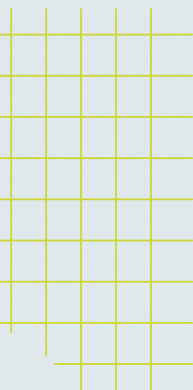




SUNSHINE COAST REGIONAL JOBS COMMITTEE

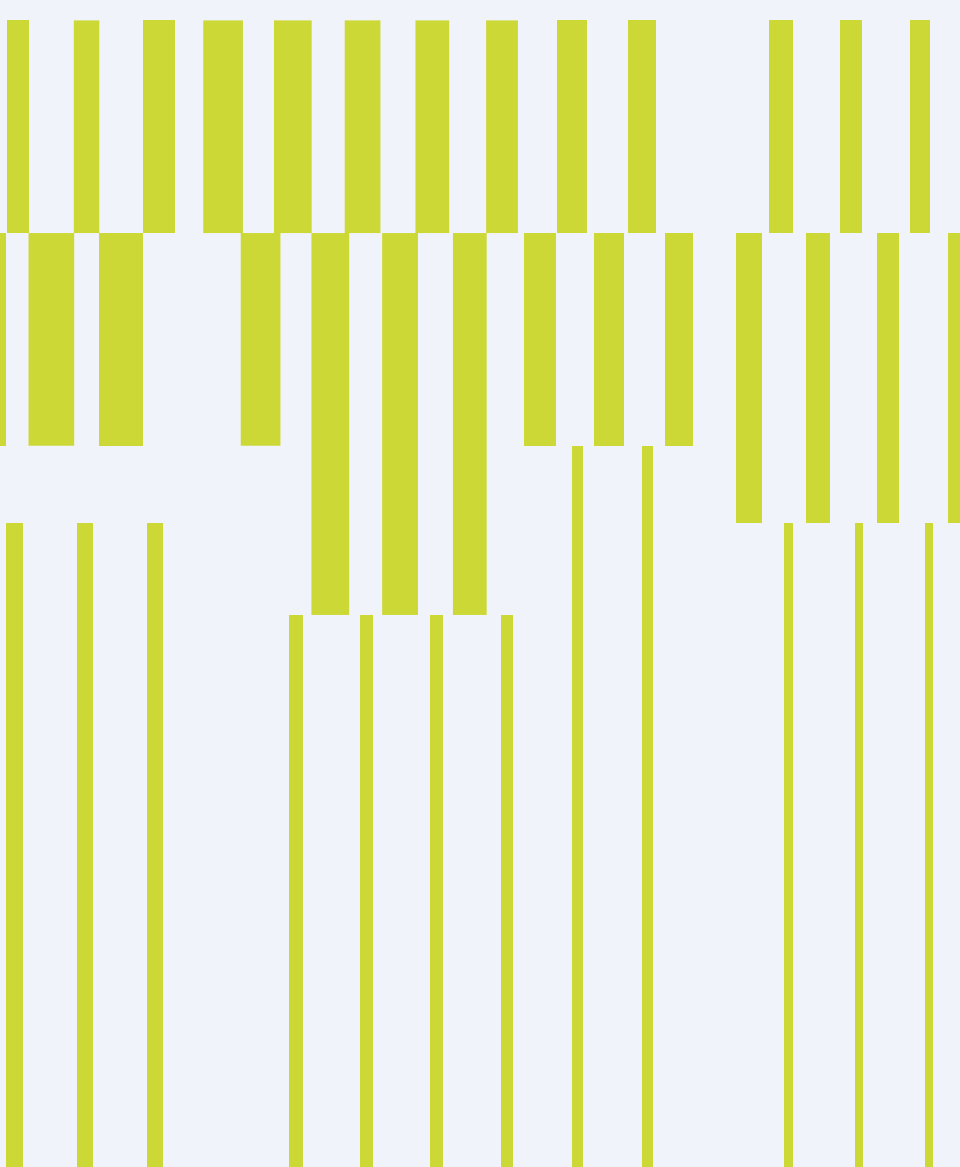
SUNSHINE COAST  
CONSTRUCTION  
SKILLS FORUM  
RESULTS

11 February 2026, 7:30am to 9:30am  
Maroochy RSL, Maroochydore





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# Executive Summary

Feedback from the forum highlights a construction industry that is well-supported by strong foundational programs and industry partnerships, yet constrained by systemic barriers in awareness, perception, funding, and pathway flexibility. While effective initiatives exist, they are not being fully leveraged due to fragmentation and limited alignment across education, industry, and government.

