

## **MEDIA RELEASE:** Start an apprenticeship and never look back

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Footballer Harrison Wigg appeared to have his AFL career mapped out when he was drafted by his hometown club Adelaide at pick 35 at the 2014 national draft.

Despite being an under-18 All-Australian, the talented defender was unable to break into the Crows strong AFL team and was traded to Gold Coast three years later.

But a series of cruel injuries, including two broken ankles and a season-ending knee injury, meant that after five years on AFL lists, Harrison never got an opportunity at senior level.

Yet Harrison is content as he always knew there was more to life than football.

Harrison, 24, started a construction industry apprenticeship last year and has “never looked back”. He is in stellar form for his SANFL club North Adelaide, and works as a wall and ceiling liner for Adelaide Pressed Metal.

“I had always been pretty good with my hands and a mate who was about to start an apprenticeship said to me, ‘you know, I’m going to get paid to learn a trade’. And I thought, ‘oh, that sounds pretty good’,” Harrison said.

“Don’t get me wrong. There’s nothing wrong with going to uni. It just wasn’t for me. And the thought of having to pay this massive study debt, actually kind of scared me a bit.”

Harrison has joined with the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) to support [National Skills Week](#), which runs from 23 to 29 August, and encourages Australians to ‘rethink’ and explore the many vocational career pathways as Australia’s economy recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic.

There are a wide range of industries currently crying out for apprentices and trainees, with unprecedented demand and few workers to meet that demand.

The focus of National Skills Week 2021 is on challenging perceptions of vocational education and training, reimagining bold and innovative ideas for young Australians to take on their careers and to reassess the value of the VET sector.

“The great thing about working in the construction industry is that there’s this kind of instant reward,” Harrison said.



“Yes, you work pretty hard, but you get a great lifestyle and independence. I can do the things I want without having to rely on anyone else. I really feel like I got a head start in life. If you're thinking about doing a trade, I'd say go for it.”

CITB chief executive Andrew Fullgrabe said National Skills Week was a great opportunity to highlight the benefits of a construction industry career.

“The CITB plays a vital role in attracting young people into careers through school-based apprenticeships, helping workers take the next step in their careers, and backing South Australian businesses to grow and thrive,” Mr Fullgrabe said.

“We hope that stories like Harrison’s inspire people to actively explore and consider a career in building and construction.

“This year the CITB will invest more than \$1.2 million in our schools’ program, doorways2construction, that provides a proven path to transition students from school into a career in the construction industry, and we are allocating more than \$19 million to support apprentices to complete their trade training.

“As Harrison can attest, a trade can provide valuable skills, rewarding work and a great lifestyle.”

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#### **Further information:**

Watch Harrison Wigg reflect on the value of a trade in this CITB video: <https://vimeo.com/566901483>

*For photo, filming or interview opportunities please contact:*

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**About the CITB:** The CITB is a whole-of-industry led organisation that provides support to attract, train and retain South Australian building and construction workers by providing leadership in training and skills development. Learn more [here](#)

