

# Application for revocation of an authorisation for proposed conduct and substitution of a replacement

## Applicants

1. Provide details of the applicants for revocation and substitution, including:

1.1 name, address (registered office), telephone number, and ACN

Australian Brick & Blocklaying Training Foundation Ltd (ABBTF), trading as Brick and Block Careers on behalf of itself, Think Brick Australia and the Concrete Masonry Association of Australia and their members.

Registered office: Unit 4, 42-46 Cochranes Road, Moorabbin, Victoria, 3189, Australia.

Tel: 1300 66 44 96, ACN: 097 159 914.

1.2 contact person's name, position, telephone number, and email address

Michael Morrissey, Chief Executive Officer/Director

Tel: [REDACTED], Email: [REDACTED]

1.3 a description of business activities

ABBTF is focused on addressing the current and future skill shortage in brick and blocklaying by promoting the trade to attract quality young people and supporting the employment and training of apprentices to achieve full qualifications to add value to the workforce and industry.

ABBTF changed its trading name to Brick and Block Careers in March 2022. The legal entity name has not been changed.

The name change better reflects the work ABBTF preforms and is more recognisable within the industry and the decision influencers of the apprentices we attract.

### **Vision**

To fulfil the career aspirations of young Australians and job seekers, by providing employment opportunities in brick and blocklaying.

### **Mission**

By promoting brick and blocklaying vacancies and career pathway opportunities we minimise the barriers to employment through generating job openings that will continue to build a solid future for the industry.

### **Summary of activities:**

To promote, educate, assist, and find employment for Australian youth and unemployed to take up an apprenticeship in brick and blocklaying. Opening improved career opportunities to those not normally considering a trade pathway.

Liaise with the construction industry to encourage more job opportunities for Australian youth and unemployed in bricklaying. To encourage these employment opportunities, a subsidy is paid annually to the qualifying employer of an apprentice.

Match and pair successful candidates with employers that lead to a long-term career prospect for the youths entering the industry, adults changing careers and the unemployed.

To assist with the employment of brick and block laying apprentices, ABBTF operates a program titled BrickStart. The ABBTF Industry Engagement Officers work with the Registered Training Organisations to track the progress of each supported apprentice. The employer is paid \$1,000 at the completion of each of the first three years of the apprenticeship. A total \$3,000 is paid to each employer.

**Programs:**

- School programs, webinars, and presentations.
- Working with Job Actives.
- Career and school expos.
- Try-a-Trade programs (short hands-on skills program).
- Role modelling beneficiaries through our Youth Ambassador programs.
- Webinars and panel sessions to schools and Job Actives.
- Marketing via social media, web advertising.
- Apprentice retention programs:
  - Retention contacts during the initial 18 months of the apprenticeship when the apprentice is most vulnerable to leaving the industry.
  - Some programs such as the Travel allowance and RPL incentives have been implemented during the last term of the authorisation. Based on the market cycles and other government incentives, these programs are not currently funded. ABBTF will continue to review the market situation and reintroduce these programs when needed.

Our programs are conducted to attract a wide range of cohorts:

- Our school programs target not only school leavers preparing to enter employment but also younger students who are in the career selection and pathway process.
- Our community engagement and community programs have been successful in reaching out to a range of cohorts who would not normally consider a trade as first choice. These include:
  - Mature age entrants.
  - Unemployed.
  - Regional applicants.
  - Students having a gap year.
  - Recently employed personnel who feel they are looking for more in a career.
- The programs are designed to help educate the influencers of potential applicants such as:
  - Parents who are not aware of the pathways into construction.
  - Career teachers who require more information or are not aware of the opportunities.
  - Job seeker agencies who are looking for better opportunities for their candidates.

Without the Brick and Block Career education programs reaching out to these areas of the population, the trade of brick and blocklaying would remain often unknown. Many opportunities for a fruitful career pathway will be missed and ultimately the housing industry will suffer.

1.4 email address for service of documents in Australia  
Email: [michael.m@brickandblock.org.au](mailto:michael.m@brickandblock.org.au)

### Authorisation to be revoked (the existing authorisation)

2. Provide details of the authorisation sought to be revoked including:

2.1 the registration number and date of the authorisation which is to be revoked

Authorisation No: A91418 in relation to levies on sales of clay bricks and concrete masonry products. Granted on 3 July 2014 and expiring on 25 July 2024.

2.2 other persons and/or classes of persons who are a party to the authorisation which is to be revoked

The arrangement includes a matching levy contribution from members of:  
Think Brick Australia, and the Concrete Masonry Association of Australia.

2.3 the basis for seeking revocation, for example because the conduct has changed or because the existing authorisation is due to expire.

The authorisation is requested as the existing authorisation will expire in July 2024. Revocation is being sought to enable substitution of a new authorisation to apply a levy on the sale of clay bricks and concrete masonry to fund programs to address the skill shortage in bricklaying.

### Authorisation to be substituted (the new authorisation)

3. If applicable, provide details of any other persons and/or classes of persons who also propose to engage, or become engaged, in the proposed conduct and on whose behalf authorisation is sought. Where relevant provide:

3.1 name, address (registered office), telephone number, and ACN

Clay Brick and Paver Institute Ltd.

Trading as Think Brick Australia:

Registered office: Suite 7.01, Level 7, 154 Pacific Highway, St Leonards, NSW, 2065, Australia. Tel: 02 8448 5500, ACN: 003 873 309.

The Concrete Masonry Association of Australia Ltd.

Trading as Concrete Masonry Association of Australia:

Registered office: Suite 7.01, Level 7, 154 Pacific Highway, St Leonards, NSW, 2065, Australia. Tel: 02 8448 5500, ACN: 065 618 840.

3.2. contact person's name, telephone number, and email address

Think Brick Australia:

Cathy Inglis, Tel: [REDACTED], Email: [REDACTED]

Concrete Masonry Association of Australia:

Cathy Inglis, Tel: [REDACTED], Email: [REDACTED]



### 3.3 a description of business activities.

The business activities of ABBTF are described in item 1.3

#### Think Brick Australia:

Think Brick Australia represents Australia's clay brick and paver manufacturers. Think Brick is governed by a board of directors elected by Think Brick member companies. Think Brick's National Technical Committee monitors, develops and researches clay masonry industry technical issues and provides direction and support to Standards Australia that develops Masonry Codes and Standards.

Think Brick provides leading research, technical resources, and training to ensure clay brick is recognised as a pre-eminent building material by leading architects, developers, builders, and property owners.

