief executive Radley de Silva said.

Master Builders today released its [priorities for Victoria’s building and construction industry](#), calling for a set of initiatives to drive the growth and prosperity of the sector.

“As a central economic pillar of Victoria, delivering more than 200,000 jobs and generating considerable taxes and output for the economy, the continued strength of the building and construction industry must be a key focus for the budget this year,” Mr de Silva said.

“The scrapping of the East West Link project has seen thousands of jobs disappear and left a gaping hole for shovel-ready infrastructure projects in the state.

“It is imperative that party politics are removed from the decision-making on infrastructure investment - that is why one of the key priorities of this budget must be the establishment of an independent agency to lay out a plan for the future of infrastructure in Victoria and to develop a strong pipeline of major work such as Stage 2 of the East West Link project.

“But coupled with this, rules and regulations across the entire industry must ensure that building can be undertaken efficiently and productively. Construction sites must be free from coercion, harassment and bullying tactics that are common in our sector. And, to keep costs down for everyone, unnecessary red-tape and delays also need to be eliminated.

“Our eight priority areas for the government will underpin the continued growth and prosperity of the industry. A comprehensive set of actions from Government is essential for the sustainability of our sector going forward.

“This budget is an opportunity for the Andrews government to address the important challenges that Victorians face such as the high cost of housing and traffic congestion.

By addressing the priorities identified by Master Builders, the Government can underpin a strong building and construction industry to deliver economic growth and jobs for Victoria,” Mr de Silva said.



The priority areas outlined in Master Builders Plan are:

- **Invest in infrastructure:** Investment in infrastructure must be a key priority of the State Government to boost productivity, employment and economic growth. As part of this, the government must work to increase expenditure as a percentage of GSP, whilst pursuing actions that ensure the state retains its AAA credit rating.
- **Establish Infrastructure Victoria and release a major works pipeline:** The costly results of the East West Link debate highlight the importance for a pipeline of major works to be released publicly. An independent agency should be tasked with identifying this plan, to remove party politics from the process and create a long-term and stable approach.
- **Provide greater transport options for commuters:** Recognising the existing works in progress, Master Builders considers identifying further investments in roads and public transport options are essential for reduction of congestion and giving commuters greater choice in their travel options.
- **Uphold the rule of law in our industry:** The Royal Commission into trade union governance has cast a light on the coercion, intimidation and bullying employed by some in our industry. This unlawful behaviour needs to be stamped out by a government willing to uphold the rule of law and a sound governance system that allows swift and meaningful action.
- **Address housing affordability:** Everyday Australians are under pressure from the rising costs of living, particularly from skyrocketing house prices in Victoria. As a matter of urgency, the government should progress the National Taskforce on Housing Affordability, so that some clear priorities can be identified. In any event, actions to address housing supply and residential zoning impediments are clear priorities for the government.
- **Introduce trades registration:** Unlike builders, plumbers and electricians, tradespeople are not required to be registered in Victoria. Registering tradespeople would boost productivity, improve the quality of housing stock and protect consumers.
- **Get tough on owner-builders and unregistered practitioners:** Hardworking registered builders and tradespeople are forced to compete with unregistered builders and tradespeople for jobs, often being undercut in the process – but at the expense of the quality of housing stock. A strong enforcement campaign is needed to weed out unregistered practitioners and tradespeople who do the wrong thing, and to tighten the requirements on owner-builders.
- **Cut building red-tape:** Builders are forced to rip up the rule book every time they step across a local council border. There is a plethora of differences across municipal borders including hours allowed on site, asset protection and site lock-up requirements. Creating one set of laws means builders can get it right and get it done. Costs imposed on this industry by unnecessary and ineffective red-tape can drive up the price of new homes and building projects, impacting everyday Victorians through home affordability and taxes that they pay.

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