

## **MEDIA RELEASE: Funding boost to tackle skills challenges**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Tradespeople will have greater access to affordable courses to improve their skills under a \$430,000 funding boost secured by the Construction Industry Training Levy.

The extra funding comes as demand in building and construction activity surges across South Australia, including in regional areas.

Extra funding will enable further savings on subsidised training courses initiated by the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB).

The funding also will help regional tradespeople to access more training to secure their jobs and ensure a qualified pool of apprentices are licensed and work-ready outside of metropolitan Adelaide.

CITB Presiding Member Maree Wauchope said the new funding measures reflected industry priorities and would focus on the most in-demand skill areas to meet significant consumer interest in the Federal Government's HomeBuilder Grants scheme.

Almost 14,000 grants, each worth \$25,000, have been handed out in South Australia – the highest rate per capita in the country.

“The Board made the decision to increase funding for successful training initiatives and to maintain support into the next financial year,” Ms Wauchope said.

“The CITB works to ensure levy payments are invested in crucial areas that matter like apprenticeship support and direct funding for high quality training. This is a great outcome for the industry and the state.”

The financial boost is supported by Innovation and Skills Minister David Pisoni.

“South Australia's economy is roaring back to life with 15,300 jobs created in the last month as a home building boom creates massive demand for tradies,” Mr Pisoni said.

“The Marshall Government's \$280 million investment in skills training is critical to ensuring South Australia has the skilled workforce necessary to drive further investment and even greater job creation.”

CITB Chief Executive Officer Andrew Fullgrabe said the average cost of undertaking more than 100 courses would be halved and the range of courses available to more than 6000 apprentices broadened.

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“This includes courses to upskill employees in work health and safety training, construction skills and management,” Mr Fullgrabe said.

Training providers will be supported to deliver more courses in regional areas with a doubling of the existing travel subsidy.

Mr Fullgrabe said the Construction Industry Training Levy helped more than 13,000 construction workers access more affordable training last financial year.

“Our current funding boost is targeted to deliver more assistance to individuals and businesses,” he said.

“The levy is helping construction workers undertake training that complements their existing trade qualifications and improves their skills or knowledge.

“At a time when the construction industry is undergoing significant challenges, South Australia’s current and prospective construction workers are accessing training the levy supports now more than ever.”

To learn more about the CITB, visit <https://citb.org.au/>

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## **MITCHELL'S STORY**

Mitchell Tonks, 22, is a leading-hand carpenter with Black Chilli Constructions.

Mitchell's journey in construction started at Salisbury High School with CITB's doorways2construction program, earning him a Certificate 2 in General Construction. During this time, Mitchell was mentored by trainer Rick Simunsen from Adelaide Training Employment Centre (ATEC). Rick introduced Mitchell to tiling and carpentry trades.

When Mitchell finished high school, he applied for the army but changed his mind and was offered a steel framing apprenticeship.

During the apprenticeship, Mitchell was introduced to his current employer, Alex Sawley from Black Chilli Constructions, who he had an instant rapport with and pivoted into a carpentry apprenticeship.



He has plans to stay with his employer and learn new skills in business management, hoping to take advantage of short courses subsidised by the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB).

"Initially I wanted to serve in the army and went through the interviews but had a change of heart and my construction trainer from CITB's doorways2construction program in high school was there for me," Mitchell says.

"In the doorways2construction program my trainer helped me learn tiling and start an apprenticeship in steel framing. Then, my apprenticeship mentor from the Housing Industry Association introduced me to my boss Alex, who runs a carpentry business. From the very first day I knew that was what I wanted to do with the rest of my life.

"In the future I want to continue building with my employer and will need to do business management courses.

"It is 100 per cent important knowing that an organisation like the CITB is there to help me access all the training I am going to need to secure the future I want. My training will be expensive and knowing that the CITB will help me is fantastic."

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