#### Concrete Masonry Association of Australia:

The Concrete Masonry Association of Australia (CMAA) is the peak body that represents Australia's concrete masonry manufacturers. Concrete Masonry covers bricks, blocks, pavers and retaining walls.

CMMA is governed by a board of directors elected by CMAA member companies. CMAA's National Technical Committee monitors, develops and researches concrete masonry industry technical issues and provides direction and support to Standards Australia that develops Masonry Codes and Standards.

CMAA publishes free technical manuals, data sheets and fact sheets, provides advice and workshop courses to architects, engineers, specifiers, educators, and designers on concrete masonry walling, retaining walls, paving and permeable paving.

## The proposed conduct

### 4. Provide details of the proposed conduct, including:

#### 4.1 a description of the proposed conduct and any documents that detail the terms of the proposed conduct

Australian Brick & Blocklaying Training Foundation Ltd, Think Brick Australia and the Concrete Masonry Association of Australia and their members seek substitution of their current authorisation to continue to apply a levy on the sale of clay bricks and concrete masonry, in order to fund programs to address the skill shortage in bricklaying.

The arrangement is an agreement between Think Brick Australia, the Concrete Masonry Association of Australia, and their current and future members to apply a levy of up to \$2 per 1,000 clay bricks sold and 10 cents per square metre on concrete masonry walling products sold in Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia, Tasmania, and the Australian Capital Territory. The levy is not collected on any sales in the Northern Territory as there currently no training or any planned training of bricklayers in this region.

The arrangement includes a contribution from members of Think Brick Australia and the Concrete Masonry Association of Australia to match the levy applied.

The levy and matching contributions are used to fund ABBTF programs.

Currently the levy is calculated as follows:

#### Clay Bricks:

\$1.50 per thousand on standard size bricks delivered (Number of Standard Brick Equivalent).



\$3.00 per thousand for double height bricks delivered (WA only)

Concrete Masonry:

7.5 cents per square metre in the wall  
(Including all fractions)

Other Conditions

Includes: Ex-yard pick ups  
Sales to country and interstate agents

Excludes: Pavers

Landscape Products  
Clay Special Shapes  
Export Sales  
Inter-company yard transfers

Levy is to be invoiced as a separate line item.

GST is applicable to the levy.

Sales to interstate clients (including the ACT) are determined by postcode and are to be advised separately to Canny Group Accounting (Levy Collection Agency) to enable segregation of the funds for use in that state or the ACT.

No levy is paid when moving stock between states for the purpose of stock transfers. Sales to clients in the Northern Territory are excluded, as ABBTF do not service or run programs in this region. This is due to the low number of bricklayers employed in the Northern Territory and that training is not provided in this region.

Sales to Participating Companies:

If a sale is made to another Company who is participating in the scheme; no levy is applied as the levy will be applied with the final sale to the customer.

#### 4.2 an outline of any changes to the conduct between the existing authorisation and the new authorisation

- The basic operations and strategy remain the same as in the previous Authorisation A91418.
- The levy rate requested for authorisation will continue to be the same as the previous authorisation A91418.
- The housing market is cyclical and therefore ABBTF will constantly change their focus to maximise the number of workers entering the brick and blocklaying industry. Hence ABBTF strategies will change in response to the market cycles in each state.
  - When the housing market is strong ABBTF focus on attraction and recruitment strategies. As described, this involves a stronger focus on attracting people to the industry.
  - When the housing market is in decline ABBTF will focus on improving the availability of apprentice vacancies within a state. This involves working closely with the potential employers of brick and block laying employees and apprentices.

4.3 the relevant provisions of the *Competition and Consumer Act 2010* (Cth) (the Act) which might apply to the proposed conduct, ie:

- cartel conduct (Division 1 of Part IV)
- contracts, arrangements or understandings that restrict dealings or affect competition (s. 45)
- concerted practices (s. 45)
- secondary boycotts (sections 45D, 45DA, 45DB, 45E, 45EA)
- misuse of market power (s. 46)
- exclusive dealing (s.47)
- resale price maintenance (s. 48) and/or
- a dual listed company arrangement (s. 49)

The proposed conduct might apply to

- cartel conduct (Division 1 of Part IV)
- contracts, arrangements or understandings that restrict dealings or affect competition (s. 45)

Facilitated by ABBTF, the members of Think Brick Australia, and the Concrete Masonry Association of Australia collect a levy on the sale of bricks and blocks sold.

- The ABBTF board collectively agrees on a fixed levy rate, up to the authorised amount of \$2 per 1,000 bricks. This is applied to the quote and invoice on all brick and block sales for participating members of the scheme.
- Upon invoicing of customers, the participating members include an itemised line on their invoice stating the amount of the training levy to be applied.
- The levy is based on the volume of product (units or squared metres) and is not affected by the price.
- The participating members of the scheme are invoiced by Canny Group Accounting, Geelong, Victoria.
- Detailed information of individual levy collection is not shared with participating companies of the scheme. Only totals are shared as a means of managing the funds through the Board.
- Confidentiality agreements are in place with the relevant ABBTF, Canny Group Accounting and Davidsons Assurance Services (auditor).

#### 4.4 the rationale for the proposed conduct

Without the continued work of ABBTF, the Australian government will struggle to meet the demand for housing in Australia due to a lack of future trades. The work of ABBTF helps stabilise and improve the availability of brick and block laying trades.

Typically, the brick and block trades supplying the housing industry are made up of SME subcontractors. An inherent problem facing the industry is the low appetite for these small businesses to proactively seek and find apprentices. If not assisted, these businesses would be less inclined to take on apprentices. With ABBTF proactively attracting good candidates to the industry, these businesses now readily take on more apprentices.

Most bricks and blocks sold in Australia are also manufactured locally in Australia, with large manufacturing facilities employing more Australians in manufacturing across the country. Manufacturers report the delay and loss of business is most often due to the lack of trades to install the product. Build times of houses are being extended and the average build cost increasing. In turn this flow-on effect then reduces the employment opportunities in the manufacturing sector.

#### 4.5 the term of authorisation sought and reasons for seeking this period.

The term for which the substitute authorisation is being sought is ten (10) years. This is an appropriate term having regard for the investment in promoting the trade to school students from Year 10 level, the support for apprentice employment, training and retention over three years, recognition of the four-year apprenticeship term in most states, and the ongoing influence to up-skill and raise skills and management levels in the brick and block laying workforce.

To conclusively measure and assess the effectiveness of the above strategies, a further term of 10 years is required.

#### 5. Provide the name of persons, or classes of persons, who may be directly impacted by the proposed conduct (e.g. targets of a proposed collective bargaining arrangement; suppliers or acquirers of the relevant goods or services) and detail how or why they might be impacted.