## **What's Working Well**

The sector benefits from a solid base of programs, partnerships and practical learning models that are delivering positive outcomes:

- Established initiatives such as CSQ, Gateway to Industry and VET programs are providing structured entry points
- Hands-on learning (trade tasters, work experience, site tours) is highly effective in engaging students
- Strong industry partnerships and networking are supporting pathways into employment
- Mentoring and jobsite training are improving retention and onboarding outcomes
- Apprenticeships offer a “earn while you learn” model, which remains a key strength
- Passionate educators, ILOs and support staff are critical enablers across the system

## **Overall Insight**

The challenge is not a lack of programs—but a lack of coordination, awareness, and system flexibility.

With targeted intervention, there is a significant opportunity to:

- Increase participation and completion rates
- Strengthen employer engagement
- Reposition construction as a first-choice career

# Key Challenges

Five significant barriers are limiting the pipeline of talent:

## Challenge 1

### Awareness & Perception Gaps

- Low awareness of construction career pathways among students, parents and educators
- Persistent perception of trades as a "second choice" career
- Limited understanding of the diversity of modern construction roles (technical, digital, professional)

## Challenge 2

### Education System Misalignment

- A "one-size-fits-all" education model that does not suit vocational pathways
- Limited exposure to construction in schools, particularly civil and emerging fields
- Insufficient career guidance capability (ILO/career advisors)
- Inflexible pathways (e.g. inability to combine qualifications or tailor learning)

## Challenge 3

### Employer & System Barriers

- Complex processes and administrative burden for employers
- Insufficient incentives to offset the cost, time and risk of hiring apprentices
- Misalignment between employer expectations and entry-level readiness
- Limited structured onboarding and support for employers

## Challenge 4

### Access & Equity Constraints

- Transport barriers impacting participation, particularly for young people
- Limited pathways and support for migrant workers and diverse cohorts
- Gender participation challenges and limited exposure in some school settings
- Language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) barriers impacting entry and progression

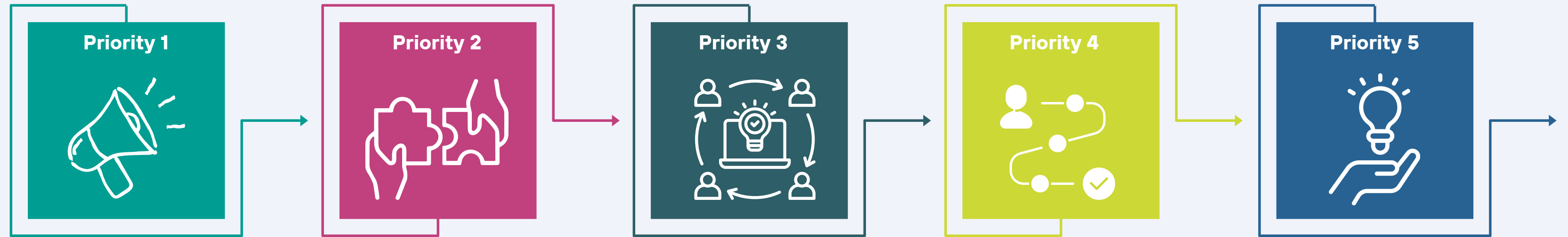
## Challenge 5

### Funding & Structural Limitations

- Funding seen as insufficient, inflexible or poorly targeted
- Low apprenticeship wages reducing attractiveness
- Constraints in delivering integrated or stacked training pathways
- Limited resourcing for schools and programs to deliver meaningful engagement

# Key Opportunities & Priorities

The findings point to a clear set of strategic opportunities to strengthen the pipeline:



## Shift Perceptions & Increase Awareness

- Reposition construction as a professional, high-opportunity career pathway
- Use case studies, career progression stories and wage trajectories
- Target parents and influencers, not just students

## Strengthen School-Industry Connection

- Expand work experience, site visits and real-world exposure
- Enable stronger roles for ILOs and career advisors
- Facilitate direct partnerships between schools and local employers

## Simplify and Incentivise Employer Participation

- Streamline systems and reduce bureaucratic complexity
- Increase and better target employer incentives and wage support
- Provide clearer guidance and support for taking on apprentices

## Improve Pathway Flexibility

- Enable integrated learning models (school + work + training)
- Support stackable and flexible qualifications
- Introduce pre-apprenticeship and bridging programs

## Address Access Barriers

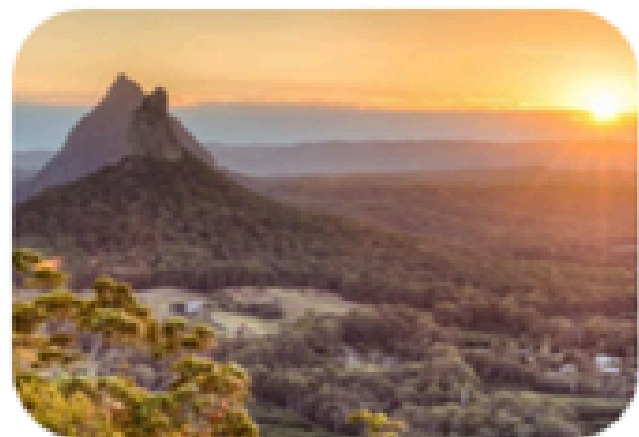
- Develop solutions for transport and mobility challenges
- Create targeted pathways for migrants, women and underrepresented groups
- Strengthen support for LLN and foundational skills

