

Submission by Matt Dolan, Matt Dolan Building Services WA

Statutory Review of the

Building and Construction Industry Training Fund and Levy Collection Act 1990 (WA)

This submission is made by Matt Dolan. Matt is a registered builder and owns Matt Dolan Building Services in WA. Matt contracts building supervisor services to numerous companies and has been supervising construction projects in Perth for over 10 years. Matt is very well known especially in high end fit out projects in residential and apartment fit outs.

Matt is a carpenter by trade and works across two of the construction sectors with a split of approximately 70% commercial, 30% residential.

Hard-to-fill Trades

Changes to the priority occupation list have huge ongoing impacts for the building industry.

How are we supposed to get these houses finished if the squeeze is on and the tap turned off on some trades (eg, Carpentry is off the skills priority list)? Carpentry and Joinery is an A class qualification so can only be done under apprenticeship arrangements; this excludes international students.

Declining Quality is an issue

There is a decline in the quality of workmanship and general care about quality from the trades. Residential workers seem to take less care and are not as professional as Commercial industry workers. Trades are untidy, with a lack of care for each other's work and the worksite generally – which creates extra work, and double handling.

All trades workers are currently hard to get hold of. Especially the finishing trades.

Change to occupations on the immigration list by government is impacting significantly. Many construction workers are here on visas and as an example on Matt's current job, there are many backpackers – 3 Italians, 2 New Zealanders, etc. People coming in from overseas (no knowledge of the local industry) are getting work even as supervisors before local people.

The high standard of trade workmanship isn't there anymore.

How the CTF can help

Incentives to get the right trades in the right areas (eg, wet trades are not popular trades to enter into – bricklaying, plastering etc). Need big incentives to attract people otherwise workers are choosing to go to the 'nicer/easier' trades.

As to diversity in the construction industry, there has been more females coming in – primarily as electricians and painters. Need more focus on other trades, plumbing, and unions need to play their part.

The culture of industry does make a difference. Lack of toilets are an issue so doesn't encourage women to work in the industry.

Education needs to start at schools. Trade programs are good – and could include work experience on building sites.

Office staff good have good female representation but it is not seen in the trades.

Reach of the CTF / Definition of Construction in the Act

The definition of construction could definitely do with an update and be included in the BCITF Act as its own.

Offsite construction should be included in the definition of construction. Fencing, modular homes, cabinet making, etc.

More advertising, more education for industry about what the CTF does as many aren't aware of.

The resources sector should be contributing to the fund. You see workers working in both resources and residential as they can do both with the nature of FIFO. Still getting \$40 per hour as a labourer in residential so this contributes to incomes which is really important currently.

The factors for an employer deciding to engage an apprentice

The state of market determines the decision as if there is no work around, no one would hire an apprentice. The CTF subsidy is helpful, but is not the reason why an employer decides to take on an apprentice.

90 per cent of the time, apprentices are just seen as cheap labour for a few years.

Matt Dolan

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