

25 March 2026

Civil Construction apprentices on the fast track to jobs

South Australia's high-demand civil construction workforce has received a boost with the introduction of two fast-tracked civil apprenticeship pathways.

Developed by the South Australian Skills Commission (the Commission) in partnership with the Civil Contractors Federation SA and the state government, the Industry Accelerated Apprenticeship Pilot (IAAP) Pathway reduces training duration in two key civil construction pathways from 36 to 18 months, culminating in immediate jobs for apprentices where they are most needed.

The civil construction pathways are two of seven IAAP pathways, announced in April 2025, to deliver the skilled workers desperately needed on major projects, including Torrens to Darlington (T2D), the largest and most complex infrastructure project ever undertaken in our state.

The IAAP will support 1,000 fast-tracked apprenticeships over two years across the seven pathways and will support other large-scale projects such as the new Women's and Children's Hospital, new commercial developments and residential housing.

Four Aboriginal apprentices have now commenced their fast-tracked civil construction pathways and will form part of the first cohort of IAAP apprentices, with others to follow.

They are employed by the Civil Contractors Federation SA's Group Training Organisation (Civil Apprenticeships and Careers Ltd) and hosted by Aboriginal owned and operated civil construction company, Birubi Australia, to work directly on the T2D project.

Civil Contractors Federation SA's Registered Training Organisation (Civil Train) will provide off-the-job training for IAAP pathway participants, who will be enrolled in either Certificate III in Civil Construction or Certificate III in Civil Construction Plant Operations.

The IAAP was one of several industry-facing initiatives announced at the inaugural National Civil Skills Summit in Adelaide, which brought together industry, unions and government to focus on workforce challenges and training reforms.

Other Commission-led initiatives to increase the state's skilled civil construction workforce are:

- Australian Apprenticeship Priority List (AAPL) inclusion for civil construction qualifications
- Degree apprenticeships
- Occupational Recognition Service

As a result of South Australian advocacy, civil construction qualifications have now been reintroduced to the AAPL.

The Commission has pioneered a model delivering Australia's only true degree apprenticeships, moving from pilot to full program delivery with strong employer demand and growing national interest.

There are now over 60 degree apprentices undertaking software, mechanical and electrical engineering pathways at Adelaide University and Flinders University, with civil engineering degree apprenticeships to commence in 2027.

The Occupational Recognition Service will lead to further opportunities for up-skilling and career progression by providing successful applicants who have acquired experience or qualifications in a trade or vocation outside an apprenticeship or traineeship with an Occupational Certificate.

Quotes attributable to South Australian Skills Commissioner, Cameron Baker

The Industry Accelerated Apprenticeship Pilot fast-tracks the delivery of training and pathways that align with real project needs, without compromising on quality or safety.

Initiatives like the IAAP are where the South Australian Skills Commission can design and broker smart, industry-led solutions to pressing workforce challenges.

We have targeted trades with known skills shortages such as civil construction and worked with the Civil Contractors Federation SA, among other key sector stakeholders to target and tailor training duration to suit real project needs.

This will help develop and maintain a pipeline of skilled workers for the Torrens to Darlington project, and create thousands of secure, well-paid jobs for South Australians.

The South Australian Skills Commission remains focused on building an agile, industry-driven skills system, and these reforms demonstrate how innovative pathways can support workforce growth across civil and other critical sectors.

Quotes attributable to Civil Contractors Federation SA Chief Executive Officer, Jessica Tucker

We strongly support and welcome the IAAP, which will help provide the pipeline of skilled, job ready workers the industry needs to deliver the unprecedented number of major infrastructure projects planned in South Australia.

This program comes as we double our training capacity to more than 400 apprenticeships per year with the launch of CCF SA's new Centre for Excellence, where IAAP apprentices will be trained in a state-of-the-art facility that simulates the real job sites and projects apprentices will work on in civil construction.

Whether it's a new hospital, a road tunnel or a housing estate, civil construction is the first trade on site and the IAAP means we can get apprentices trained and on the job faster to lay the foundations for the state's growth.

We're pleased to work closely with the South Australian Skills Commission to continue demonstrating how innovative pathways help ensure we have the skills and workforce the civil construction sector needs now and in the future.

Quotes attributable to Birubi Australia SA Managing Director, Farin Wanganeen

The IAAP provides significant benefits for young Aboriginal people by offering the accelerated 18-month apprenticeship opportunity.

Birubi, together with our partners (Leed & BMD) are fortunate to be able to support a culturally safe workplace for apprentices, that we're sure will lead to meaningful career opportunities with Birubi Australia upon completion of their apprenticeship.

The apprentices are enthusiastic about the opportunity to "earn while they learn" and to begin their journey into the civil construction industry together.

Our aim is to obtain continuity of work here in South Australia across infrastructure projects that we hope will lead to more opportunities for Aboriginal Apprentices of all ages (including women) to join Birubi Australia in delivering labour to an industry which has overwhelming demand.