# KEY INVESTMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS



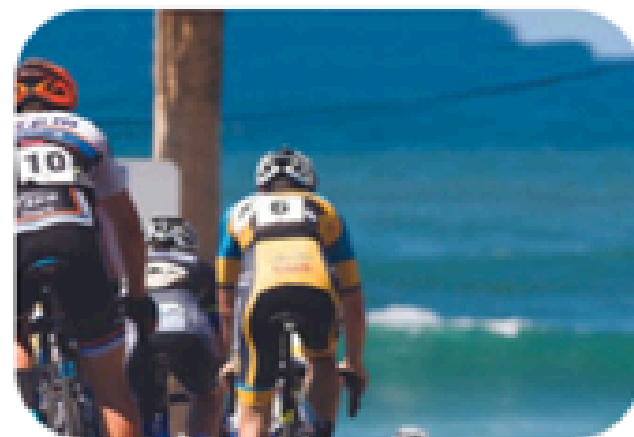
## **Aura**

Caloundra South 50,000 residents (est) \$7 billion+ investment



## **Beerwah East**

Forecast to provide 7000 homes by 2041



## **Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games**

Host of seven Olympic Games and two Paralympic Games sports



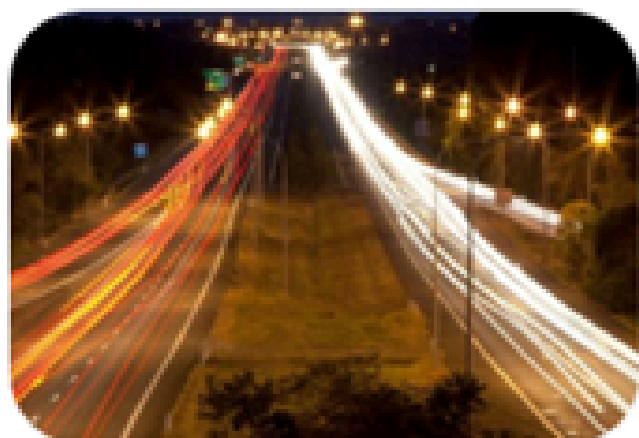
## **Maroochydore City Centre**

Our new Olympic and Paralympic Games City | Forecast \$2.5 billion investment by Walker Corporation over 20 years



## **The Wave Public Transport**

Mass Transit System | 9000 jobs | \$3.6 billion contribution to the economy



## **Mooloolah River Interchange**

\$320 million expansion and upgrade



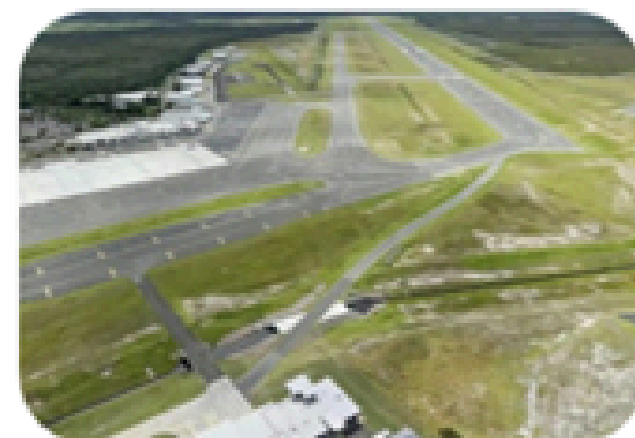
## **Bruce Highway**

\$1.6 billion expansion and upgrade | First stage complete



## **Palmview**

Approximately 16,000 residents by 2036



## **Sunshine Coast Airport Master Plan**

Maximising the economic return from the recent \$334 million expansion project



## **Caloundra Congestion Buster**

5 Projects in Caloundra Congestion Busting Plan, funding allocation



ROUNDTABLE: ACTIVITY 1

Activity One: Barriers to workforce participation

Understanding what are the barriers around attracting people into the industry, upskilling them or internal promotion, and retaining good staff.

Put dots against the top three the group feel are most critical / impacting on industry

CSQ

GET NEW SKILLS

GET MOST

CONSTRUCTION PATHWAYS

BIG DREAMS?

There's more to construction than what you imagine.

