

**Media Release**  
**19 May 2021**

**NAWIC and Tradeswomen Australia Backs NSW Government  
Fee-Free Training for Women**

*Direct action by the NSW Government is a political policy benchmark which should be introduced nationally.*

The National Association of Women in Construction (NAWIC) and Tradeswomen Australia have congratulated the NSW Government on its launch of the 'Built for Women' Fee-Free training program.

The two organisations backed the announcement of 3,000 training places for women in trades which will hopefully go some way towards addressing the significant under representation of women in the construction industry.

NAWIC Chair Kristine Scheul said only 12% of workers in the construction industry are female with less than 2% of construction trade jobs being occupied by women, a significant under representation for half the population.

"With more women entering the industry through programs such as this, the more likely there will be even more role models for future women looking for a career in construction."

"Whilst programs such as this are essential for attracting women into industries such as construction, it is equally important to ensure that those women feel supported and respected throughout their training. NAWIC is prepared to work with government and the industry to provide a network of ongoing support to the women who take up this program to ensure that they have the best chance possible to stay.

"NAWIC calls on other states and Territories to allocate part of their infrastructure spend towards similar programs and start tipping the balance towards creating a more equitable industry where women fully participate."

Fiona McDonald, Managing Director of Tradeswomen Australia said with the lack of women engaged in the trades, at below 2% in some major trades, when there are skills shortages, the direct action by the NSW Government is a political policy benchmark.

"Currently, whilst there is increasing recognition to address this issue at Government, industry and business level, the reform is moving too slowly.

"Public support for Government and Industries across Australia moving to address the lack of women in the trades should be part of an ongoing public and community discussion."

'The Built For Women' program is providing a clear financial commitment from the NSW Government which is linked into the \$107 billion Government Infrastructure program.

Ms McDonald said currently the National Skills Needs List (2019) lists 65 trades that are experiencing national skills shortages. Of those, 62 can be classed as male-dominated trades; only 3 could be classed as female-dominated.

"Introducing Gender Equity policies, such as the NSW Government's 'Built For Women' program, provides pathways into trade apprenticeships for women and could see them, once qualified, earning up to \$80 to \$90 an hour. For many women and their families, this would be life changing.

"It would also provide political parties with a focus on the role women can play in overcoming the skills shortages in Australia whilst progressing Gender Equity in Government Policies and expenditure.

"The COVID recovery provides Government's with an important opportunity to announce policies and actions on increasing employment of women in the trades," Ms McDonald said.

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