Current and future members of:

- Think Brick Australia, and
- The Concrete Masonry Association of Australia.

The application or authorisation applies to bodies corporate which are subsidiaries, within the meaning of section 4A of the Trade Practices Act, of the members of Australian Brick & Blocklaying Training Foundation Ltd, Think Brick Australia and the Concrete Masonry Association of Australia, and are manufacturers of the clay brick and concrete masonry products to which the authorised levies will apply.

The above companies manufacture and sell clay bricks and concrete masonry products to which the authorised levies will apply.

## Market information and concentration

#### 6. Describe the products and/or services, and the geographic areas, supplied by the applicants. Identify all products and services in which two or more parties to the proposed conduct overlap (compete with each other) or have a vertical relationship (e.g. supplier-customer).

Bricks and blocks are sold into two sectors the commercial building sector and the domestic housing market. Approximately 70 to 80% of product is sold into the domestic housing market. Housing in the eastern states is generally brick veneer, while the Western Australian market is predominately double brick wall.

The number of bricklayers needed in each state is a function of the number of houses and commercial work needed and the market share of bricks and blocks. While the block market has been in decline due to substitution, bricks have remained the most popular material for external cladding of domestic houses.



The Housing Industry Association (HIA) Trades Report, September 2023 Quarter, shows that the HIA Trades Availability Index for bricklaying to be the worst shortage of all trades with an index of -1.17 (the worst possible is -2.00). The report shows that bricklaying has had the highest shortages of all housing trades since the start of the period in September 2020.

The following table references the 2021 Census:

<b>State/Territory</b>	<b>Bricklayers and Stonemasons 2021 Census</b>
New South Wales	5,869
Victoria	6,454
Queensland	3,035
South Australia	1,478
Western Australia	3,848
Tasmania	446
Northern Territory	92
Australian Capital Territory	343
<b>National</b>	<b>21,574</b>

The current construction trade skills shortage is of critical importance to the Australian State and Federal Governments. This is especially important when it comes to the brick and block laying trades to assist the building industry and decrease the potential delays in housing construction times.

The long-term viability of being able to afford a house in Australia is impacted by the availability of housing construction trades. The recent economic boom of the residential new housing market has put additional pressure on the trade availability of brick and block layers.

The governments Housing Future Fund is the current goal of 1.2 million houses over five years. This will assist with the housing crises. In turn, it will have a significant impact of the already existing labour shortages including brick and block layers.

In 2022 the housing starts were 183,000. At its peak Australia commenced 234,000 houses in 2016. During the peaks and the troughs, bricklayers were always in short supply. Australia would need to produce 240,000 houses each year to achieve the Governments Future Housing Plan.

An estimate broken down into states this would require the following house to be built annually:

<b>Total Houses to be Built each Year</b>	
New South Wales	75,288
Victoria	61,625
Queensland	49,148
South Australia	16,762
Western Australia	25,817
Tasmania	5,223
Northern Territory	2,285
Australian Capital Territory	4,212
<b>Total</b>	<b>240,360</b>

To achieve the 1.2 million houses announced by the government and maintain the same market share, brick sales would need to increase by over 30% from 2022. This would require over an additional 6,000 brick and block layers. Although training apprentices will not meet this goal, without strong apprentice growth the industry will suffer more acute shortages and further increased house prices.

Master Builders Australia's recent economic assessment projects that between May 2023 and November 2026, Australia will lose 6,973 bricklayers to attrition. This is on top of the bricklayers required to meet the growing housing industry.

7. Describe the relevant industry or industries. Where relevant, describe the sales process, the supply chains of any products or services involved, and the manufacturing process.

The markets in which clay bricks and concrete masonry products are supplied are:

- Commercial construction market.
- Residential construction market.

Other affected markets are:

- The supply of bricklayer services.
- The supply of apprentice employment services through Group Training Organisations.
- The supply of bricklayer training services.

The residential and commercial construction markets are supplied clay bricks and concrete masonry by manufacturers. It is estimated that parties to this scheme represent at least 95% of the total supply nationally.

In the residential market, builders purchase the clay bricks and concrete masonry. The top 100 builders in Australia represent 36% of total dwellings constructed according to the Housing Industry Association 2023 report.

Supply of product is restricted by geographical breakdown due to the cost factor of transport over long distances.

The supply of bricklaying services generally can be segmented into residential and commercial markets. A small proportion of the trade may move between states where construction activity is higher for better employment prospects. ABBTF apprentice support programs are the same or similar for bricklaying contractors across the country.

Group Training Organisations compete in a market of apprentice employment. All are entitled to the same ABBTF benefits within the state of operation.

The market is defined as local, or state based.

Bricklayer training is provided by TAFE colleges or private Registered Training Organisations. Training delivery methods may vary as do assessments of apprentices; however, all assess competencies against a national training package. ABBTF subsidies to employers require evidence of satisfactory training progress from training organisations recognised by ABBTF.

8. In respect of the overlapping products and/or services identified, provide estimated market shares for each of the parties where readily available.

As per Sections 6 and 7.

9. In assessing an application for authorisation, the ACCC takes into account competition faced by the parties to the proposed conduct. Describe the factors that would limit or prevent any ability for the parties involved to raise prices, reduce quality or choice, reduce innovation, or coordinate rather than compete vigorously. For example, describe:

9.1 existing competitors

9.2 likely entry by new competitors

9.3 any countervailing power of customers and/or suppliers

9.4 any other relevant factors.

The levy is a minimal charge to the cost of a new house or a small percentage of a commercial project. Representing approximately \$16 to \$40 to the price of a new house build. It will not impact the market or have any effect on:

- Any competition between brick and block manufacturers.
- Competitive advantage of any supplier in the brick and block market.
- Any disadvantage for any supplier to enter the market.

## Public benefit

10. Describe the benefits to the public that are likely to result from the proposed conduct. Refer to the public benefit that resulted under the authorisation previously granted. Provide information, data, documents or other evidence relevant to the ACCC's assessment of the public benefits.

The skills shortage in bricklaying has continued through the last decade and was at its peak during the COVID period. Each state recorded record skills shortages in brick and block laying that led to delays in construction and increasing prices.

Despite the influx of bricklaying apprentices, bricklaying remains on the Federal Governments Priority Skills list as a Shortage. Without this influx of apprentices, the problem would be worse.

More investment is needed to promote the trade and better source good candidates for bricklaying. ABBTF is the only organisation solely dedicated to promoting and supporting the training of brick and block laying tradespeople. This particular trade has suffered from a lower level of prestige in comparison to other construction trades.