SUNSHINE COAST Regional Jobs Committee

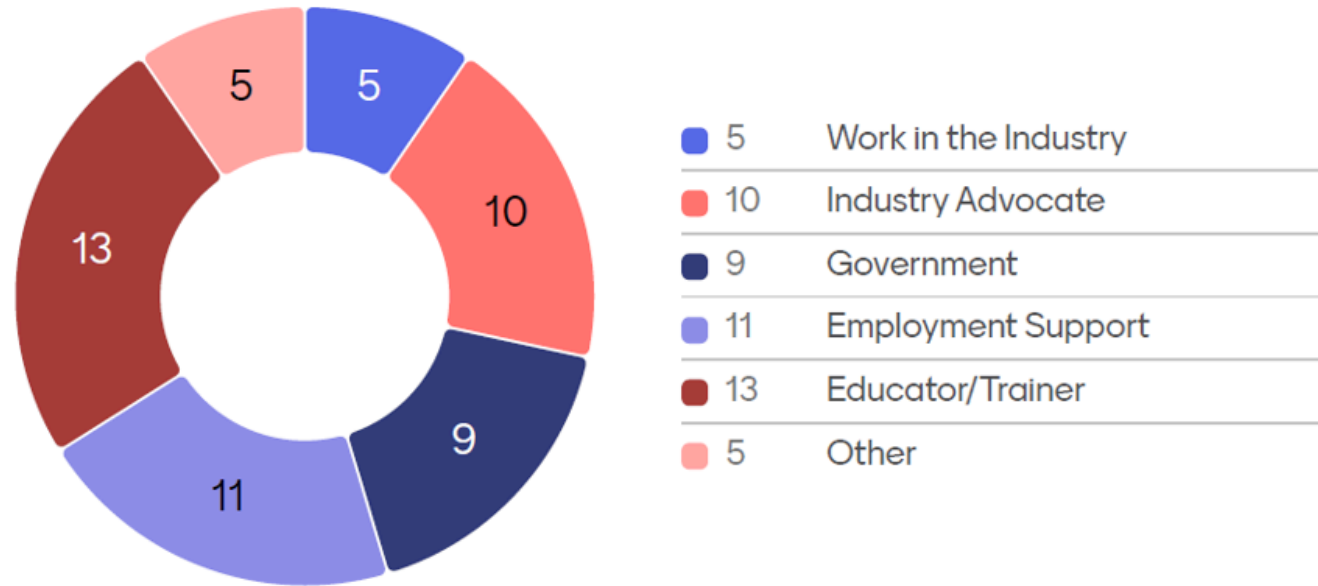
Driving local workforce solutions and business development.

