

MEDIA RELEASE

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SKILLS SHORTAGE THREATENS INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY AND THE AUSTRALIAN ECONOMY

With the Australian economy growing by just 1.4% in the year to June, the Urban Development Institute of Australia (UDIA) is urging the Government to bring forward its planned spend on infrastructure to help bolster the economy and ensure that Australia's national migration policy addresses the skills shortage that is hampering infrastructure delivery.

"We welcome the announcement that the Government is reviewing its skilled migration occupation list and we call on the Government to ensure this review specifically addresses the skills shortage that is threatening infrastructure delivery," says Connie Kirk, UDIA National Executive Director.

"In the recent Infrastructure Australia Audit, this skills shortage was highlighted as being one of the greatest threats to the delivery of infrastructure.

"Without this issue being addressed head on, the opportunity to support the economy through speeding up the pace of infrastructure delivery is directly hampered."

With migration numbers at their lowest level in a decade, UDIA is also urging the Government to reconsider the cap it has placed on migration at 160,000 people per year for the next four years.

"Ensuring more migrants enter with the right skills to help deliver infrastructure projects and making sure that those already in the sector receive the right training, are critical issues that need to be addressed, if we are to bolster our weak economy through a faster pace of infrastructure delivery," says Connie Kirk.

"The Government's promised \$100 billion spend on much-needed infrastructure also needs to be brought forward to help support weak economic growth," says Connie Kirk.

"Only \$30 billion of this total amount is planned to be spent in the next four years, so we firmly believe the pace of infrastructure delivery needs to be faster. Infrastructure improves the liveability of our cities and has a huge positive impact on our economy, through jobs creation, spend on materials and services and improved productivity, through reduced congestion."

UDIA National's post-election action plan entitled 'Building A Better Australia' outlines six policy priorities which are aimed at linking population, cities, infrastructure, housing, tax and regulation planning for greater economic growth.

UDIA's population and infrastructure priorities are as follows:

- Getting population planning and migration policy settings right to ensure we have skilled workers living and working in the areas we need to support our economic growth and delivery of crucial infrastructure.
- Creating a bi-partisan Infrastructure Accord to deliver certainty for cohesive long-term planning and delivery.
- Reducing red tape to expedite planning and infrastructure delivery.

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