ABBTF submits that the strategy to address the skill shortage and to increase the quality, knowledge, skills, management, and availability of bricklayers does provide a public benefit in the form of:



1. Addressing the fluctuating skill shortage which is becoming more acute with the increase in building activity and fewer new apprentice candidates.
2. Targeted marketing to create training and employment opportunities for young people.
3. Step Out Programs and Try-a-Trade for students in secondary schools and job seekers.
4. Via our website [www.brickandblockcareers.org.au](http://www.brickandblockcareers.org.au) we are able to provide up to date and relevant information to potential brick and block laying candidates including job seekers, employers, apprentices, parents, careers teachers and other key influencers. This website also hosts our Jobs Board which details our current vacancies and feeds potential candidate applications directly to our CRM. Blogs cover off on key industry news and events.
5. Apprentice employment incentives and benefits are promoted to bricklayers through a wide distribution of flyers, fact sheets, and other promotional material.
6. Maintain an active jobs board on our website showing job locations and application details.
7. Recommencing Out of Trade apprentices has been a key activity in improving the retention of apprentices, thereby reducing lost skills within the industry, and saving training costs.
8. Retention in the apprenticeship to achieve a completion and a full qualification.
9. An improved profiling and suitability process to minimise a withdrawal or cancellation in the apprenticeship.
10. Assistance with apprentices and bricklayers with available mentoring and support programs to achieve completions and job satisfaction.
11. Improve skills and knowledge in the workforce to meet Australian building standards.
12. To encourage best practice in brick and block installation, as well as efficiency and small business management.
13. Reduce construction delays caused by lack of skills and availability of tradesmen and women.
14. Promoting diversity with new entrants to the trade. This includes programs and marketing to encourage females into a non-traditional trade.

ABBTF have more than 300 vacancies nationally for new apprentices which cannot be adequately filled due to young people staying at school and preferring an academic or non-trade occupation. As soon as vacancies are filled, more immediately become known.

The creation of ABBTF continues to help raise the profile of this trade, and ABBTF was created at the behest of the brick and block manufacturing industry. There is evidence of an improving bricklaying workforce during the period of implementing ABBTF strategies.

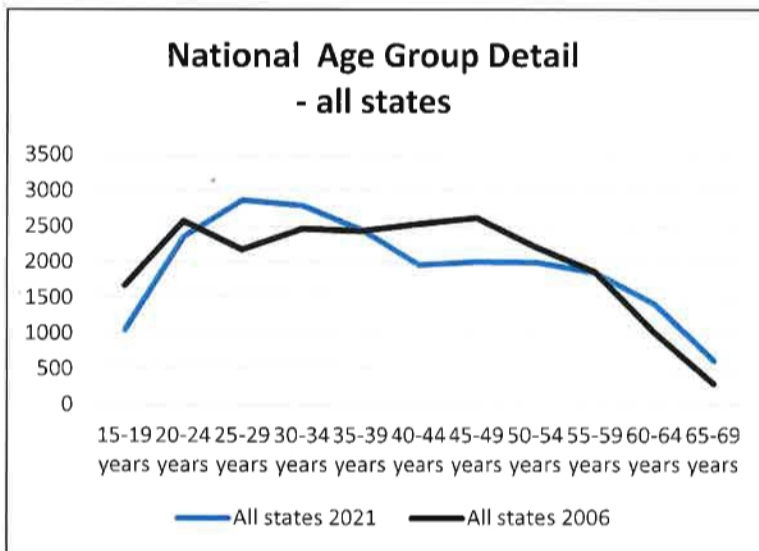
Evidence of the public benefit include:

### **Changing age profile of bricklayers in Australia**

The challenge of attracting apprentices into the trade has led to an increasingly aged workforce. ABBTF has been operating for the past 15 years which is evident when looking at the aged workforce of Bricklayers.

When comparing bricklayer and stonemasons' employment numbers as published by the ABS there is a two notable changes:

- A clear increase in the ages under 35.
- A noticeable drop in the over 45 years old leaving the industry or retirement.



ABBTF confirm that the age profile shows only one part of the success of our strategies. More importantly, ABBTF believe without these strategies the number of trades in brick and block laying would have greatly declined. As previously stated, bricklaying is a difficult trade to promote, and without any promotion the trade would see serious declines.

### **The funding of supported brick and blocklaying apprentices**

An important feature of ABBTF strategies is that ABBTF is a "Not-for-Profit" and a Social Enterprise. A large percentage of money collected goes back into the industry with the assistance to employers via our Brickstart subsidy. Every direct indenture and Group Training Organisation qualifying employer receives \$1,000 per year up to a total of \$3,000.

Over the past 10 years ABBTF have supported the apprentice employers with more than \$10,900,000 in Brickstart subsidies.

### **Secondary school students and job seekers**

Over the past five years secondary school students and job seekers have benefited from 431 hands-on bricklaying experiences provided or coordinated by ABBTF. The one day Try-a-Trade and up to five-day Step Out and other programs provide students with a real experience in bricklaying, which influences their consideration for future careers.

Many students from these programs have gone on to start an apprenticeship in brick and block laying.

ABBTF staff have attended more than 950 expos and events over the past five years, despite Covid lockdowns impacting most states over this period. These expos and events are used to promote the trade and the career pathways that can result from a Certificate III qualification in bricklaying and blocklaying.

### **Direct employment outcomes – last five years**

Over the last five years, the following apprenticeship outcomes have been achieved with the direct involvement of ABBTF staff:

- New apprenticeship outcomes – more than 3,000.
- Recommencement apprenticeship outcomes – more than 700.
- Bricklaying labourer outcomes – more than 650.

15,000 leads have been followed up in the last five years by ABBTF staff to seek those candidates to become quality new commencements.

### **Hiring an Apprentice**

The many benefits of employing an apprentice are promoted to industry and ABBTF financial support, with a subsidy (currently \$3,000), is paid in addition to support from other sources.

The ABBTF subsidy support has been a significant factor in apprentices completing their training. The number of apprentices completing their training with our support is usually over 300 per annum.

Clearly, ABBTF 's Brickstart subsidy does make a difference. Even more importantly, managing the distribution through a brick and block laying trade foundation, ensures that this subsidy is appropriately targeted and supportive of trade specific needs.

For instance, the in-depth knowledge of the trade and evidence-based research is integral to the development of meaningful support and information. The website [www.brickandblockcareers.org.au](http://www.brickandblockcareers.org.au) strongly promotes this message and includes meaningful details for both employers and apprentices that provide real benefits.