connect with us to learn more

# Attendee Feedback

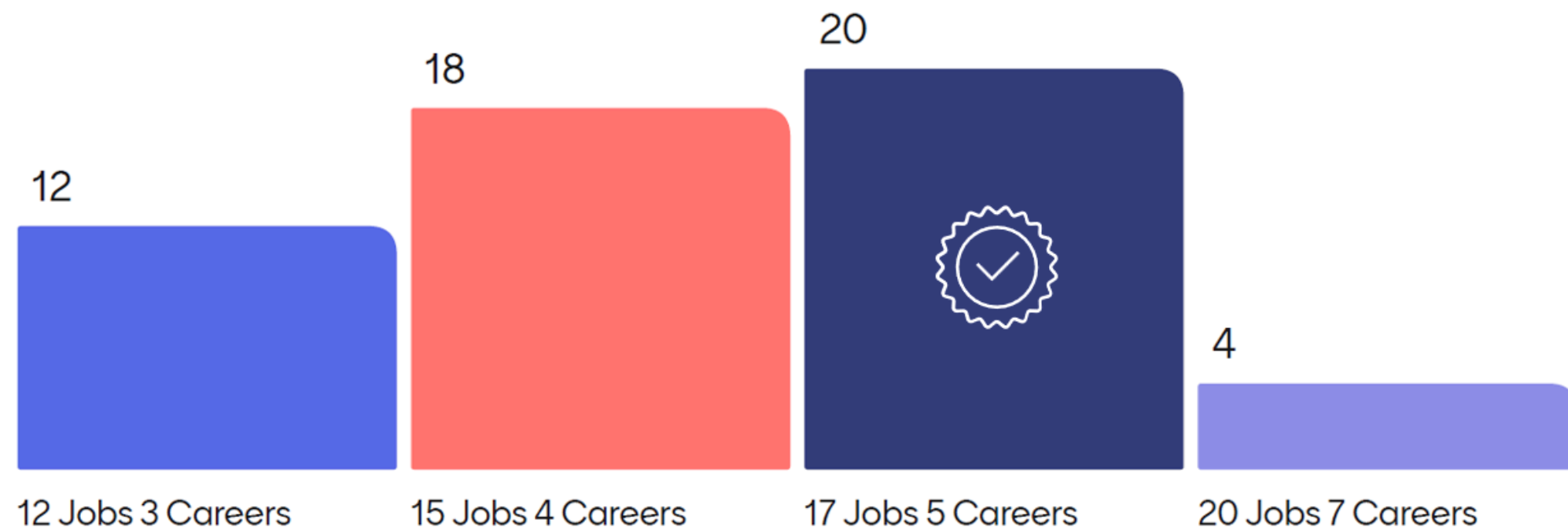
Identification

# How would you identify yourself?



Jobs & Careers

# Guess how many jobs and careers the average worker will now have over their worklife?



# TRANSFERRABLE SKILLS

Transferrable Skills Category	Industries / Backgrounds Feeding Into Construction	Transferrable Skills / Attributes	Barriers / Considerations
<b>Core Feeder Industries</b>	Manufacturing, Mining, Transport, Warehousing, Engineering, Hospitality, Retail, Business	Technical skills, process knowledge, safety awareness, operations experience	Industry transition awareness needed
<b>Emerging / Non-Traditional Pathways</b>	Health & Fitness, Sport Coaching, Education, HR, Business Services, Entrepreneurship	Leadership, teamwork, communication, people management, organisational skills	Perception that these roles don't align with construction
<b>Entry-Level / General Workforce</b>	General labouring, factory workers, process workers, administration	Work ethic, reliability, adaptability, basic operational skills	Lack of formal pathways into construction
<b>Target Workforce Groups</b>	Students, school-based apprentices, ex-military, migrants	Discipline, trainability, resilience, diverse experience	LLN barriers, recognition of prior learning (RPL), awareness gaps
<b>Professional &amp; White-Collar Pathways</b>	Business, Leadership roles, Corporate management, Engineering	Project management, leadership, planning, digital/technical capability	Limited visibility of these roles within construction
<b>Adjacent Trades &amp; Technical Fields</b>	Electrical, IT, WHS, Civil sectors	Technical competency, compliance knowledge, systems thinking	Qualification alignment / certification barriers
<b>Transferrable Capabilities</b>	Across all sectors	- Teamwork & collaboration - Communication skills - Problem solving - Leadership & accountability - Safety mindset - Digital/automation awareness	Skills not always recognised as relevant to construction
<b>Workplace Challenges Impacting Transition</b>	Cross-sector	- Long hours - Physical demands / injury risk - Workplace culture issues - Health & wellbeing concerns	Can deter entrants from other industries

## PATHWAYS & TRAINING

### What's Working Well

The sector has strong foundational elements supporting workforce entry and development:

- Established programs and pathways (CSQ, Gateway, VET, school-based apprenticeships) are effective entry points
- Hands-on learning approaches (trade tasters, work experience, jobsite training) are highly valued
- Strong industry collaboration (partnerships, networking, mentoring) supports engagement and retention
- Clear “earn while you learn” model through apprenticeships remains attractive
- Growing career pathway awareness and structured onboarding are improving outcomes



# Pathways & Training Challenges

What is not working as well for Pathways and Training

## Challenge 1

### Awareness & Perception Issues

- Low awareness of construction careers among students, parents, schools
- Ongoing perception of VET and trades as lower-value pathways
- Poor promotion of the diversity of roles in construction

## Challenge 2

### Education System Gaps

- Limited exposure to construction in schools
- Inflexible, one-size-fits-all education model
- Insufficient capability among career advisors and ILOs
- Limited time and access for meaningful work experience

## Challenge 3

### Access & Equity Barriers

- Transport challenges impacting participation
- Lack of pathways for migrants and diverse cohorts
- LLN (language, literacy, numeracy) barriers
- Gender pathway gaps and limited inclusivity

