

MEDIA RELEASE

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STATE BUDGET CONTINUES BIG INFRASTRUCTURE PUSH BUT WORKFORCE TRAINING GAP REMAINS

While the Andrews Government's release of their 2019-20 state budget revealed no surprises for building and construction, Master Builders Victoria is pleased to see a continuation of significant support for the infrastructure and small business projects outlined in last year's budget. We are very encouraged to see the inclusion of \$5.6 million to develop the 'Big Build' higher apprenticeships in partnership with industry.

"As the leading voice for the building and construction industry, we consider that our sector remains important for the government in terms of its contribution to the health of the Victorian economy, which constitutes more than 45 per cent of its tax revenue," Rebecca Casson, CEO of Master Builders Victoria, said.

"Their commitment of \$29.4 billion for building and improving roads across the state, including \$15.8 billion complete funding for the North East Link, is evidence of the vital role building and construction plays in the lives of all Victorians," she said.

"A \$1.5 billion investment for a new hospital in Footscray means more jobs for our sector, the biggest full-time employer in the state, where one in 10 jobs is in construction," Ms Casson said.

"We also look forward to collaborating with the Government to support their pledge of \$209 million for public housing to deliver 1,000 new homes over the next three years."

"Given 80 per cent of businesses in our sector are small-to-medium enterprises, we welcome the Government's commitment to lift the payroll tax-free threshold across the state to \$700,000 by 2022-23."

"Our members build communities throughout the state, so a further reduction of payroll tax to 25 per cent of the metropolitan rate for regional Victorian businesses keeps those regions thriving," Ms Casson said.

"With the introduction of the higher apprenticeships initiative for their ambitious list of major building projects, the Government appears to recognise the need to address a shortage of skilled workers."

However, to cultivate that work force, industry RTOs must be part of the solution, and we look forward to details on how this will happen.

"Recognising that industry RTOs have a demonstrated record of training for the skills most in demand, supporting them to the same extent as TAFEs is a smart move," Ms Casson said.

ENDS:

MASTER BUILDERS VICTORIA

www.mba.vic.org.au

Since 1875, Master Builders Victoria has grown to be Victoria's leading building and construction industry voice.

A broad-based organisation, we service the needs of the entire industry, from residential to commercial and engineering businesses, principal contractors to subcontractors, manufacturers and suppliers.

We continually assist in developing the skills of our members by providing access to a wide range of services and proactive representation to government and industry. Master Builders Victoria also serves the community by fostering best practice work standards and acting as an independent advisory service for our industry.

AVAILABLE FOR COMMENT:

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