The trade is also contacted through quarterly newsletters, SMS marketing, and blogs (50 per annum).

The website has approximately 4,000 visitors and 6,000 page views each month. The industry benefits from this program by adding new entrants into the workforce through the apprenticeship scheme which improves industry wide skills and efficiency.



The following table shows the total subsidies paid to employers to support and encourage the employment of apprentices, split between those employed under direct indenture and those employed via group training organisations.

\$,000's	FY19 \$	FY20 \$	FY21 \$	FY22 \$	FY23 \$
DIRECT	593	580	1,137	1,004	679
GTO	75	95	152	189	175
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>668</b>	<b>675</b>	<b>1,289</b>	<b>1,193</b>	<b>854</b>

The number of apprentices supported is shown in the table below:

	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23
NSW	339	327	406	384	391
VIC	522	423	439	414	361
ACT	12	14	15	15	7
QLD	255	217	296	309	313
SA	86	96	148	179	190
TAS	32	42	68	80	74
WA	98	107	160	204	242
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,344</b>	<b>1,226</b>	<b>1,532</b>	<b>1,585</b>	<b>1,578</b>

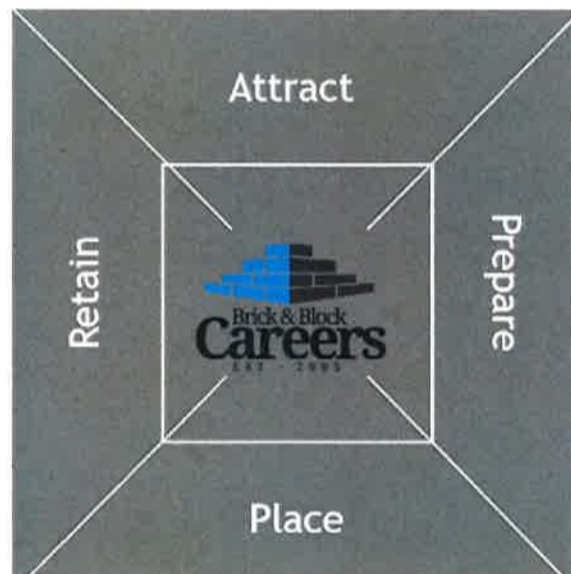
### The marketing strategy

Our strategy is to promote the trade through the Brick and Block Careers website and regular promotions to schools, youth, and the community.

To support our Vision and Mission, it is important that our business model remains agile and flexible in an ever-changing environment.

We aim to meet industry challenges and increased demands through a cohesive and organised business model which is focused on the following four pillars – Attract, Prepare, Place and Retain.

Our refined business model now reflects our strategic objectives and will drive a suite of operational activities which are focused on candidate care, the apprentice pipeline, filling vacancies, individual and team responsibilities.



Through our in-depth knowledge of the trade, tailored marketing, and evidence-based research, ABBTF has developed focused and targeted marketing campaigns that underpin the reduction of the median age of the workforce.

Targeted beneficiaries include:

- Youth 15 to under 25
- Youth unemployed
- Youth females
- Youth financially disadvantaged backgrounds
- Youth in rural/regional communities
- Youth indigenous.

Social media presence – growth in social media engagement:

- Facebook followers – more than 12,000:  
Targets youth 18 years of age+, including bricklayer employers, TAFE/RTO teachers, apprentices, parents, and industry.
- Instagram followers – more than 1,700:  
Targets youth 18 years of age+, mainly bricklayer employers and apprentices.
- LinkedIn recently launched – with close to 900 followers and growing:  
Targets careers teachers and builders.
- Our website attracts over 50,000 yearly visitors, with more than 2,000 contact/enquiry forms submitted each year.
- Program such as the Sports Entertainment Network (SEN) campaigns – Kick-start your career:  
Targets youth over the last six months with more than 2,400,000 impressions and over 1,600 clicks to our website.
- Supporting females in brick and block laying:  
Promoted via Female Apprentice Bricklayers (FAB), and more recently a closed Facebook page has been launched for Aussie Female Brickies.
- Google ads is a great tool for building our brand awareness and our SEO has doubled the leads generated through organic traffic.
- EDM campaigns of which we send approximately 100 campaigns per annum to our key stakeholders which includes careers teachers, job network providers, employers, and apprentices.
- Ambassadors, this initiative showcases young people at various stages of their apprenticeship journey. They make a real difference in promoting brick and block laying career pathway options to potential youth apprentice candidates.
- Volunteers – a recent campaign to encourage employers to act as industry leaders, this campaign received a good response from businesses who are eager to support brick and blocklaying events and promote the trade to school students and the unemployed.

### **Recommencements**

Recommencing Out of Trade apprentices has had good success with the use of the custom built ABBTF CRM, and ongoing communication with apprentices and potential employers. ABBTF keep a close eye on apprentices falling out of employment. Once an apprentice is deemed a concern or have left their employer, ABBTF Industry Engagement Officers assist with finding more suitable work options and therefore try to maintain the apprentice in the industry. We also advise on how to engage mentoring, welfare, and career assistance.

Retention of apprentices in training has been a focus over recent years. The strategy is to prepare the apprentice and employer with “What to Expect” and “What is Expected of You” in a manner that is tailored to the brick and block laying trade.

In the past, the ABBTF had successfully attempted to simply attract more individuals into the trade. The ABBTF has the strategic emphasis to attracting well suited individuals and targeting support to reduce unnecessary dropouts. This can only be done through close and consistent communication with apprentices and employers.

Regular retention calls or visits are made to support both parties and achieve early detection of potential cancellations.

### **Working with Registered Training Organisations (RTOs)**

Brick and Block Careers works closely with all private and TAFEs and RTOs who deliver Certificate III in Brick and Blocklaying. Our policy is not to interfere with their competition with other RTOs and treat each one individually.

Our relationship is important for us to be able to:

- Keep abreast of changes in the skills outcomes.
- Monitor student's year competitions for the enablement of a Brickstart payment to the student's employer.
- Educating students on their incentives.
- Working with RTO teachers to identify students with possible retention issues.
- Assisting RTOs with their own promotion and programs they may be running.

### **Monitoring of training quality and achievement**

The quality of training in brick and block laying can vary due to differences in facilities, commitment, skills, location, and employer influence.

ABBTF closely monitor training progress to ensure satisfactory progression in learning is being achieved. This is done with retention calls, visits to TAFE and through the Brickstart subsidy claim procedure.

Conditions of eligibility for ABBTF subsidies include conditions the employer must meet in training the apprentice such as giving trowel time to achieve competency. This avoids the unfortunate, but common practice, of using an apprentice as cheap labour and ensures valuable on-the-job training time. It is unlikely this 'cheap labour' practice would change without the oversight and management of the levy by an industry focused group, such as ABBTF.

