

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Innovation key to strengthening job numbers across the building sector**

Innovation and training are key to lifting sluggish employment rates across the state's building and construction industry, Master Builders Victoria says.

Latest [data](#) from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) reveals the Victorian building and construction industry generated 333,165 full-time and part-time jobs in August 2023.

It represents a significant decrease of 21,078 – or 6.3 per cent - from May 2023 and a decrease of 8146 - 2.4 per cent – from the same time last year.

A large proportion of the decline occurred across regional Victoria, with an 11 per cent decrease in the number of construction workers from 100,314 to 89,288.

Master Builders Victoria CEO Michaela Lihou says while the state government's ambitious housing statement offered a pipeline of work and a beacon for the industry, steps were needed to ensure the industry remains equipped and ready.

"Victoria's building and construction industry is strong and resilient but to continue on that path we need to make sure investment in innovation and skilling people up remains a key pillar," Ms Lihou says.

"Governments and stakeholders must continue to explore and strengthen opportunities across the innovation and education spaces to widen the pool of skilled workers so we can get the job done.

"Spikes and dips in employment are part of the cycle across every sector but by addressing industry challenges through innovation we can ensure we collectively create a sustainable and more resilient housing sector."

ABS figures also show the number of women in residential trades has also dipped.

In August 2023, there were 1865 women in trades – or 1.8 per cent in total.

This is a 36 per cent decrease from the same time in 2022 when there were 2894 women in trades – making up 2.4 per cent of this sector of the building and construction industry.

Ms Lihou says Victoria's building and construction industry continues to offer women opportunities.

“Master Builders Victoria is committed to promoting gender equality in the workplace and on building and construction sites,” Ms Lihou says.

“Attracting and training more women to pick up the tools is another key to helping to reduce the skill shortages as we move toward a more sustainable future.”

Master Builders Victoria CEO Michaela Lihou is available for comment.

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