

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Master Builders Victoria (MBV) says Victoria's declining population places even more pressure on skills shortages impacting the building and construction industry**

Victoria's falling population will only heighten skills shortages impacting the building and construction industry, says Master Builders Victoria (MBV).

Restrictions placed on international borders and ongoing lockdowns have played a large part in Victoria's declining population.

In Victoria, the September 2021 quarter saw a further population fall of 6004 people, leading to a decrease in population of 32,716 over the 12 months to September 2021.

MBV CEO Rebecca Casson said Victoria had seen five consecutive quarters of population decrease.

"This has not been seen since ABS data collection began in 1981 and places even more pressure on the current skills shortages impacting the building and construction industry," Ms Casson said.

"The last time our state experienced a fall in population was in the June 1993 quarter, nearly 30 years ago, when Victoria recorded a fall of 499 people.

"This decrease in population has further impacted the current skills shortages in Victoria, with our industry already seeing chronic shortages across carpentry, bricklaying, project managers and building surveyors.

"Supply chain disruptions and skills shortages disrupt the building and construction industry's ability to keep up with the pipeline of work ahead.

"Supply and skills shortages must be addressed for the building and construction industry to continue supporting the Victorian economy and consumers to afford housing.

"To protect consumers, we need to protect builders."

While it is pleasing to see Victoria leading the nation in the number of women working in the building and construction industry, Ms Casson said much more needed to be done.

“Although more women are active in building and construction now than in the past, women still only made up 11.6 per cent of all employees in the building and construction industry in February 2022,” she said.

“And worse still, only 1 per cent of all construction trades workers in Victoria were women.

“We are making good progress, but we need to encourage more women to become fully qualified master trades.

“As a member of the Victorian Government’s Building Industry Consultative Council, Master Builders Victoria has been working with others to increase the participation of women in the building and construction industry.”

Meanwhile, at the end of February 2022, the building and construction industry generated approximately 305,700 full-time and part-time jobs.

This was down 16,000 (5 per cent) from the previous quarter but up 14,930 (4.7 per cent) from the February quarter of 2021.

Building and construction is Victoria’s fifth-largest employer across all industry sectors, providing 8.7 per cent of total employment opportunities for Victoria.

However, measured in total full-time employment terms, Ms Casson said the contribution of the building and construction industry was even more significant.

“Building and construction is Victoria’s third largest full-time employer, having contributed around 11.1 per cent of Victoria’s full-time employment as of February 2022,” she said.

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“As of November 2021, there were around 269,200 full-time building and construction jobs in Victoria.

“This was a decrease of 3,550 (1.3 per cent) full-time jobs from the previous quarter and down 226 (0.1 per cent) from the same time last year.”

On a national level, Ms Casson said many other industries were able to hire new staff from December 2021 to February 2022.

However, building and construction appeared to have lost more than 10,000 part-time jobs leading to an overall net increase of just under 9,000 new building and construction employees.

“This, however, could be attributed to seasonal reasons, as industries such as retail and hospitality ramped up staff numbers for the busy Christmas period,” she said.

“Many building and construction businesses would have paused works over this time, but there is a concern that skills shortages and lack of construction skills in the workforce may also be at play here.”

**ENDS**

#### **MASTER BUILDERS VICTORIA**

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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.

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