Brickstart subsidy claims when they fall due, are verified with the TAFE or Registered Training Organisation to ensure the employer is allowing the apprentice to attend training and the apprentice is making satisfactory progress. Random calls to the apprentice are also made to validate the training and the skills acquired.

### **Monitoring of training capacity**

ABBTF closely monitor the availability of training facilities around Australia. With tighter monetary pressure and controls, public and private training organisations can reduce training in an area impacting future generations of bricklayers.

The most recent example of this was in Cairns and Townsville when training of bricklaying ceased due to profitability. ABBTF lobbied the government and the training organisation to have it reinstated. Without training in these regional areas, apprentice numbers and the future workforce will decrease, leading to future skills shortages. This in turn will lead to increased prices and shortages of regional housing.

#### **Future technology changes effecting outcomes.**

The future of the bricklaying industry, and hence the housing industry, is dependant on sufficient apprentice numbers entering the market.

The fundamental process to manually build a brick or block structure has not changed since the previous Authorisation. Brick and block laying remains a labour-intensive process requiring the need for brick and block layers to perform the work. There have been no changes to automation that have made any significant change for the need for bricklayers.

- There are no known future large scale changes to automation that will impact the number of brick and block layers required over the next 10 years.
- Any advances in automation will only compliment the shortage in bricklayers expected over the next period.

### **Public detriment including any competition effects**

11. Describe any detriments to the public likely to result from the proposed conduct, including those likely to result from any lessening of competition. Refer to the public detriment that may have resulted under the authorisation previously granted. Provide information, data, documents, or other evidence relevant to the ACCC's assessment of the detriments.

The levy for which authorisation is being sought is \$2 per thousand on clay bricks and 10 cents per square metre in the wall for concrete masonry. This would add \$16 to the average sized home in all states except Western Australia where double brick construction means the levy represents \$40 for the average house. Authorisations for this level have been in place since 2006 and we submit that it continues.

The above levy has been applied and matched by participating brick and block manufacturers in all states from 2007 to June 2012. The levy was then reduced to the current rate of \$1.50 per thousand on clay bricks and 7.5 cents per square metre in the wall for concrete masonry.

The levy amount has not changed since 2012.

The public detriment may be seen as an additional amount included in the total price of the product sold; however, this is not significant in terms of the price of bricks and blocks and the overall cost of construction.

Greater costs may be incurred if skill shortages occur through lack of skilled contractors.



### **In summary**

- a) The amount of the Levy is negligible relative to the cost of construction,
- b) The Levy will result in little, if any, impact on the relevant areas of competition; and
- c) The Conduct provides little opportunity for anti-competitive conduct beyond the scope of the authorisation, and there is no evidence that the existing authorisation has had an anticompetitive effect.

Without the Conduct, it is likely that there would be no scheme that is funded by the Levy and administered by the ABBTF for the purposes of promoting bricklaying apprenticeships and providing incentives to employers of apprentices.

### **Contact details of relevant market participants**

12. Identify and/or provide names and, where possible, contact details (phone number and email address) for likely interested parties such as actual or potential competitors, customers and suppliers, trade or industry associations and regulators.

Likely interested parties include:

- Housing Industry Association (HIA)  
Jocelyn Martin, Managing Director  
Tel: [REDACTED], Email: [REDACTED]
- Master Builders Australia (MBA)  
Denita Wawn, Chief Executive Officer  
Tel: [REDACTED] Email: enquiries@masterbuilders.com.au
- CSR Masonry & Insulation  
Heath Hopwood, Executive General Manager  
Tel: [REDACTED], Email: [REDACTED]
- Brickworks Limited  
Mark Ellenor, Chief Operating Officer  
Tel: [REDACTED], Email: [REDACTED]
- Adbri Masonry  
Andrew Dell, Chief Operating Officer  
Tel: [REDACTED], Email: [REDACTED]
- TAFE Queensland  
John Tucker, Chief Executive Officer  
Tel: [REDACTED], Email: [REDACTED]
- Victorian Skills Authority (VSA)  
Craig Robertson, Chief Executive Officer  
Tel: [REDACTED] Email: [REDACTED]
- Construction Industry Training Board (CITB)  
Holly Willcox, Chief Executive Officer  
Tel: [REDACTED] Email: [REDACTED]
- MEGT  
Matthew Hick, Chief Executive Officer  
Tel: [REDACTED] Email: [REDACTED]
- Construction Industry Training Council (CITC)  
Vince Ball, Executive Director  
Tel: [REDACTED] Email: [REDACTED]
- ACT Building and Construction Industry Training Fund Authority  
Jo Whitfield, Chief Executive Officer  
Tel: [REDACTED], Email: [REDACTED]

Likely interested parties continued:

- Masonry Contractors Association  
Brendan Covle, President  
Tel: [REDACTED] Email: [REDACTED]
- National Apprentice Employment Network (NAEN)  
Dianne Dayhew, Chief Executive Officer  
Tel: [REDACTED] Email: [REDACTED]
- Murray Mallee Training Company (MMTC)  
Di Menz, Chief Executive Officer  
Tel: [REDACTED] Email: [REDACTED]
- FCTA – Building Careers  
Trisch Baff, Chief Executive Officer  
Tel: [REDACTED] Email: [REDACTED]
- Brick Education Australia  
Dean Canny - Owner  
Tel: [REDACTED] Email: [REDACTED]

### Additional information

13. Provide any other information or documents you consider relevant to the ACCC's assessment of the proposed application.

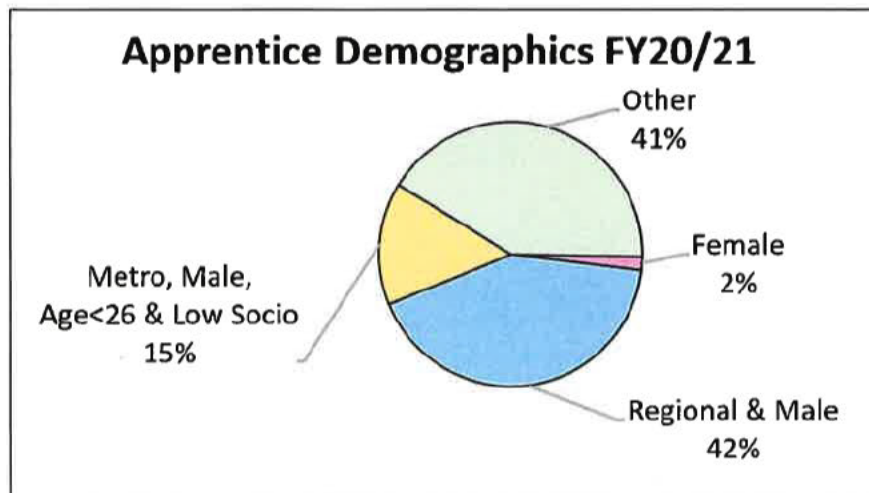
#### Not for Profit and Social Enterprise

Australian Brick & Blocklaying Training Foundation is a not-for-profit company, a registered social enterprise, and a public company Limited by Guarantee.