## Challenge 4

### Employer & Industry Challenges

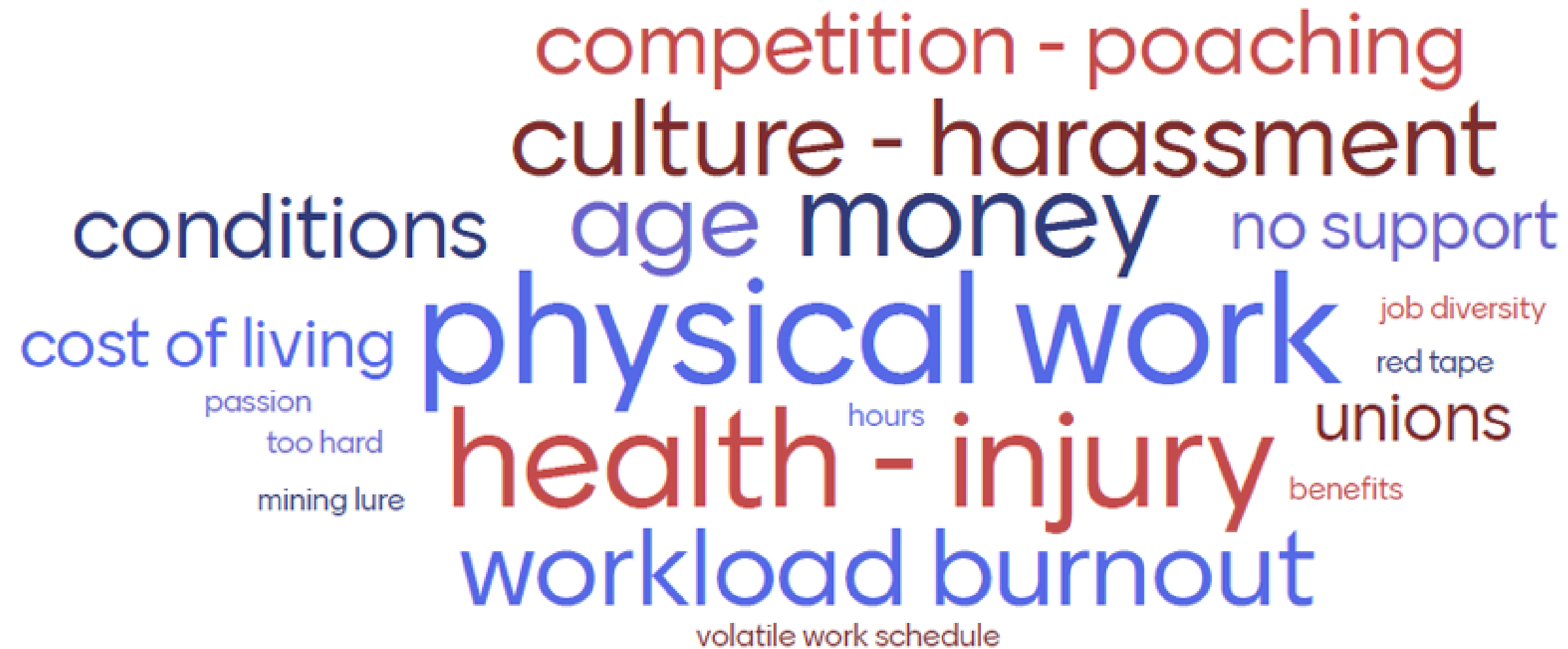
- Employers face time, cost and administrative burdens
- Misalignment between employer expectations and entry-level readiness
- Lack of onboarding-ready candidates
- Limited support for school-industry partnerships

## Challenge 5

### Funding & Structural Constraints

- Funding is insufficient, inflexible or poorly targeted
- Low apprenticeship wages reduce attractiveness
- Inability to combine or stack qualifications
- Rigid training pathways and lack of integration

What is the single biggest reason Construction workers are currently leaving the industry?





## Barriers To Workforce Participation

What is the single biggest barrier you see in attracting workforce to the Construction Industry?



Workforce Attraction Barriers	Upskilling / Internal Mobility Barriers	Workforce Retention Barriers
Perception of industry in community / negative media reputation	Lack of mentors / mentorship	Wages / poaching
Industry seen as “too hard”	Lack of retention leading to limited	Competition between employers
Limited understanding of available roles	Lack of knowledge of upskilling	Company size limitations
Skills gaps	Lack of awareness of subsidised training	Employer brand / culture
Drivers licence / transport barriers	Cost of living while upskilling	Supportive work environment
Youth transport access	Cost of upskilling	Work–life balance
Isolation (site based work)	Time constraints for training	Flexible work environment & hours
Site conditions / WHS (heat/sun)	Employers unable to release staff for	Clean site conditions
Mental health concerns	Lack of workforce strategy to support	Gender equality
Low apprentice wages	Funding availability / access (CSQ, govt	Culture
Cost to enter industry	Business management skill gaps	Personal growth & learning opportunities
Recruitment costs	Confidence gaps	Variety of work
Employer willingness to take apprentices	Sink-or-swim training culture	Burnout
Training packages not aligned to business needs	Labour expected to “know everything”	Physical impacts on body
Gender imbalance	Barriers to internal mobility (size of	Tough working conditions
Discrimination	Multiple trade expectations	No loyalty
Parental influence / lack of parental knowledge	Diversity across sectors	Impatience
Earlier career education needed (Yr 7 onwards)	LLN (Language, Literacy & Numeracy)	
Knowledge of opportunities for ESL learners	Need more training/info sessions	
Work ethic from home environment	Need resilience training	
Ex-offender pathway opportunities	Time off to study + employer support	
Volatile market conditions		



## Skills Gaps

What is the **number one skill** most needed in the construction industry that you **don't see enough of** today?



