

Media Release - 21 June 2022

A WELCOME FOCUS ON ADDRESSING CULTURE IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

The Construction Industry Culture Taskforce (CICT) strongly supports the NSW Government's focus on attracting more women into the construction industry by addressing root cause cultural issues limiting the sustainability and productivity of the sector.

"We were very pleased to see Friday's announcement made by NSW Treasurer, Matt Kean and his colleagues, Ministers Rob Stokes and Natalie Ward, committing \$20.2m to shifting the culture in construction, and look forward to seeing it included in today's Budget," CICT Chair Gabrielle Trainor AO said.

"Construction is the most male-dominated industry in Australia, has the widest pay gap of any industry and we know the culture of the industry is one of the biggest turn-offs for women who are leaving the industry around 40% faster than men.

"We believe construction can be an important driver of the participation of women in the NSW workforce – but a wholesale step-change is required if we're going to get more women into the industry and at decision-making tables. That's why we are focusing on addressing the culture through a new culture standard which proposes a range of requirements, including bringing working hours into line with other industries and an improved focus on mental health and wellbeing. This work is being developed in a collaboration with industry, government, and academic research. The NSW Government's recently announced funding is a great step forward in tackling these challenges head on," Ms Trainor said.

"The construction industry represents the greatest opportunity to make a legacy change to women's workforce participation. At a time when infrastructure construction is facing a workforce shortfall of more than 100,000 workers by 2023, we need to improve the culture of the industry so more women will join and find long term career paths in it.

"Increasing women involved in this sector will make the industry more productive and grow the economy."

The CICT is working on six pilot projects to test the implementation of the Culture Standard through the procurement process, including three in New South Wales.

For more information on the CICT and the Culture Standard, visit: www.cultureinsconstruction.com.au.

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Background on the CICT:

The Construction industry Culture Taskforce (CICT) is a partnership founded in late 2018 between the NSW and Victorian governments, the construction industry, including the Australian Constructors' Association, Infrastructure Australia and a team of leading academics and independent contributors.

It seeks to address cultural problems that affect the ability of the sector to keep and attract workers and is part of the broader agenda of the Construction Industry Leadership Forum which is focused on the sustainability of the industry in delivering major projects.

What are we trying to achieve?

The cost of inaction is hidden, but significant. New research, a report by BIS Oxford Economics called the *Cost of Doing Nothing*, finds that the cultural problems in the sector addressed by the Standard are costing the Australian economy \$8 billion annually due to workplace injuries, mental illness, high rates of suicide, long work hours and a lack of diversity.

While good work has been done to try to attract women to the industry, and improve worker mental health and wellbeing, very little has changed. The CICT strongly believes that industry-wide adoption of the Culture Standard will drive change and create a sector that more people want to work in. A positively changed industry will deliver better outcomes for our people and for the economy.

You can read the draft Culture Standard and the proposed elements [here](#).