In May 2022, ABBTF was certified as a Social Enterprise by Social Traders. Social Traders provides the only social enterprise certification in Australia. ABBTF was certified as a Social Enterprise due the beneficiaries of our work.

Beneficiaries:

- Youth in rural/regional communities
- Youth - 15 to under 25 Metro Low Socio-economic background
- Youth Females
- Unemployed
- Retention of youth within the apprenticeship.



### **ABBTF Board Structure**

The structure of the Board of Directors enables participation from the three key brick and block manufacturing companies who are major contributors to the foundation.

These include:

- Brickworks/Austral Bricks/Austral Masonry – one director and one alternate director
- CSR/PGH Bricks & Pavers – one director
- Adbri Masonry – one director

Other directors include:

- Housing Industry Association (HIA) – one director
- Master Builders Australia (MBA) – one director
- Builder representative– one director (currently CEO of the Burbank Group)
- Builder/Commercial Bricklayers, currently:
  - Fugen Group – one director
  - Favetti Group – one director
  - IRP Masonry – one director
- Australian Brick & Blocklaying Training Foundation (ABBTF)
  - Chief Executive Officer/Director
  - Company Secretary.

### **ABBTF Accounting**

Annually ABBTF has their finance records independently audited by an external auditor. An annual report is issued each year with the finance records and auditing outcomes.

## Declaration by Applicant(s)

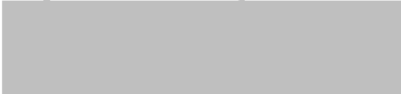
Authorised persons of the applicant(s) must complete the following declaration. Where there are multiple applicants, a separate declaration should be completed by each applicant.

The undersigned declare that, to the best of their knowledge and belief, the information given in response to questions in this form is true, correct and complete, that complete copies of documents required by this form have been supplied, that all estimates are identified as such and are their best estimates of the underlying facts, and that all the opinions expressed are sincere.

The undersigned undertake(s) to advise the ACCC immediately of any material change in circumstances relating to the application.

The undersigned are aware that giving false or misleading information is a serious offence and are aware of the provisions of sections 137.1 and 149.1 of the *Criminal Code* (Cth).

Signature of authorised person



Office held

Chief Executive Officer/Director, Australian Brick & Blocklaying Training Foundation Ltd, trading as Brick and Block Careers

(Print) Name of authorised person

Michael Morrissey

This 5<sup>th</sup> day of December 2023

*Note: If the Applicant is a corporation, state the position occupied in the corporation by the person signing. If signed by a solicitor on behalf of the Applicant, this fact must be stated*



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Signature of authorised person



Office held

Group Chief Executive Officer, Clay Brick and Paver Institute Ltd, trading as Think Brick Australia

(Print) Name of authorised person

Cathy Inglis

This 5<sup>th</sup> day of December 2023

*Note: If the Applicant is a corporation, state the position occupied in the corporation by the person signing. If signed by a solicitor on behalf of the Applicant, this fact must be stated*

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The undersigned undertake(s) to advise the ACCC immediately of any material change in circumstances relating to the application.

The undersigned are aware that giving false or misleading information is a serious offence and are aware of the provisions of sections 137.1 and 149.1 of the *Criminal Code* (Cth).