CURRENT SKILL GAPS
Perception of sector (confronting)
Digital literacy / basic IT capability
Maths / numeracy
Business management / profit v loss
Administration skills
Cabinet makers / tilers / bricklayers
Transport / licence barriers for training
Civil construction knowledge
Surveying shortages
Employer mentoring
Trainer retention
Lack of SBA / apprenticeship opportunities

CURRENT SKILL GAPS
Women participation pathways
Industry knowledge gaps
Salary expectation v reality
Work ethic / attitude / motivation
Lack of resilience
Time management
Respect / discipline
Emotional intelligence
Training packages for migrant workers
Critical thinking / problem solving
Confidence / communication / teamwork
Financial literacy / LLN / budgeting
Forward planning / time management
Conditioning / physical preparedness

FUTURE SKILL GAPS
Post training job pathways
Work attitude / ethic / engagement / mindset
Resilience / grit / reliability
LLN skills / high level numeracy
More complex / engineered builds (density)
Interpersonal skills
Technology adoption / programming
Streamlined / pre-production construction
IT / tech capability / AI / automation / robotics
Machinery upgrades / digital skills
Education for employers (generational)
Supervisory / leadership capability
Industry work exposure
Communication / teamwork



# Solutions



If you could wave a magic wand right now and fix one skill or workforce issue for Construction, what would it be?



# Construction Industry Solutions

**Strategic Goal:** Position construction as a modern, respected, well-paid professional pathway with strong employer participation and simplified systems.

## Solution 1

### Reposition & Promote Construction

- Rebrand trades as professional, high-income, future-focused careers
- Showcase lifetime earnings vs university pathways
- Promote modern roles (digital, civil, AI, automation, leadership)
- Share real career progression case studies
- Reduce stigma and "second-choice" perceptions

## Solution 2

### Support & Educate Employers

- Educate on costs, incentives & obligations
- Train-the-trainer & mentoring capability
- Incentivise retention of apprentices
- Encourage large contractors to employ apprentices
- Reduce bureaucracy & simplify systems

## Solution 3

### Strengthen the Talent Pipeline

- Increase industry exposure for students, parents & teachers
- Expand work experience & school-to-industry connections
- Simplify apprenticeship pathways & employer onboarding
- Promote clear post-training job opportunities

## Solution 4

### Advocate for Better Policy & Funding

- Increase wage & employer incentives (beyond current levels)
- Improve funding flexibility & stacking
- Reform apprentice pay structures (competency-based progression)
- Address transport, licensing & language barriers
- Strengthen RPL pathways for migrants

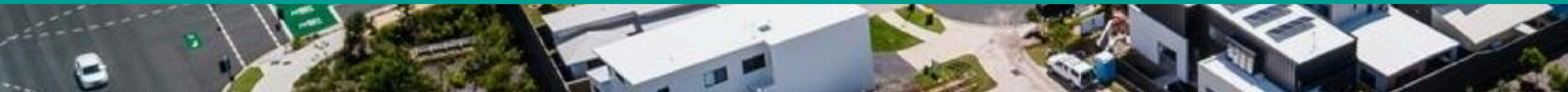
## Solution 5

### Drive Productivity & Modernisation

- Promote digital & modern construction skills
- Support AI, automation & technology adoption
- Fast-track recognition of skilled workers
- Improve industry professionalism & productivity



## Next Steps



# Construction Industry Workforce Transformation Map

## Stabilise & Align Foundations Year 1

- Establish regional construction workforce taskforce (industry, education, government)
- Map all existing programs (CSQ, VET, Gateway, etc.) into a single ecosystem view
- Launch awareness campaign targeting parents + students
- Pilot enhanced work experience & site tours
- Provide clear employer onboarding guides

## Engagement (Activate Pipeline) Year 2

- Scale trade tasters, career expos & school-industry programs
- Strengthen ILO and career advisor capability (training + resources)
- Introduce parent education initiatives (digital + community)
- Expand mentoring programs
- Trial transport support solutions