Signature of authorised person



Office held

Group Chief Executive Officer, Concrete Masonry Association of Australia

(Print) Name of authorised person

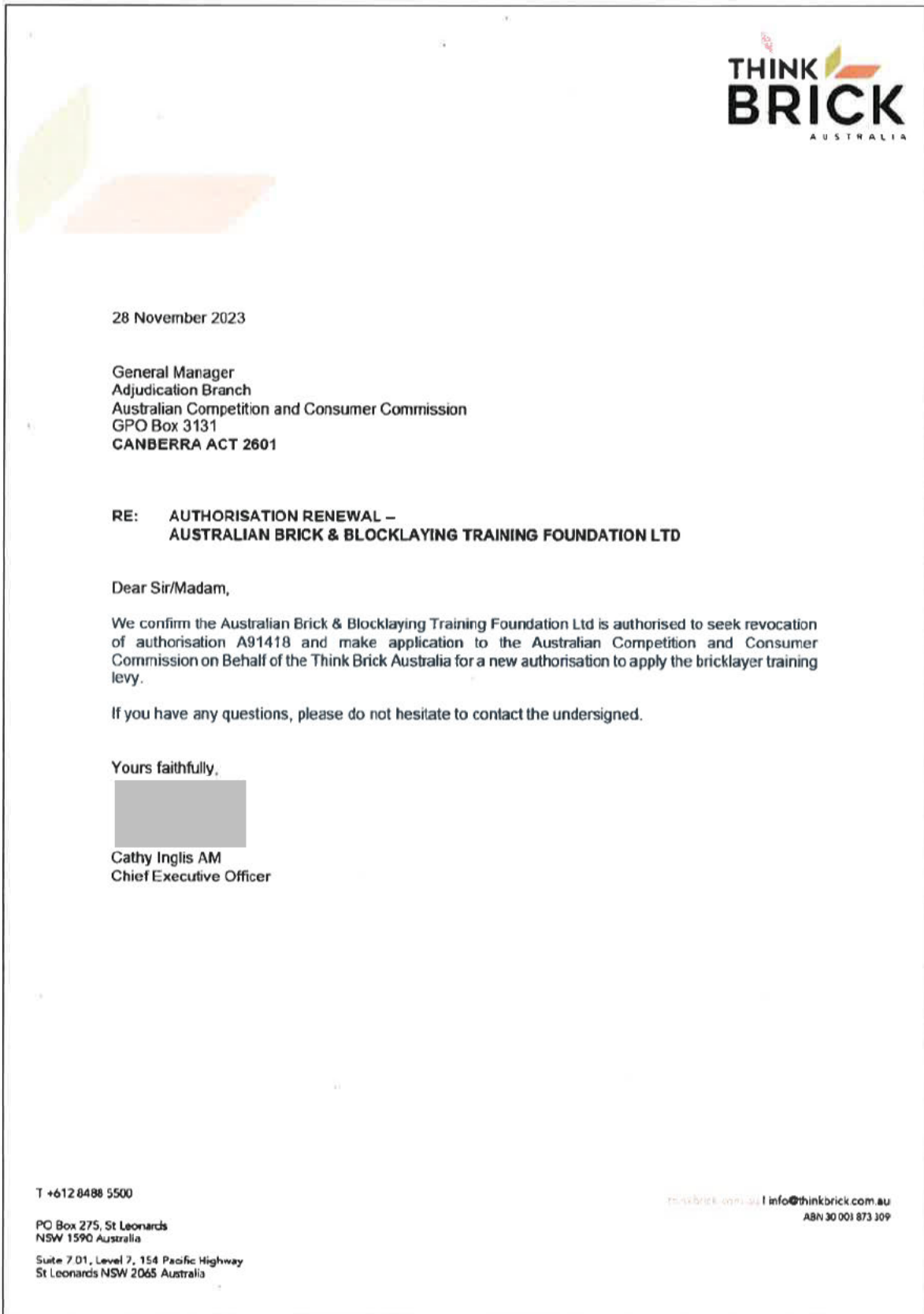
Cathy Inglis

This 5<sup>th</sup> day of December 2023

*Note: If the Applicant is a corporation, state the position occupied in the corporation by the person signing. If signed by a solicitor on behalf of the Applicant, this fact must be stated*

The following letters of support have been requested/received:

1. Think Brick Australia:



## 2. Concrete Masonry Association of Australia:



28 November 2023

General Manager  
Adjudication Branch  
Australian Competition and Consumer Commission  
GPO Box 3131  
CANBERRA ACT 2601

**RE: AUTHORISATION RENEWAL –  
AUSTRALIAN BRICK & BLOCKLAYING TRAINING FOUNDATION LTD**

Dear Sir/Madam,

We confirm the Australian Brick & Blocklaying Training Foundation Ltd is authorised to seek revocation of authorisation A91418 and make application to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission on behalf of the Concrete Masonry Association for a new authorisation to apply the bricklayer training levy.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned.

Yours faithfully,



Cathy Inglis AM  
Chief Executive Officer

PO Box 275, St Leonards NSW 1590 Australia  
Suite 7.01, Level 7, 154 Pacific Highway  
St Leonards NSW 2065 Australia

T +612 8448 5500  
E info@cmaa.com.au  
ABN 33 065 618 840

[www.cmaa.com.au](http://www.cmaa.com.au)






### 3. Social Traders – Social Enterprise Certification

This certificate confirms


# BRICK AND BLOCK CAREERS

41 097 159 914


meets the Social Traders Social Enterprise definition:


-  Operates with a primary social, cultural or environmental purpose
-  Derives a substantial portion of revenue from trade
-  Reinvests profits towards its purpose such that public benefit outweighs private benefit

and is certified for the period of  
23/05/2022 - 23/05/2025



**Mike McKinstry**  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

  
Unlocking business for good

  
Business for good

#### 4. Housing Industry Association (HIA)



79 Constitution Avenue  
Campbell ACT 2612  
02 6245 1300

14 November 2023

Brick and Block Careers  
42-24 Cochranes Road  
MOORABBIN VIC 3189  
Via email: [REDACTED]

Dear Michael

#### ACCC Application for Revocation and Substitution of Authorisation A91418

In response to a request from the Australian Brick and Blocklaying Training Foundation Ltd (ABBTF), trading as Brick and Block Careers, HIA would like to offer its support for their Application for Revocation and Substitution of Authorisation No. A91418 granted for a period of 10 years in 2014 and expiring on 25 July 2024.

We understand that Brick and Block Careers was established by brick and block manufacturers to address the skill shortage in bricklaying and over the last 15 years has made a substantial investment in promoting bricklaying apprenticeships and providing subsidies to employers of new apprentices.

We note that a small levy on the sale of bricks and blocks is collected by the local brick and block manufacturers and then matched by them. The funds raised are used to support brick and blocklaying employers to take on and retain apprentices and includes strategies and programs to address the critical skill shortages in brick and blocklaying. Part of the money received is fed back into the industry through subsidies to the employers of apprentices.

Considering our strong representation of the housing and construction industry, we understand the crucial efforts required to sustain support for trades such as bricklaying. HIA is enthusiastic about endorsing the continued work of Brick and Block Careers in providing crucial services to our members, thereby effectively combating the prevailing skills shortage in the brick and blocklaying trades.

Should you require anything further in support of the application, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely  
HOUSING INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION LIMITED

[REDACTED]  
Jocelyn Martin  
Managing Director

## 5. Master Builders Australia



**MASTER BUILDERS  
AUSTRALIA**

22 November 2023

Mr Michael Morrisey  
Chief Executive Officer  
Brick and Block Careers  
42-24 Cochrane Road  
MOORABBIN VIC 3189

By email: [REDACTED]

Dear Michael,

**Re: ACCC Application for Revocation and Substitution of Authorisation A91418**

In response to a request from the Australian Brick and Blocklaying Training Foundation Ltd (ABBTF), trading as Brick and Block Careers, we would like to offer our support for their Application for Revocation and Substitution of Authorisation No. A91418 granted for a period of 10 years in 2014 and expiring on 25 July 2024.

We understand that Brick and Block Careers was established by brick and block manufacturers to address the skill shortage in bricklaying and over the last 15 years has made a substantial investment in promoting bricklaying apprenticeships and providing subsidies to employers of new apprentices.

Master Builders Australia acknowledges that a levy on the sales of bricks and blocks is collected by the local brick and block manufacturers, and then matched by them. The funds raised are used to support brick and blocklaying employers to take on and retain apprentices and includes strategies and programs to address the critical skill shortages in brick and blocklaying. Part of the money received is fed back into the industry through subsidies to the employers of apprentices.

Considering our strong representation of the construction industry, Master Builders Australia understands the crucial efforts required to sustain support for trades such as bricklaying. Considering this, we are enthusiastic about endorsing the continued work of Brick and Block Careers in providing services to our members, thereby effectively combating the prevailing skills shortage in the brick and blocklaying trades.

Should you require anything further in support of the application, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Denita Wawn  
Chief Executive Officer  
Master Builders Australia

+61 2 6202 8888  
+61 2 6202 8877

enquiries@masterbuilders.com.au  
www.masterbuilders.com.au

Level 3, 44 Sydney Avenue  
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PO Box 7170  
Yarralumla ACT 2600