## Integration (Fix the System Gaps) Year 3

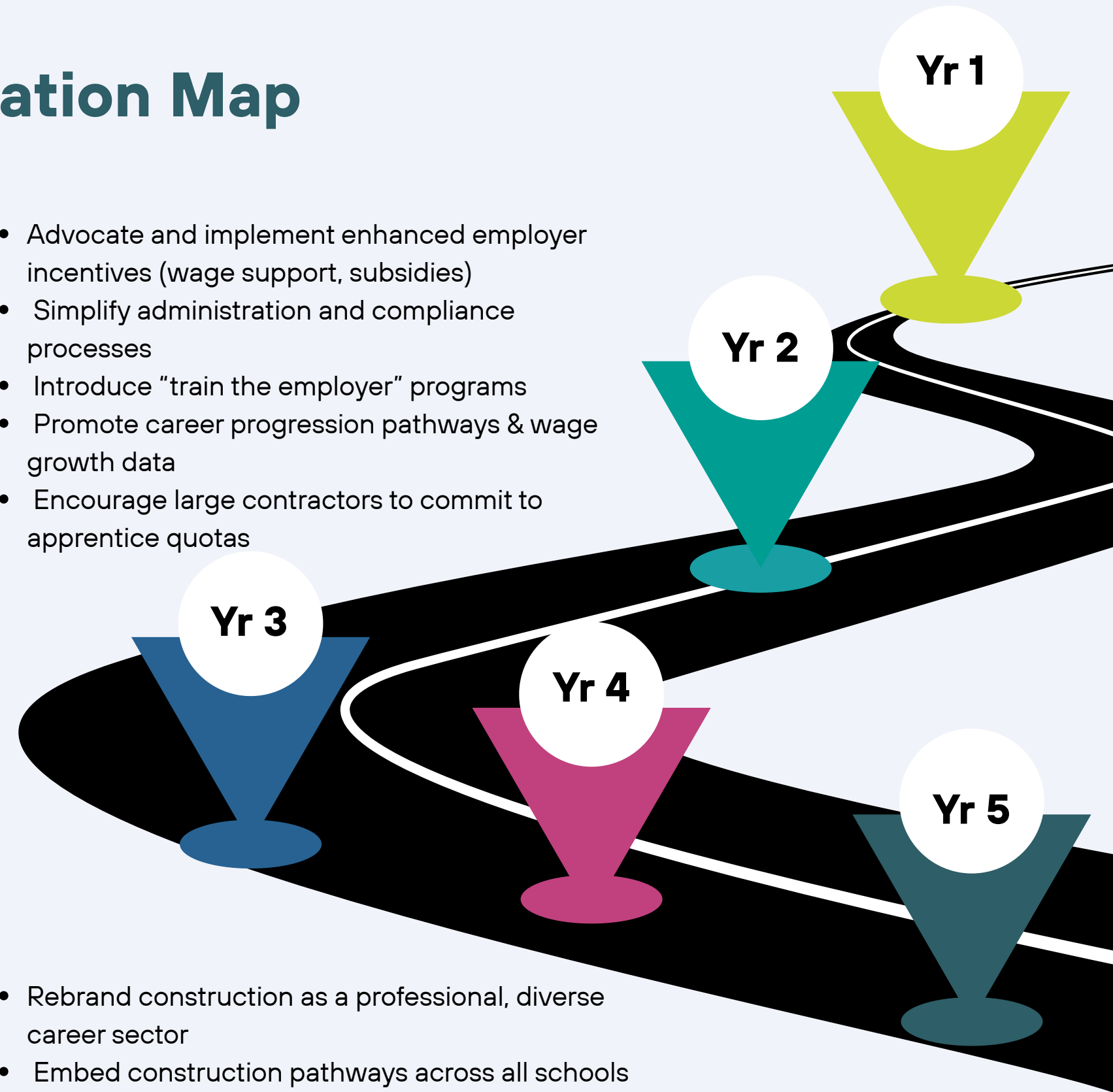
- Implement integrated learning models (school + work + training)
- Enable stackable / flexible qualifications
- Expand pre-apprenticeship & bridging programs
- Introduce LLN and employability skill support
- Formalise school-employer partnership models

## Incentivise & Scale Year 4

- Advocate and implement enhanced employer incentives (wage support, subsidies)
- Simplify administration and compliance processes
- Introduce "train the employer" programs
- Promote career progression pathways & wage growth data
- Encourage large contractors to commit to apprentice quotas

## Transform Future-Proof Year 5

- Rebrand construction as a professional, diverse career sector
- Embed construction pathways across all schools
- Scale digital, technical and emerging skills (AI, automation, modern construction)
- Establish ongoing workforce data tracking & forecasting
- Ensure inclusive pathways (women, migrants, diverse cohorts)



01

### Sunshine Coast RJC Action Plan

Using the results of all Skills Forums to develop a State Govt approved Action Plan of the year's activities that aligns with industry needs



## NEXT STEPS



02

### Industry Discovery Sessions

Work with industry leads like CSQ, HIA, Master Builders and BuildSkills Australia to assess current programs & identify gaps or areas of support, then create repository of resources



03

### Construction Industry Advisory Group

Sense-checking all activities with local leaders to show value add of actions undertaken and ensure measurement of outcomes possible

# THANK YOU FROM SCRJC

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The Sunshine Coast Regional Jobs Committee is proudly supported and funded by the Queensland Government.



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